

SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

Volume 14, No. 1

January 1997

Articles

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|--|
| Md. Ripter Hossain | 1 | Population Aging in Bangladesh and its Perspectives |
| Dr. Khawaja Amjad Saeed | 17 | SAARC Economic Union by 2008 |
| Khandaker M. Shariful Islam | 27 | State Policies and the Status of Women : A Comparative Assessment of India and China |
| Nadeem Shafiq Malik | 39 | Crown Prince of Nepal's Visit to Pakistan : An Over View |
| M. Habibur Rahman | 45 | Modern State and the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1972 |
| | 63 | Book Review |
| | 65 | Statements
South Asian Regional Co-operation
July to December 1996 |
| | 123 | A Select Bibliography of Books and Periodical Literature on South Asia and SAARC
July to December 1996 |
| | 141 | Chronology of Important Events South Asian Region
July to December 1996 |

Population Aging in Bangladesh and its Perspectives

MD. RIPTER HOSSAIN

Abstract

The last few decades bear witness to the tremendous changes in population structure, particularly age and sex structure, traditional socio-cultural values, specially filial piety. Among these changes two significant evolutionary processes—population aging and break-down of traditional patterns of family life, have drawn apt attention of social scientists following the declining trend in mortality and fertility levels.

In this piece of work the evolutionary process of population aging in Bangladesh examined by analyzing proportion of the aged population, life expectancy of the aged, total age structure, mortality patterns of the aged and by computing aging indices. It is revealed that there will be remarkable increase in the aged population of Bangladesh from the beginning of the next century and by the year 2030 the country will have to bear the aged population of 11.5 million. The aging indices also reflect the sex differential in aging, clearly indicating the need for special attention towards our female sect. Finally some policy measures are recommended.

INTRODUCTION

The elderly people comprise a much larger proportion of the population today than ever before. When the medical science was in its infant stage fertility and mortality rates were high, the relative size of an aging population was small. The rapid and faster technological progress in medical sciences control the fertility and mortality rates considerably, and the average composition exhibits a relatively large proportion of elderly persons.

The old age segment in the population represents an important subset of the aggregate population and the elderly as a separate and identifiable group with their own specific needs has emerged as an issue quite recently. Our empirical knowledge about the sub-population in the developing countries is however limited till now. But even for these countries we know the size of the elderly population has increased significantly in absolute terms.

In Bangladesh changes in the population structure, specially population aging and break down of traditional family life are of concern for the social scientists as well as for the governments and family members. Further the elderly persons of Bangladesh will have to be economically more independent in future to cope with the old age problems.

The process of aging in Bangladesh now taking place in such a time when pattern of life is changing ; kinship bonds are weakening and the family composition is undergoing in a rapid transformation.

The present study focuses on the phenomenon of aging in Bangladesh. It examines the state of the aged population, changes in this sub-population in respect of size, composition and distribution, and the determinants and implications of the process. Judged against any standard old-age scale, Bangladesh population is still demographically young, since the demographic factors causing changes in age structure have rather been weak so far.

The demographic transition has far reaching consequences not only on the structure of Bangladesh's population but also on the country's overall well being. But this being a recent phenomenon, the effect might not be felt immediately. Nevertheless, there is a need to explore the aging situation of the country for its future perspectives and implications. Issues relating to the aging situation should get due attention not only from demographic angle but it also acquires special significance in a situation when the country swings at different levels on the continuum of tradition and modernity (Randhawa, 1991).

DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

The data used and analyzed in this piece of work comes from "The sex and age distribution of World population-1994, United Nations" and "The National census series."

The cross classified categorical data analysis are performed using elderly population by the age group and the variables life expectancy, broad age structure, structure ratios and mortality rates.

The most popular traditional measures of the extent of aging consist of identifying a critical level of age above which a person will be considered as 'aged' and then finding the proportion that is 'aged.' As shown by Basu (1987), a family of poverty measures in economics offers ideas for developing an index which captures the underlying notion of aging.

The conventional aging index is defined as :

$$Z(p) = \frac{m(p)}{n(p)}$$

Where $n(p)$ is the number of people in a population 'p' and $m(p)$ is the number of people aged 60 and over.

By analogy with the "Income cap" measure, another indicator, called the "age-difference Index" is given as :

$$I(p) = \frac{1}{m(p)} \sum_{i=1}^{m(p)} \left(\frac{p_i - 60}{60} \right)$$

Where p_i is the age(sixty plus) of the i th person. Since the index $I(p)$ is concerned only with the extent of oldness among the old, a good measure of aging is derived by some kind of reconciliation of $Z(p)$ and $I(p)$. The improved index is defined as :

$$P(p) = \frac{1}{n(p)} \sum_{i=1}^{m(p)} \left(\frac{p_i - 60}{60} \right)^2 = \frac{1}{n(p)} \sum_{i=1}^{m(p)} \left(\frac{p_i}{60} - 1 \right)^2$$

Further a general index of aging I_r as constructed by Satya R. Chakravarty and Sumita Chakravarty (1993) is used to indicate the differential impact of variables on aging.

$$I_r = \frac{q}{n} \left[\frac{1}{q} \sum_{i=1}^q \left(\frac{y_i}{g} - 1 \right) \right]^r$$

Where, q is the number of old persons

n is the total population

y_i is the age of the i th person

g is the cut of point for old age which is 60 years in our study

r is the non-negative constant.

When $r = 0$ then I_0 is simply the head count ratio H . The term within third brackets measures how old the old are. I_0 does not indicate how old the old are and does not satisfy the properties continuity and monotonicity.

The index I_r possesses the properties Continuity, Monotonicity in old age line for all $r > 0$ and the index meets the properties Focus, Symmetry, Normalization, Principle of population and Additive decomposability for all permissible values for r .

FIXING AGE BOUNDARY FOR ELDERLY

The definition of old age is very much dependent on its use in a particular context. Thus old age is often determined on the criterion of retirement from the labour market. The way of fixing the entry into old age ignores that a large number of women has not been in the gainful occupation and the age of retirement varies not only between countries but also between public and private sectors within a country. Further, majority of the working-age population is engaged in the unorganized sector in which there is no formal age of retirement.

Old age has typically been fixed in terms of years birth, usually an arbitrary fixed number of years. An alternative concept is linked to level of longevity. Progress in longevity has also been measured traditionally in terms of years from birth. A very different concept of old age being advanced is based on the average number of years until death (Ryder, 1975 and Jackson, 1980).

The demographer commonly uses simple chronological designations to define the bounds of old age corresponding to those ages cited in the principal legislation affecting older persons. These may be 60,62,65,or 72. Then there are other bounds for young of age, middle-old age, old-old age, and frail old (Neugarten, 1974).

Cultural definitions of old age vary according to the longevity of a population, the proportion of persons in the old ages, and the degree to which persons at different ages are engaged in useful activities. In these terms, a redefinition of old age is now occurring in the United States.

Going by the criterion of self-identification of one being aged may lead to different cut-off points even within a culture. Developing societies commonly recognize that a person attaining age 60 has become old. The United Nations, on the other hand, considers the beginning of old age at 65 years. Quite obviously, developing countries differ from developed countries in consideration of what constitutes old age. For convenience of standardized comparisons, the threshold of demographic old age is usually considered at 60 or 65 years, but no sex differential of the lower bounds is generally made.

For Bangladesh the life expectancy at ages 60, 65, and 70 are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Life Expectancy at Ages 60, 65 and 70 for Bangladesh : 1974 - 1994

Period	e^o_{60}		e^o_{65}		e^o_{70}	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1974	14.4	14.1	11.6	11.3	9.1	8.8
1981	14.7	16.0	11.7	13.1	9.0	10.4
1983	15.8	15.9	13.0	12.7	9.5	9.6
1986	14.1	14.8	11.0	11.2	8.9	8.4
1987	15.5	15.8	12.2	12.0	9.6	8.8
1990	15.2	14.8	12.3	11.7	10.0	8.9
1991	14.8	15.3	11.8	11.9	9.6	9.2
1993	14.6	14.6	11.7	11.4	8.9	8.3
1994	15.2	15.0	12.0	11.9	9.1	8.6

Source : 1980-81, 1982, 1983-84, 1987, 1992, 1993, 1995. *Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh*. BBS, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Further the proportion of population at these higher ages is still very low as shown in Table 2. It turns out that the basis for fixing age boundary for the elderly should not be a single criterion like $e^o_x=10$ or specified proportion of people at certain higher age, etc. A sound approach seems to be the consideration of a combination of the above two criteria. To this we should add that however low the extent of aging for any country for any period, the lower age should not be less than 60

years. With the current demographic background and the above criteria, however, age 60 is fixed as a boundary point for elderly in Bangladesh.

TABLE 2
**Percentage of Population at Ages 60+,65+ and 70+for Bangladesh
 1950 – 2030**

Year	Male			Female		
	60+	65+	70+	60+	65+	70+
1950	6.07	3.37	1.62	6.19	3.85	2.12
1960	6.51	3.86	1.94	5.78	3.56	1.97
1970	6.50	3.74	2.16	5.60	3.54	2.11
1980	5.19	3.38	1.95	5.37	3.51	1.96
1990	4.46	2.83	1.67	4.92	3.17	1.86
2000	4.77	3.05	1.75	5.29	3.31	1.87
2010	5.55	3.50	2.03	6.14	3.95	2.29
2020	7.54	4.51	2.61	8.05	5.08	2.96
2030	10.72	6.75	3.85	11.44	7.28	4.28

Source : *The Sex and Age Distribution of World Populations, the 1994 Revision*, United Nations, New York, p.178-179.

FUTURE TREND IN AGE STRUCTURE

The present trends in the components of growth of the population are the determinants of age structure in the future. The prospective trend in broad age-structure of Bangladesh is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Prospective Trend in Broad Age-Structure of Bangladesh
Population 1950, 1980-2030

Population in Million

Year	Male			Female		
	0-14	15-59	60+	0-14	15-59	60+
1950	7.9	13.0	1.4	7.8	10.4	1.2
1980	21.0	22.1	2.3	19.5	20.8	2.3
1990	23.5	29.7	2.6	21.7	28.0	2.6
2000	25.6	40.3	3.4	24.2	37.5	3.4
2010	27.7	51.3	4.7	26.2	47.9	4.8
2020	25.2	62.8	4.7	26.2	58.9	7.3
2030	24.2	70.5	7.2	23.8	66.4	11.5

Source : *The Sex and Age Distribution of World Populations, the 1994 Revision*. United Nations, New York, p.178-179.

Table 3 shows a consistent increase in the proportion aged 60+ compared to the population those of young and adult age-groups since 1950. This has clearly been indicated that the old population of Bangladesh is going to increase gradually up to year 2000 and then remarkably increase between the decades 2010 to 2020 and 2020 to 2030.

Among the other indicators used to show the process of population aging: mention may be made of the several population structure ratios such as the proportions of working age population in relation to children, aged, and all dependents. Another index is considered to show that with increase in the number of old people, the oldness of the old will also increase. The Table 4 shows the trends of some population structure ratios for Bangladesh : 1950, 1980-2025 for both males and females.

TABLE 4

**Trends of some Population Structure Ratios
for Bangladesh : 1950, 1980 –2030**

Year	15-59/<15		15-59/60+		15-59/<15+60+		60-69/80+	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1950	1.66	1.33	9.57	8.66	1.41	1.16	19.8	16.00
1980	1.05	1.07	9.36	9.09	0.95	0.96	11.3	11.00
1990	1.26	1.30	11.30	10.87	1.14	1.15	7.23	8.03
2000	1.57	1.55	11.98	10.88	1.39	1.36	7.81	8.50
2010	1.86	1.83	11.06	9.89	1.59	1.55	7.88	8.27
2020	2.50	2.48	8.76	8.10	1.94	1.89	8.29	7.59
2030	2.91	2.90	6.18	5.77	1.98	1.93	8.28	7.42

Source : *The Sex and Age Distribution of World Populations*, The 1994 Revision, United Nations, New York, p.179-179.

If the basic sex-structures of the population from which the indices have been derived are at least approximately accurate, the population can be considered to be heading towards high degree of aging, The direction of change of the first two indicators in Table 4 is expectedly just opposite, and indicated convincingly the decline in children and concomitant increase in the elderly. The third indicator is, in fact, the reciprocal of the conventional dependency ratio, and will maintain an increasing trend so long as the decrease in 0-14 ages population out numbers the increase in the 'aged population.' The last index 60-69/80+ considered here is of special interest is the oldest old age ratios. The oldest old ratios shows increasing trend.

MORTALITY PATTERNS AND TRENDS FOR THE ELDERLY

The mortality rates for persons in the old-age are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Mortality Rates for Persons in the Old – Age Ranges for Bangladesh : 1984, 1994

Age Group	CRL 1984	CRL 1994	CRL 1984	CRL 1994
	Male		Female	
60-64	38.2	28.1	34.5	22.6
65-69	70.0	51.1	66.4	41.6
70-74	76.4	67.5	94.0	61.9
75+	147.1	122.4	154.2	120.4

Source : *Demographic Surveillance System-Matlab, Scientific Report No.-67, 77, ICDDR,B, Dhaka, Bangladesh.*

The data collected by CRI from Demographic Surveillance System, though not representative of the country as a whole, give insight into the patterns of mortality by age and sex. With the passage of time death rates for both the sexes of the aged shows decreasing trend which indicates increasing number of aged in Bangladesh.

AGING INDEX

Based on the Index, the trend in population aging in Bangladesh is illustrated with reference to sex-age distributions of the population estimated by the United Nations, 1994. The data used as the input for the index are presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6
 Estimated sex-age Distribution of Population of Bangladesh in the
 old age Range : 1950, 1980--2030 (Population in 000)

Age Group	1950	1980	Male				
			1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Total	22227	45492	58785	69305	83713	95220	106061
60-64	600	822	958	1251	1718	2882	4209
65-69	390	654	685	904	1237	1812	3076
70-74	215	466	463	592	829	1200	2094
75-79	105	288	292	341	490	719	1111
80+	50	131	226	276	375	566	880
60 and over	1350	2361	2624	3364	4649	7179	11370
Female							
Total	19556	42729	52333	65113	78787	89970	100893
60-64	457	796	921	1291	1725	2672	4195
65-69	340	662	685	935	1310	1902	3036
70-74	230	447	467	600	902	1280	2077
75-79	134	267	304	356	533	812	1262
80+	50	122	200	262	367	604	975
60 and over	1211	2294	2577	3444	4837	7240	11545

Source : *The Sex and Age Distribution of World Populations, the 1994 Revision*, United Nations, New York, p.178-179.

The conventional aging Index, $Z(p)$, and the Improved Index $P(p)$ are presented in Table 7

TABLE 7
 Expected Trend in Aging of Population according to Two Indicators
 for Bangladesh : 1950, 1980--2030

Year	Improve $P(p) \times 100$		%Change of $P(p)$		$Z(p) \times 100$		% Change of $Z(p)$	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1950	0.53	0.39	-	-	6.12	6.19	-	-
1980	0.71	0.72	33.96	82.62	5.19	5.37	-15.2	-13.3
1990	0.72	0.73	1.41	1.39	4.70	4.93	-9.5	-8.2
2000	1.02	1.15	41.67	57.53	4.85	5.29	3.2	7.3
2010	1.66	1.89	62.75	64.35	5.55	6.14	14.4	16.1
2020	3.80	3.88	128.92	105.29	7.54	8.08	35.9	31.6
2030	8.44	8.89	122.11	129.12	10.72	11.44	42.2	41.58

Source : Computed from Table 6. For description of the indicators, see text.

While both indicators reveal a clear trend towards further aging in Bangladesh, well into the next century, the $P(p)$ Index seems to be more sensitive, and registers a steeper and larger increase compared to the conventional index, $Z(p)$. The sex differential in aging is also brought out more sharply by the new index than does the traditional index.

Using age data of Bangladesh for the year 1950, 1980-2030 the general index I_r for $r = 0, 1, 2, 3$ are computed by dividing the entire population by sex (Male and Female). The numerical results are presented in Table 8. The decomposition of the population with respect to a characteristic is given in the first row, the second column gives the proportion of the total population in different subgroups. Numerical values of I_r for $r = 0, 1, 2, 3$ are given in columns 3-10.

We note from Table 8 the contribution of males towards the aging is more pronounced than the females which indicates that males live longer than females in Bangladesh. Further the percentage contribution of males and females for different values of the parameter do not differ significantly. However, we note that approximately 55 per cent contribution to total aging comes from male population. The contribution to the total aging by the female population is approximately 45 per cent. It is to be mentioned that the contribution made by the males to total aging is monotonically decreasing in r . But the contribution made by the female population to the total aging in Bangladesh is monotonically increasing in r .

From the comparison of differential impact of sex on aging it is revealed that males contribution to aging is much more pronounced than that of female for Bangladesh whereas in India differential sex impact in aging is not notable as noted by Chakravarty. This clearly indicates that males survive more in Bangladesh than females. Under age marriages, malnutrition, more birth, social inadvancement are the factors might be related to the sex differential in aging pattern in Bangladesh.

TABLE 8

Measures of Aging for the Population in Bangladesh
by sex : 1950, 1980, 2030

Year	Proportion of all Bangladesh Population	Male					Female				
		I_0	I_1	I_2	I_3	Proportion of all Bangladesh Population	I_0	I_1	I_2	I_3	
1950	0.53196	.00023	.00077	.0053	0.0418	0.046804	.00025	.00078	.0039	0.0213	
1980	0.51566	.00011	.00072	.0071	0.0744	0.48434	.00012	.00077	.0072	0.0741	
1990	0.51596	.00009	.00066	.0072	0.0828	0.48404	.00009	.00072	.0073	0.0856	
2000	0.51515	.00007	.00074	.0112	0.1882	0.48441	.00008	.00081	.0115	0.1939	
2010	0.51515	.00006	.00087	.0176	0.3935	0.48485	.00007	.00096	.0189	0.4189	
2020	0.51417	.00005	.00121	.0380	1.4464	0.48583	.00006	.00129	.0388	1.3655	
2030	0.51248	.00004	.00188	.0844	4.7572	0.48752	.00005	.00254	0.889	4.9451	
Percentage of Index											
		I_0	I_1	I_2	I_3		I_0	I_1	I_2	I_3	
1950		47.92	49.68	57.61	66.24		52.08	50.32	42.39	33.76	
1980		47.83	49.66	49.67	50.10		52.17	50.33	50.35	49.90	
1990		47.05	47.83	49.66	49.69		52.95	52.17	50.35	50.31	
2000		46.67	47.74	49.34	49.35		53.33	52.26	50.66	50.65	
2010		46.16	47.54	48.22	48.75		53.84	52.46	51.78	51.25	
2020		45.45	48.40	49.48	51.42		54.55	51.60	50.52	48.58	
2030		44.44	48.50	49.75	51.23		55.56	51.50	50.25	48.77	

Source : Computed from Table 6.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF AGING

The last few decades bear witness to the tremendous changes in population structure, particularly age and sex structure, traditional socio-cultural values, specially filial piety. These changes can be traced back to the rapid rate of urbanization, industrialization, and modernization. Among these changes two significant evolutionary processes—population aging and break-down of traditional patterns of family life, have drawn apt attention of social scientists following the declining trend in mortality and fertility levels.

The process of aging in Bangladesh now taking place in such a time when pattern of life is changing, kinship bonds are weakening and the family composition is undergoing a rapid transformation. But with rapid increase of elderly in their number and under the condition of changing family pattern, the elderly population already seems to be experiencing difficulties.

From the analysis of the sex differential in aging in Bangladesh it is concluded that more care are to be taken for females so that socio-economic deprivation in any respect is removed for females. Hence recent steps taken by the government of Bangladesh paying more important role to the upliftment of the socio-economic condition of the females are timely. Specially free education upto secondary levels, pensions for the widows till death, involvement of the destitute in food for works. etc., are to be channeled properly by the government and the NGO's.

The rapid growth of the aged population in Bangladesh in the next century raises a major policy issue about the funding of health services. Efforts is to be made to redesign medical and health facilities.

The aged population are the respected senior citizens of a country, their needs and demands are different from other segment of the population. There is a need for government policies with respect to senior citizens of the country. In order to facilitate employment of the elderly it is necessary to set up organizations which can provide resource information on talent pool of aged persons (60+) for the purpose so that the elderly are able to do what they can for the society and the future generations.

Besides the government will have to establish a National Council/ Institute which deal with the welfare of the aged. A national policy for the aged has to be framed in such manner that it includes all social security measures.

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SAARC Economic Union by 2008

Dr. KHAWAJA AMJAD SAEED

PRELUDE

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was set up in the 1980s. Since then productive meetings were held to develop ideas. This unique forum has brought home several messages of goodwill, peace and tranquility in the region. On several occasions, heads of states of all SAARC countries have met and agreed on several issues of mutual interest. This platform has enabled sharing of thoughts, exchange of ideas and creation of awareness regarding innovative initiatives to be taken for achieving the objectives of SAARC in the light of founding principles laid down for SAARC. Hopefully these initiatives will continue in future so that efforts are solidly undertaken for alleviating poverty, accelerating socio-economic and scientific progress in SAARC region to pave the way for ushering in an era of prosperity on wider dimensions. The sincerity and commitment by the governments and the people of SAARC region are the crying need of today. In this background, the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry deserves full congratulation for taking the initiative of starting the debate on *SAARC Economic Union by 2008*. This paper is an effort in presenting some thoughts on the above issue.

STARTING DEBATE : FOCUS VISION 2008

Status quo is never a permanent feature. Change is an on-going process. SAARC Economic Union by 2008 is the result of a positive thinking approach. An excellent debate has been initiated in this respect.

Khawaja Amjad Saeed, Fellow Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (FCA); the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan (FCMA); the Institute of Marketing Management (FIMM); the Institute of Taxation Management (FITM); Institute of Chartered Secretaries (FICS) and Chartered Manager (FICM) President, Institute of Cost Management Accountants of Pakistan.

It is hoped that this subject of vital importance will be discussed and debated at various levels namely Government, Private, Public, NGOs institutional and even individual levels. Ideas need to be pooled together. Experiences need to be shared. Dimensions of cooperation need to be identified and a framework needs to be evolved to serve as a basis for the proposed Economic Union of SAARC by 2008.

SAARC : PRINCIPLES

Clear cut principles have been spelled out and these require firm commitment by all the SAARC countries. The cooperation among SAARC countries will not be a substitute for bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation but will complement them. Further such cooperation will not be inconsistent with bilateral and multi-lateral obligation.

Principles on which cooperation will be based include respect to the following :

1. Sovereign Equality.
2. Territorial Integrity.
3. Political independence.
4. Non-interference in international affairs of other states and mutual benefit.

The foregoing principles represent strong conceptual logistics on the basis of which SAARC Economic Union can be strongly visualized by 2008.

SAARC : OBJECTIVES

Objectives of SAARC include promotion of socio-economic developments within SAARC countries and also develop a productive relationship with regional and international organizations. Based on this objectives can be categorized as under :

Inter-SAARC

1. To promote the welfare of the people of South Asia and to improve their quality of life.
2. To accelerate economic growth.
3. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields.
4. To promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia.
5. To contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems.

Intra-SAARC

1. To strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums and with other developing countries.
2. To strengthen cooperation with other developing countries.
3. To cooperate with international and regional organizations.

WORK PACKAGES FOR SAARC COUNTRIES

Ten areas of work within SAARC region have been identified and assignment have been given to various SAARC countries. Topics allocated together with the countries responsible are now identified. India has been given four assignments namely, Business Information and Data, Networking, Human Resource Development, Source & Technology and Social Dimension of Business Development. Pakistan has two topics, Trade and Investment. Sri Lanka has an interesting topic namely women entrepreneurs. Bangladesh will handle telecommunication. Travel and Tourism will be handled by Nepal. Bhutan and Nepal have joint responsibility of energy.

SAARC : INRETROSPECT AND BACKGROUND FOR SAARC ECONOMIC UNION BY 2008

Initial steps taken for a long-term objectives of SAARC Economic Union by 2008 so far include the following :

1. Agreement on SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement) was signed during the Seventh SAARC Summit in Dhaka. This entered into force on December 7, 1995. This has the following two forward linkages :
 - (a) Gradual reduction and eventual elimination of tariffs with in SAARC.
 - (b) A step on the road to creating a SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area). Accelerated efforts are needed to implement bilateral and multi-lateral initiatives to promote economic cooperation.
2. Bold initiatives have also been taken in respect of developing institutional framework. These institutions need to be strengthened for their vibrant functions so that positive steps are taken to crystallize the dream of SAARC Economic Union by 2008.

Some of the pertinent institutions include :

- (a) Promoting people-to-people contact.
- (b) SAARC Regional Institutions :
 - (i) SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC), Dhaka, Bangladesh.
 - (ii) SAARC Documentation Centre. (SDC), New Dehli, India.

(c) The following SAARC Funds have been established so far :

- (i) SAARC Fund for Regional Projects (SFRP) (1991).
- (ii) SAARC – JAPAN Special Fund, September 27, 1993. Kathmandu.
- (iii) South Asian Development Fund SADF, 1995, New Delhi.

There is a need to consolidate gains from the above institutional framework and carry forward the same towards achieving the goal of SAARC Economic Union by 2008.

LOGISTICS FOR VISION 2008 **SAARC : A BLUE PRINT : TEN POINTS**

SAARC is the largest geo-economic block of the world with 1.2 billion people. Its GDP, based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), is \$ 3.57 trillion. Its combined average growth is over 7 per cent. Its plan includes a common market, i.e., SAPTA. This represents a hope for the largest pool of poor people of the world, with a consumer base of over 425 million people in the middle class bracket. It is larger than any economic block of the world. It has the potential of contributing a great deal to the ever evolving global economy.

SAARC region has the following unique features of the world :

1. It has one of the most ancient living civilizations in the world.
2. It is a sleeping giant and has started to move its arms.
3. All religions, faiths, and ideologies of the world have yet to learn to live together.

4. It is maturing and is poised to become an important economic force forming a common market called SAPTA. This is expected to usher in a new era which will change all traditionally known economic parameters.
5. It has the second largest railway network of the world after the US.
6. It has the largest irrigated land areas in the world with, over 67 million hectares.
7. It offers one of the largest English speaking area.
8. It has labour force of 423 million people. This is the largest of any other economic block in the world.
9. It also is home to some of the poorest living people on the earth but has increased job opportunities and self-employment schemes in all nations.
10. Having a combined average growth rate of more than 7 per cent by year 2000, SAARC will have a combined population of 1.3 billion people and the total consumer base will surpass 750 million. This will be largest number of consumers in a single economic block in the world.

SCCI : A STRONG LOGISTIC FOR SAARC ECONOMIC UNION BY 2008

SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) was set up in 1992 as the official recognition by all the regional governments and as the apex body of all the national federations of chambers of commerce and industry with its headquarters in Pakistan. It consists of seven component members representing each country. Its mission is to enhance economic cooperation with a view to improving SAARC's position in the World trade as well as within SAARC itself.

SCCI's Philosophy

It will gradually endeavour to achieve SAARC Economic Union through :

1. Economic Cooperation.
 - (a) Bring about harmonious and healthy economic relations among the business communities of the region.
 - (b) The general belief is that the above Union will serve as a step forward to globalization and will help to overcome the socio-political differences within the region.
2. SCCI's contributions towards establishment of SAARC Economic Union by 2008 can be in the following dimensions :
 - (a) Serve as voice of business community of the region at national, regional and global fora.
 - (b) Endeavor to bring about necessary economic cooperation in all spheres of the SAARC region.
 - (c) Encourage investments and joint ventures within and outside the region to ensure that the benefits of economic cooperation are realised for the region.
 - (d) Encourage private sector in the process of industrialization and also to act as the change agent while allowing the governments to develop the infrastructure jointly with them and setting in place policies which can minimize dislocations to economic growth and social development.

INTRA-REGIONAL INVESTMENT

The business community of SAARC need to be encouraged to come forward with intra-regional investment proposals covering the following areas :

1. Investment Promotion.
2. Investment Protection.
3. Repatriation of Profits.
4. Avoidance of Double Taxation.
5. Arrangements for settlement of trade disputes among SAARC member states.

Strategy needs to be developed to evolve common agreements for the region as a whole or sub-region on bilateral basis for the above aspects.

The following Table shows how big is the potential of intra-regional trade in SAARC :

TABLE I

Intra-Regional Trade in SAARC : 1985- 1995

Year	Intra-Regional Trades in World Trade Percentage
1985	2.70
1991	3.02
1993	3.39
1995	4.02

Source : Computed from *Directions of Trade Statistics*, IMF.

AGENDA FOR SAARC ECONOMIC UNION BY 2008

Year 2001 has been set as target date to achieve, SAFTA. This is expected to set pace of development in core trade and economic cooperation in the member countries.

Ninth SAARC Summit was held in Male, Maldives during May 12--14, 1997 and has directed the establishment of Group of Eminent Persons (GEP). This group has been asked to undertake the following tasks :

1. Develop a long range vision.
2. Formulate a perspective plan of action including a SAARC agenda for 2000 and beyond.
3. Spell out the targets that can and must be achieved by the year 2020.

SAARC Economic Union by 2008 is expected to result as under :

1. With new enthusiasm in the markets and shifting economies on combined scale, dependence of their GNP will reduce in coming years.
2. An increased collaboration and harmonious relationship could help reduce the defense budgets to much lower points. On the assumption that these funds are allocated for developmental programmes, the growth indicators will sharply move forward.
3. Marketing plans for these countries can be more or less unique and specially for consumer products and services like entertainment.

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State Policies and the Status of Women : A Comparative Assessment of India and China

KHANDAKER M. SHARIFUL ISLAM

INTRODUCTION

China and India together possess a substantial number of the world's population. They are by far the most populous countries in the world, together accounting for 2 billion of the world's 5.3 million. Their individual populations are projected to stabilize in the 1.5 to 2 billion range by the middle of the next century, with India probably being slightly larger.¹ Therefore, it is obviously of great importance to focus on these two countries to understand the status of Asia's women to a large extent as they cover a substantial number of populations of the region. Moreover, the characteristics or approaches to development in the two countries represent two major patterns in the developing world. In the past India and China followed two distinct approaches : These are the free market economic system with some elements of state planning in India and the socialist centralized planning system in China. Under these different political and economic circumstance, it is interesting to observe the policies for women development and their impacts.

There is no question now that women are an essential component of the development process that can take place only if both men and women are included. This process of inclusion greatly involves the question of policy intervention, which requires policy planners to understand the women's scenario from a comparative perspective by referring experience from different cultures. Though India and China followed different political systems, the problems they encounter in managing a

large economy are similar in many respects. In both countries, state was the main engine of economic development, and centrally guided decisions of development. Attempts are made in this article, to offer an overview of the development strategies with regard to women and the actual achievement under these broad policy guidelines of the two countries. This comparative discussion will hopefully provide an opportunity to analyze the importance of women policy and identify required areas of improvement in policies towards women's development both in India and China.

POLICY TOWARDS WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

India is one of the few countries in the world with fewer women than men (927 women per 1,000 men). With a mixed-type of political system and traditional social values emanated from Hinduism, Islam and other local religions, India has had adverse effects on the development of women's social and economic positions. Although the state is defined as a secular one, the politics has often led the form of religious fundamentalism or revivalism, especially Hindu chauvinism.² Unwritten norms and social customs have prevented women from attaining equal status with men. For example, although Hindu revivalism adopted elements of feminist discourse, in practice affirming the subordinate status of women, and used traditional symbols of female strength to argue that "Hindu women did not need liberation because they already had it within traditional Hinduism."³ Swrup and Rajput (1994) observed, "Even though the Hindu Law in the mid fifties provided for daughters to receive parental property along with sons, still the law is hardly implemented. Landed property is particularly denied."⁴

Indian Policy makers were concerned primarily with overall economic development of the country and under this policy direction, despite more than 40 years of planned development activities, the socio-economic status of women did not appear to have improved by any

measurable extent.⁵ The policies and programmes aimed at women development were very limited in scope and resources and it was not until last fifteen years or so that, "It has been recognized that though women constitute an overwhelming majority among the poor, development programmes are structurally biased in favour of men."⁶

Indian society invested far less in women than in its men despite, women's vital role in the economy. "Women are associated strongly with the home and courtyard, with bearing children and nurturing the family. The male domain is outside, in marketplaces and workplaces, where livelihoods are earned and economic and political power is wielded."⁷

A major element of discrimination against women in India is their unacceptably low status in the society, with continuing legal discrimination against them. In India, women's right of inheritance is given by religious laws which are different between religions. Where the civil code exists alongside other systems of law, it is usually overridden by these systems of religious law, as well as by custom.⁸

The Government of India, however, issued a National Perspective Plan for Women in 1988, which has dual goals of integration of women into the mainstream of the economy and equity and justice for all women. Since the Government's Sixth Plan (1982-83--1986-87), emphasis has been placed on access to health care and family planning services.⁹

POLICY TOWARDS WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA

Women account for approximately 49 per cent of the Chinese population. The Government has a commendable policy framework in place to improve the health, education, economic, legal, and social status of women.¹⁰ The Chinese communists regarded themselves as engaged not just in class war but also in social liberation: "Women hold up half

the heaven' was a favourite epigram of Maye.¹¹ Under this system Chinese women did make significant gain in social status and economic position. The legislative principle of equality of the sexes established by the socialist system is embodied in the policy of equal pay for equal work. Under the influence of this policy, a broad section of Chinese women came out from their families and engaged in various social and economic activities together with men. Women are found in almost all kind of jobs.¹²

In China, land reform and the Marriage Law of 1950 provided for equality between the sexes, as well as equal property rights within the family that abolished the system of arranged marriages in order to establish a democratic marriage system based on freedom of choice, monogamy, equal rights, and protection of the legal interests of women. The law also prohibited interference with the remarriage of widows, and requests for wedding money by parents. Subsequently, the Marriage Law of 1980 incorporated the principles of the 1950 Marriage Law and retained many of its useful and effective stipulations.¹³ Legally women and men have equal rights to own, control and inherit property in China, although, the *de facto* situation is somewhat different.

The Chinese Government's policies to redress women discrimination over the past forty years, by integrating women into the process of development and by redefining traditional gender roles, "have brought about remarkable improvements, such as legislative measures have revised land labour, and marriage laws and have recognized women's roles in the economy as well as in the reproductive sphere."¹⁴ For example, between 1983 and 1989, twenty-eight provincial level legislatures passed regulations protecting women's and children's right and interest and a national law, *Law Yearbook 1993*, was promulgated in 1992.¹⁵ Although these legal protections for women vary in length and detail, they have common goal of reaffirming the equal status of women in the family and in society at large.

During 1978-79 the Government introduced the one-child family policy recognizing the implications of uncontrolled population growth. This policy has helped China achieve the desired effect of decreasing the birth rate to near replacement level.

Even so, women in China are discriminated in many ways. Although under the commune and production brigade and team system in China, women retained their right of access to land but were discriminated against in the form of lower work points (even for equal work done), and were considered as a labour reserve, to be used mainly when men were not available. Women were also deprived of the control of their income; the wife's earnings were automatically added to that of the husband and handed over to him as the head of household. Under the new family responsibility system, "there is the danger that women labour becomes invisible; their rights of access to land are still evolving."¹⁶

A COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Although women in India and China constitute half of the major population of the region, their status has been inferior to men as is in other parts of the world. As is observed in the following Table they are deprived of many opportunities and discriminated against in many ways and counts, although they play as important role as their male counterparts.¹⁷

TABLE
Indicators on the Status of Women

Indicators	India	China
Female adult literacy rate (%) 1995	37.7	72.7
Female net enrollment in primary education (%) 1995	61	98
Female combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrollment ratio (%) 1995	46.5	61.5

Continued to next page

Female life expectancy at birth (year) 1995	61.8	71.3
Total fertility rate 1998	3.2	1.8
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births) 1990	570	95
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) 1995	73	38
Birth attended by trained health personnel (%) 1990-96	34	84
Women's share of earned income (%) 1995	25	38
Female economic activity rate (as % of male rate) 1995	46	82
Female administrators and managers (%) 1992-96	2	12
Female professional and technical workers (%) 1992-96	21	45
Seats in Parliament held by women (%) 1995	8	21
Women in government at ministerial level (%) 1995	4	6
Women in government at sub-ministerial level (%) 1995	6	6

Source : *Human Development Report, 1998*. UNDP¹⁸ AND Bureau of Census, 1999.¹⁹

An attempt has been made below to make a comparative assessment of status of women in India and China in terms of the basic indicators of women development such as Education, Employment, Health Facility and Political Participation.²⁰

Education

Education is one of the most potential means of empowering women which leads to better health and nutrition, improved socio-economic opportunities and helps influence their environment. Chinese women's literacy rates more than doubled in the past 50 years and their enrollment in tertiary education increased tenfold. The adult female literacy rate in China is 72.7 with an average combined gross enrollment ratio of 61.5.²¹ There were over 120 million females with at least a junior high school education (in 1987) which demonstrates their emerging influence of political affairs. Their rising educational level foretells that they will play a more important role in politics and the other affairs of the country.²²

India has a long way to go though it is encouraging to note that the literacy rates of women have increased from 18.7 per cent during 1971 to 37.7 per cent by 1995. Also the sex differentials in literacy reveal a discouraging trend. About 62 per cent of Indian illiterates are girls or women.

Health Security

In both the countries, for the last twenty years, not only life expectancy gap between men and women narrowed, but also the life expectancy at birth for females has become higher than that of males.²³ In the last twenty years period, women's life expectancy at birth rose by more than 16 per cent in India. In 1970 she could expect to live nearly 45 years, whereas now she can expect to live above 62 years. Although this evidence implies an improvement, the incidence of high maternal mortality rate reflects the poor health care. The maternal mortality rate of 570 per 100,000 live births is one of the highest in the world. Also incidences of high infant mortality rate and low birth attended by trained health personnel (see the table) are the indication of slow progress in the overall health care. Therefore, part of the improvement in women's life expectancy in India may have occurred due to the prevention of higher births among educated couples.

China has a higher life expectancy of women and a lower maternal mortality as compared to that of India, which is obviously an indication of significant relative improvements in the health care. This is due to China's successful population control policy which has been able to keep the total fertility rate at 1.8 as compared to India's 3.2. Concerted government efforts have engineered the world's largest drop in fertility rates---from 5.6 live births per women in 1960 to 1.8 in 1998 in China.

Employment and Economic Opportunities

Although the Employment opportunities provided to women have had profound impact on the self-dependence of women, discrimination

against women has been noted in many spheres of employment in both countries. Between 26 and 45 per cent of all Indian women and aged 15 or over are engaged in waged work or trade, and represent between 26 and 35 per cent of their countries' national labour forces.²⁴ In comparison with India and many other countries, Chinese women stand out prominently in their employment status. China has one of the highest female labour participation rates in the world at about 82 per cent (1995), and this has laid a solid foundation for their future development. Whereas, in India 46 per cent of women are engaged in earned economic activities. Moreover, the figures of women administrators or managers and professional or technical workers represent the poor participation of Indian women in work as compared to their Chinese counterpart (see the table). As a result of the spread of education, Chinese women have extensively diversified their traditional roles, and in fact women in China are more employed outside home than women in other developing countries of the world. Indian women lag far behind them due to the vagaries of development and century old retrogressive cultural constraint.

Political Participation

Men in Asian countries have always monopolized political space. Women's political participation is still limited in these two countries, as only a few women are elected to the Parliament and to different political bodies. While women vote in great numbers, few hold high political office, in both India and China (see the table). Even though more than 10 per cent of the Indians who went to prison in the struggle for independence were women, their representation in political power structure has remained low for the following years. For example, in 1977 and 1989 respectively, only 3.4 and 5.2 per cent of the Lok Sabha (upper chamber) and since 1952, the year when women were first allowed to stand for election, women's representation has never risen above 8 per cent.²⁵ However, Indian women are relatively better represented at local levels than in the national ones. In 1994 India

reserved a third of *Panchayat* (Local Council) seats for women. As a result, at least 800,000 women entered the local political pipeline from which national leaders emerge.

The corresponding figures of female political participation for China are also not satisfactory although there has been little improvement (see the table). This low level of women's participation mainly stems from their heavy burden of work followed by household chores and care of children in the home in addition to their formal work either in the field or in the office. Data from many sources indicate that in China, recent economic reform efforts have reduced political participation of women at all levels of government. For instance, membership of women at the Central Committee peaked in 1973 at 10.3 per cent, whereas it was down to 7.5 per cent by 1992. When women constituted 25 per cent of the members of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of 1975, in 1993 they made up only 9 per cent.²⁶

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The above comparative analysis reveals that social indicators for women in India are worse in many respects as compared to those for Chinese women. When the progress of women is viewed in terms of their emancipation, education, employment, participation in social, public and political life, health and control of maternal mortality, etc. Chinese women appear to be ahead of their Indian counterparts. In UNDP's 1997 Gender-related Development Index (GDI),²⁷ China ranks 93rd whereas India ranks 128th among 163 countries for which the GDI has been constructed. Furthermore, India's lower Gender Empower Measure (GEM)²⁸ rank (100th) relative to that of China (33rd) among 103 countries indicates that performance of India in achieving gender equality in the key areas of economic and political participation and decision making is less than that of China. In sum, as available data shows, although neither the Chinese nor the Indian approach to gender development can be considered optimal with respect to the achievement

of women, the Chinese approach appears to have been significantly more conducive to some areas of women development than the Indian approach, both with respect to actual achievement and to potential for further growth. Chinese women's problems are, to a large extent, social problems and their future is closely dependent upon political and economic development. For example, family planning is not only a personal issue for married couples but a national issue about the speed of economic development and about the future existence of the Chinese nation.

However, in spite of progressive developments for emancipation of women both in India and China as compared with their own past, girl children still continue to face discrimination, neglect and even infanticide as a result of the legacy of their respective cultures. While education and health facilities in these two countries have improved considerably in the last few years, the opportunity to participate in economic and political spheres are yet to be opened for women. The gender gaps in income and political have remained wide and sometimes increase. Therefore, there is still a long way to go to fully emancipate women from their present predicament. Moreover, rural-urban inequality has further deteriorated the socio-economic position of the rural women. Poverty is more widespread and pervasive in rural areas than in urban areas. For example, in India, a disaggregated GDI²⁹ for 16 states constructed in 1996 by the United Nations further indicates significant disparities among these states in basic female capabilities.³⁰ Government intervention is necessary through policy reforms and affirmative actions. Eradicating gender disparity through providing education, health and nutrition although is significant, takes much narrower approach than through improving income earning and decision making opportunities. Through policy reforms women's equal right in property, access to credit and, etc., should be established. What is required most is women's widespread involvement in decision making, both within the family and outside it at all levels of government. Women's opportunities should be regarded as their right rather than as welfare. Finally, women's household work should be reflected in respective country's GNP.

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Crown Prince of Nepal's Visit to Pakistan : An Over View

NADEEM SHAFIQUE MALIK

Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Nepal, an important member country of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).¹ Recent visit of the Crown Prince of Nepal, Dipendra Bir Shah Dev to Pakistan from February 17 to 22, 1998, has further enabled the two countries to discuss ways and means to enhance cooperation among all SAARC countries and further strengthen multi-faceted ties between Pakistan and Nepal, in particular. During his first ever official visit to Pakistan, arranged on the invitation of the Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the Crown Prince met the President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Defence Secretary and other senior officials. In these meetings, views were exchanged on matters relating to Pak-Nepal as to how to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries, especially in economics, trade, investment, commercial and industrial fields. The discussion also took place in which the ideas were explored how to make the SAARC a more effective organization.

The Crown Prince visited historical places including the Taxila Museum, Mohenjodaro and other historical sites in Punjab. He appreciated rich cultural heritage of Pakistan.

Nepal's Crown Prince Dipendra arrived at Karachi on February 17, 1998 accompanied by Nepal's Minister for Population and Environment Parkash Man Singh and other high ranking officials. He laid a floral wreath at the mausoleum of founding father of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, soon after his arrival.² On February 18, 1998, he along with his entourage, visited 5,000-year old archeological relics at Moenjodaro in Sindh Province before leaving for Islamabad. At his arrival at Mohenjodaro, he was given a warm reception. Two children, clad in traditional Sindhi dress, presented bouquets to the Crown Prince and he also witnessed folk dance at the airport. Thereafter, he along with

his associates visited archeological sites and they were briefed about that ancient pre-historic site. The Crown Prince also made a visit to the museum established at the site and attended a lunch there. Later, he flew back to Karachi along with Sindh Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Saleem Zia who was accompanying him on his visit to Mohenjodaro.³

On February 19, 1998 the Crown Prince of Nepal flew to Islamabad to meet President of Pakistan Muhammad Rafiq Tarar and Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. He was received at the Islamabad Air Port by Foreign Minister Mr. Gohar Ayub Khan and Minister in Waiting Mr. Haleem Siddique. He was presented 21-gun salute on his arrival.⁴ Then the Crown Prince called on the Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at the Prime Minister's House. The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere. The two leaders exchanged views on various issues of bilateral and mutual interests. The Prime Minister welcomed the Nepalese Crown Prince on his first ever official visit to Pakistan and expressed the confidence that his tour would further strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries. He said that the two countries were linked together by cultural and historical affinities and he was looking forward to building "very strong relationship with Nepal."⁵

The two leaders also discussed the prevailing situation in South Asia. Nawaz Sharif underscored Pakistan's commitment to peace and stability in the region, which he said was an essential pre-requisite for the socio-economic well being of its people. The key to peace, progress and prosperity in the region, he said, was the resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute which had bedevilled relations between Pakistan and India for the past 50 years. He further said that his government had initiated a peaceful solution to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN resolutions.⁶ Both the leaders felt that economic and trade relations between Pakistan and Nepal were not commensurate with the excellent political relationship that existed between the two countries. The Crown Prince expressed complete satisfaction over the current state of bilateral relationship which he said reflected the aspirations of the government and the people of the two countries.⁷

Later, the Prime Minister hosted a banquet in honour of the Crown Prince of Nepal. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister of Pakistan said that “the affinities between our two countries are many while we also share a strong commitment to democracy and freedom.” The Prime Minister said that Pakistan was also determined to fulfil the objectives of progress and development and his government had initiated far reaching structural reforms which had begun to yield results. He said that these reforms provided unmatched incentives for foreign and domestic investors. Adding that although there would be no sudden reversals in this regard, but, “continuity in the process will be ensured as we have established an environment for progress and growth and are poised for a take off.”⁸ The Crown Prince of Nepal during the course of his speech said that as the members of the SAARC, which embodied the great vision and foresight of its founding fathers, an additional dimension had been added to Pak-Nepal relationship. He said that Nepal was also “pursuing liberal economic policies which encourage foreign investment,” adding that there were already signs of Pakistan entrepreneurs showing that there was much the two countries could learn from each other in addressing their respective problems. He was confident that his visit to Pakistan would contribute significantly towards further promoting mutual goodwill and strengthening the friendship between the two countries.⁹

Later in the evening, the Crown Prince first visited the *Daman-i-Koh* view-point in Islamabad. The Capital Development Authority had made special arrangement for his visit and had tastefully decorated the area and the route as well.¹⁰ The Crown Prince of Nepal went over to Shakarparian Hills on Thursday evening and planted a *Michelia Champaca* tree to commemorate his visit. He and members of his entourage had a panoramic view of the capital sprawling at the foot of Margalla Hills. He also saw the trees planted by various heads of states and governments at Shakarparian Hills, popularly known as Friendship Hills.¹¹

On February 20, 1998 the Crown Prince of Nepal called on the President Muhammad Rafique Tarar at the President House. Welcoming the Crown Prince, the President underscored the importance that Pakistan

attaches to its relations with Nepal. He expressed the hope that the visit of the Crown Prince would significantly contribute to the strengthening of the bilateral relationship. The President underlined the importance of the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in order to bring peace and stability in the region. He informed the Crown Prince that the King of Nepal His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev was highly respected in Pakistan 'for his statesmanship.' The two countries, the President said, belonged to the same region and share common aspirations. The President also laid stress on expanding economic relations between the two countries.¹² The Crown Prince said that he was greatly impressed by the progress that Pakistan had made in diverse fields, particularly in the field of information technology, in which he pointed out, the two countries could have mutually beneficial cooperation. The meeting was also attended by the Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan, and Minister of State for Water and Power Haleem Siddiqui, who is also Minister in Waiting for Crown Prince of Nepal, Secretary Foreign Affairs, Nepal's Ambassador to Pakistan and other senior official.¹³

Later the Crown Prince of Nepal was briefed by Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan on the salient features of Pakistan's Foreign Policy. The Foreign Minister told the visiting dignitary that the Foreign Policy of Pakistan is based on the internationally recognized forms of inter-state relations. It includes, "sovereign equality of all countries, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states and non-aggression and the peaceful settlement of disputes," "Guided by these principles, he said, Pakistan sought to promote peace and stability in the region and play a positive and constructive role in the community of nations in furthering international understanding, security and prosperity."¹⁴ In his neighbourhood, the Foreign Minister said, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had taken the initiative to resume the dialogue with India in a bid to resolve the outstanding issues between the two countries. These include the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir whose resolution was an essential prerequisite, for peace and stability in the region, which in turn would give a tremendous impetus to regional economic cooperation as envisaged under SAARC. The Foreign Minister also emphasized that

“Pakistan had also a vital interest in bringing an end to the turmoil in Afghanistan and towards this end had launched a peace initiative which had been welcomed by all Afghan parties as well as the UN, OIC and regional countries. The Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan also informed the Crown Prince that Pakistan was a strong proponent of nuclear non-proliferation and was supportive to any regime as long as it is equitable and non-discriminatory. Pakistan, the Foreign Minister pointed out, had made a number of proposals with regard to non-proliferation, including the establishment of a NWFZ in South Asia. Regrettably India's response to these proposals had been negative. The Crown Prince was also briefed on Pakistan's relations with neighbouring Iran, China and the Central Asian Republics as well as the United States and Russia. The Foreign Minister also briefed the Crown Prince on the increasing importance that Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is assigning to economic reform and growth and as natural corollary to the strengthening of economic ties with foreign countries. The economic dimensions of Pakistan's Foreign Policy had thus become markedly pronounced. The briefing was rounded off with a review of Pakistan-Nepal relations.¹⁵

On February 21, 1998 Crown Prince of Nepal called on Defence Secretary Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Iftikhar Ali Khan. Welcoming the Crown Prince to the Ministry of Defence, the Defense Secretary said that Pakistan and Nepal enjoyed excellent relations and “are cooperating closely at the regional and international fora for the promotion of peace and economic development.” He expressed the hope that the visit of the Crown Prince would further cement economic and political ties between the two countries. He also apprised the distinguished guest that Pakistan would always be prepared to extend its facilities to Nepal. The Crown Prince of Nepal thanked Pakistan for allocating seats to Nepalese armed forces personnel in various defense related training institutions.¹⁶

Nepalese Crown Prince arrived in the provincial capital Lahore, on the last leg of his tour on Sunday 22nd February, 1998. A warm welcome was accorded to the Crown Prince on his arrival at the Lahore Airport. He was received by Punjab Governor Shahid Hamid and Chief Secretary Pervaiz Masoud. Two children presented bouquets to him.

Later, the Crown Prince visited the *Mazar* of Allama Muhammad Iqbal where he placed floral wreath to pay homage to the great poet. Then he visited the famous Badshahi Masjid and the Lahore Fort. The distinguished guest and his entourage also visited various sections of the Lahore Museum, including the Ghandhara Art Gallery, coins section, miniature painting and arts and crafts section. Later, the Crown Prince drove to see a part of the motorway and termed it the 'eighth wonder' of the world.¹⁷ The distinguished guests left for Nepal on Monday 23rd February, 1998.

Visits like these are of immense significance. The personal touches are given to the official relations. Bridges of understandings are built. The warmth is added to the existing ties and new vistas are opened to build more solid understanding. Mutual good-will is strengthened. Even the SAARC's importance was high-lighted. This visit of the Crown Prince was indeed a marked success for both the countries.

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Modern State and the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1972

M. HABIBUR RAHMAN

INTRODUCTION

At present the concept of state based on defined territory, population, government, independence and sovereignty is not limited. Nevertheless, fusion and defusion of state and religion cannot be treated unquestioned. Confusion on such matters is still going on. The purpose of the paper is to deal with the emergence of modern state bringing out its foundations and objectives along with concomitant events so far occurred. The study will make out spirits of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1972 commensurable with the urges of modern state.

EVOLUTIONARY BACKGROUND

The background of evolution of state to its present phase is of a long-standing historical interest. Without being acquainted with the earlier position to the ongoing stage of state, an attempt on modern state will be an inadequate deal and as such, needs arise to highlight to this end.

Earlier Phase

The existence of nations such as the Jews, Greeks and Romans is of antiquity. Each nation had its own religion and gods, its own language, law and morality. The reality of Greek city states and later Rome's dominance of the ancient world cannot be encountered. The Greeks before the Macedonian conquest were never united into one powerful national state. They lived in numerous more or less small city states, which were totally independent of one another.¹

The Roman Empire gradually absorbed nearly the whole civilized world, so far it was known to the Romans. They hardly knew of any independent civilized states outside the borders of their Empire. It is true that at the borders of this world Empire there were always wars but these wars gave opportunity for the practice of a few rules and usages only. And matters did not change when under Constantine the Great (306-337 A.D.) the Christian faith became the religion of the Empire, and, further, when in 395 A.D. the Roman Empire was divided into the Eastern and the Western Empires.

The Western Empire disappeared in 476 A. D., when Romulus Augustine the last Emperor, was deposed by Odoacer, the leader of the Germanic soldiers, who made himself ruler in Italy. The land of the extinct Western Roman Empire passed into the hands of different peoples, chiefly of Germanic extraction. In Gallia the kingdom of the Franks sprang up in 486 A. D. under Chlodovech the Merovingian. In Italy the kingdom of the Ostrogoths under Theoderic the Great, who defeated Odoacer, rose in 493 A.D. In Spain the kingdom of Visigoths appeared in 456 A.D. The Vandals had, as early as 429 A.D. erected a kingdom in Africa, with Carthage as its capital. The Saxons had already gained a footing in Britannia in 449 A.D.

All these peoples were Barbarians in the strict sense of the term. Although they had adopted Christianity, it took hundreds of years for raising them to the standard of more advanced civilized people. And, likewise, hundreds of years passed before different nations emerged out of the amalgamation of the various peoples that had conquered the old Roman Empire with the residuum of the population of that Empire. It was in the eighth century that matters became more settled. Charlemagne built up his vast Frankish Empire and, in 800 A.D. he was crowned Roman Emperor by Pope Lee III. Again, the whole world seemed to be one empire, headed by Emperor as its temporal and by the Pope as its spiritual master. But the Frankish Empire did not last long. According

to the Treaty of Verdum it was, in 843 A.D. divided into three parts and with that division the process of development set in, which led gradually to the rise of the several states of Empire.

In theory, the Emperor of the Germans remained for hundreds of years to come the master of the world; but in practice he was not even master at home, as the German Princes, step by step succeeded in establishing their independence. And although, theoretically, the world was well looked after by the Emperor as its temporal and the Pope as its spiritual head, there were constantly treachery, quarrelling, and fighting going on. The practice in war was the most cruel possible. It is true that the Pope and the Bishops succeeded on occasions in mitigating such practice, but as a rule there was no influence of the Christian teaching visible.²

After the arrival of the Normans in 1066 we find a great change. The Norman Kings possessed orderly minds and were efficient administrators. They unified the kingdom, administered the local English customs and taxes and introduced feudalism. Under this system the King made grants of land to his nobles and followers in return for a promise of allegiance, offered active help in time of war and the payment of feudal dues. The nobles who held, their land, directly from the King also made subgrants of land to their tenants, again in return for allegiance and the payment of feudal dues. The lord on his part promised protection and justice. William I went further and ordained that all land holders owed a duty of allegiance to him as King. This quantified the immediate allegiance, which a land holder owed to his immediate overlord. Thus loyalty to the King was the supreme and universal duty of all English freemen (or freed elders, as they were called). This form of feudalism introduced from the continent made for greater unity and cohesion within the kingdom.³

Medieval Phase

Medieval history relates to period from 5th to 15th centuries. Frederic III, the last of the Emperor of the Germans from 1440 to 1493 was crowned in Rome by the Popes. At that time Europe was, in fact, divided into a great number of independent states.

The Hundred Years' War (1337 – 1453) resulted in the possession of French territory by English Kings from the days of the conquest onward was a frequent cause of Angle-French conflicts, but the series of wars known as the Hundred Years' War was not continuous. This time is 1453 the Turks had victory over the Roman Byzantium Kingdom. Such defeat of the Roman Kingdom gave rise to Renaissance and Reformation particularly effective in 1520 – 1620. The Renaissance of science and art in the fifteenth century, together with the resurrection of the knowledge of antiquity, revived the philosophical and aesthetical ideals of Greek life and transferred them to modern life through their influence the spirit of the Christian religion took precedence of its letter. The conviction arose that the principles of Christianity ought to unite the Christian world more than they had done hitherto, and that these principles ought to be observed in matters international as such as in matters national. The Reformation on the other hand, put an end to the spiritual mastership of the Pope over the civilized world. Protestant states could not recognize the claim of the Pope to arbitrate as of right in their conflicts either between one another or between themselves and Catholic states.⁴

Importantly, profound alterations occurred in the fifteenth and sixteenth countries. The discovery of the New World the Renaissance of learning, and the Reformation as a religious revolution disrupted the facade of the political and spiritual unity of Europe, and shook the foundations of the medieval Christendom. Theories were evolved to meet the new conditions, intellectually, the secular conceptions of a modern sovereign state and of a modern independent sovereign found expression in the works of scholars of different nationalities.⁵

In the early period the expression of the trade played a decisive role. It created a need for better police protection and security in transportation and communication. The story of these activities is a long and complicated one, but there is little disagreement concerning the fundamental facts as revealed in the mounting trade figures in Venice, Florence, Antwerp, London, Frankfurt, and many other centers of urban progress. The citizens of London and Paris as well as the imperial cities of Germany were on the whole, willing supporters of the princely overlord against local feudal barons, regarding him as the likeliest guarantor of the public peace. But in Italy, where the development of trade was perhaps most marked, the cities did not support such a central head, these cities, in fact, offered the most violent opposition to imperial as well as papal pretensions. Here traders preferred to rely upon the growing power of their own city. This led to incessant warfare between the cities, which eventually, in the age of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469 – 1527), brought foreign intervention and subjugation. It was the success of the Northern monarchs in integrating and pacifying their kingdoms, which in part inspired Machiavelli's ardent concern with Italian unification. In the Europe north of the Alps, by increasing the security of commercial intercourse, these political developments provided a fertile field for the expansion of trade activities as if between sovereign states.

Sovereignty as first considered by Louis XI (1461 – 1483) the founder of French absolutism means the absolute and perpetual powers within a state. Henry VIII (1509 – 1547) of England is similarly ranked as the most absolute of Monarchs. It is difficult to single out Louis XI and Henry VIII as the founder. Bodin (French) in his *De La Republique* (1576) expressed sovereignty perpetual and absolute safe and except the "Commandments of God" the "Law of Nature."⁶

Modern Phase

The evolution of modern state system was a process greatly influenced by the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) making the end of Thirty Years' War. It started as a quarrel between the Catholic and Protestant

states: developed into a struggle for supremacy in Europe between Hapsburg Empire and France. The principle of religious independence was secured and Switzerland was recognized as an independent state. France in Bodin's time, had been rent by faction and civil war, and he was convinced that the cause of her miseries was the lack of a government strong enough to curb the subversive influences of feudal rivalries and religious intolerance, and that the best way was to strengthen the French monarchy. He saw, too, that a process of this kind was actually taking place in his own day throughout western Europe; unified states were emerging out of the loosely compacted states of medieval times, and the central authority was everywhere taking the form of a strong personal monarchy supreme over all rival claimants to power secular or ecclesiastical.

The essential manifestation of sovereignty, Bodin thought is to make the laws and since the sovereign makes the laws, he clearly cannot be bound by the laws that he makes. However, Bodin went on to say that the sovereign is not a *potestas legibus Omnibus soluta*; there are some laws that do bind him, the divine law, the law of nature or reason, the law that is common to all nations, and also certain laws which he calls the *legis imperii*, the law of the government. These *legis imperii* which the sovereign does not make and cannot abrogate, are the fundamental laws of the state, and in particular they include the laws which determine in whom the sovereign power itself is to be vested, we should call them the laws of the constitution.

As regards state and its sovereignty the development reached its culmination in the *Leviathan* (1651) of Thomas Hobbes (English) and it is interesting to note that Hobbes, like Bodin, was writing with his eyes on the events of his time; for he, too, had seen a civil war (English Civil War 1642 – 1649), and for him, as for Bodin, sovereignty was the essential principle of order. Hobbes believed that men need for their security "a common power to keep them in awe and to direct their

actions to the common benefit.” and for him the person or body in whom this power resides, however, it may have been acquired, is the sovereign. Law neither makes the sovereign, nor limits his authority; it is might that makes the sovereign, and law is merely what he commands. Moreover, since the power that is the strongest clearly cannot be limited by any thing outside itself, it follows that sovereignty must be absolute and illimitable; that means, the sovereign power is as great as possibly much can be imagined to make it. This, of course, called totalitarianism pure and simple. Hobbes, in fine, ascertains to have cherished sovereignty being absolute, had a right over everything even over religion.

Whereas a good many writers followed Hobbes, others, especially the founder of the naturalist school of international law, Samuel Pufendorf (German) in his *De Jure Natural et Gentium* (1672) denied in contradistinction to Hobbes, that sovereignty involves omnipotence. According to Pufendorf, sovereignty is the supreme power in a state but not absolute power, and sovereignty may well be constitutionally restricted.⁸

With the coming of constitutional government John Locke (English) in his *Treatise of Civil Government* (1690) propounded a theory that the people as a whole have the sovereignty; and in spite of all the differences in the definition of sovereignty, all the authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries agree that sovereignty is indivisible.⁹

In the eighteenth century matters changed again. Several hundred reigning princes of the member states of the German Empire had in practice although not theoretically, become more or less independent since the Westphalia Peace enforced upon writers the necessity of recognizing a distinction between an absolute, perfect, full sovereignty, on the one hand, and, on the other, a relative, imperfect, not full or half sovereignty. Absolute and full sovereignty was attributed to those monarchs who enjoyed an unqualified independence within and without

their states. Relative and not full sovereignty, was attributed to those monarchs who were, in various points of internal or foreign affairs of state, more or less depended upon other monarchs. By this distinction the divisibility of sovereignty was recognized. And when in 1787 the United States of America turned from a Confederation of states into a Federal state, the division of sovereignty between the sovereign Federal state and the sovereign member states became prominent in political theory. But the divisibility of sovereignty was not universally recognized in the eighteenth century. It suffices to mention Jean-Jacques Rousseau (French) whose *Contract Social* appeared in 1762 and who again defended the indivisibility of sovereignty.¹⁰

Lock, and after him Rousseau propounded the theory that the people as a whole were the sovereign, and in the eighteenth century this became the doctrine which was held to justify the slogan, as a protest against arbitrary government and a demand that government should serve the interests of the governed and not only of the governors, the doctrine of popular sovereignty has had beneficent results, but as a scientific doctrine it rests on a confusion of thought. It tries to combine two contradictory ideas: that of absolute power somewhere in the state, and that of responsibility of every actual holder of power for the use of which he puts it.¹¹

During the nineteenth century the old controversy regarding divisibility of sovereignty had by no means died out. It acquired a fresh stimulus, on the one hand, through Switzerland and Germany turning into federal states, and on the other, through the conflict between the United States of America and her Southern member states. The theory of the concurrent sovereignty of the federal state and its member states, as defended by *The Federalist* (Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay) in 1787, was in Germany taken up by Waitz, who found many followers. The theory of the indivisibility of sovereignty was defended by Calhoun, and many European writers followed him in time.¹²

It is noticeable that as statehood developed international law and relation gained momentum in the sense that states fell to constitute doctrinal principles to be related with one another on the basis of *pacta sunt servanda* effectuating through consent common to each other. The modern law of nations, e.g., international law is a product of Christian civilization. It originally arose between the states of Christendom only, and for hundreds of years was confined to these states. Between Christian and Muhammedan nations a conditions of perpetual enmity prevailed in former centuries. And no constant intercourse existed in former times between Christian and Buddistic states. But from about the beginning of the nineteenth century matters gradually changed. Many interest which knit Christian states together, knit likewise some non-Christian and Christian states.¹³

The old Christian states of western Europe were the original members of the Family of Nations, because the Law of Nations grew up gradually between them through custom and treaties. Whenever afterwards a new Christian state made appearance in Europe, it was received into the existing society by the old members of the Family of Nations. It is for this reason that this law was in former times frequently called "European Law of Nations." But this name has nowadays historical value only, as it has been changed into "Law of Nations" or "International Law" pure and simple.

The Congress of Vienna, 1815 by far first time incorporated principles of the Law of Nations. But in fact International Law until this time was limited to the Christian states – so called civilized nations. However, the Peace Treaty of Paris of 1856 gave rise to all independent and sovereign states to be members of the family of nations. Discrimination of states on the criterion of religion since this treaty ceased. Specifically mentioning, with the reception of Turkey into the Family of Nations in 1856 International Law ceased to be a law between Christian states only.

SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS

Volume 14 No. 1

Articles

- Population, Aging in Bangladesh and its Perspectives

Md. Ripter Hossain

- SAARC Economic Union by 2008

Dr. Khawaja Amjad Saeed

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Nadeem Shafiq Malik

- Modern State and the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1972

M. Habibur Rahman

- Book Review
- Statements — SAARC
- Select Bibliography
- Chronology

JANUARY 1997

SOUTH ASIA STUDIES

RAFIQ AHMAD

Editor

South Asian Studies seeks to provide a forum for discussion of issues and problems primarily relating to South Asia. We welcome contributions by researchers, administrators, policy makers and all other interested in promoting better understanding of South Asian Affairs.

Published bi-annually by the Centre for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Quaid-i-Azam Campus, Lahore, Pakistan.

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Pakistan	: Annual	Rs. 175.00
	Single Copy	Rs. 100.00
Foreign	: Annual	U.S. \$ 70.00
	Single Copy	U.s. \$ 36.00
Pakistan	: Annual	Rs. 165.00
	Single Copy	Rs. 95.00
Foreign	: Annual	U.S. \$ 65.00
	Single Copy	U.s. \$ 33.00

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ISSN 1026 – 678 X

SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

Volume 14, No. 1

JANUARY 1997



Centre for South Asian Studies
UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB
QUAID-I-AZAM CAMPUS, LAHORE
PAKISTAN
(Published 1999)

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January 1997

Articles

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|--|
| Md. Ripter Hossain | 1 | Population Aging in Bangladesh and its Perspectives |
| Dr. Khawaja Amjad Saeed | 17 | SAARC Economic Union by 2008 |
| Khandaker M. Shariful Islam | 27 | State Policies and the Status of Women : A Comparative Assessment of India and China |
| Nadeem Shafiq Malik | 39 | Crown Prince of Nepal's Visit to Pakistan : An Over View |
| M. Habibur Rahman | 45 | Modern State and the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1972 |
| | 63 | Book Review |
| | 65 | Statements
South Asian Regional Co-operation
July to December 1996 |
| | 123 | A Select Bibliography of Books and Periodical Literature on South Asia and SAARC
July to December 1996 |
| | 141 | Chronology of Important Events South Asian Region
July to December 1996 |

Population Aging in Bangladesh and its Perspectives

MD. RIPTER HOSSAIN

Abstract

The last few decades bear witness to the tremendous changes in population structure, particularly age and sex structure, traditional socio-cultural values, specially filial piety. Among these changes two significant evolutionary processes—population aging and break-down of traditional patterns of family life, have drawn apt attention of social scientists following the declining trend in mortality and fertility levels.

In this piece of work the evolutionary process of population aging in Bangladesh examined by analyzing proportion of the aged population, life expectancy of the aged, total age structure, mortality patterns of the aged and by computing aging indices. It is revealed that there will be remarkable increase in the aged population of Bangladesh from the beginning of the next century and by the year 2030 the country will have to bear the aged population of 11.5 million. The aging indices also reflect the sex differential in aging, clearly indicating the need for special attention towards our female sect. Finally some policy measures are recommended.

INTRODUCTION

The elderly people comprise a much larger proportion of the population today than ever before. When the medical science was in its infant stage fertility and mortality rates were high, the relative size of an aging population was small. The rapid and faster technological progress in medical sciences control the fertility and mortality rates considerably, and the average composition exhibits a relatively large proportion of elderly persons.

The old age segment in the population represents an important subset of the aggregate population and the elderly as a separate and identifiable group with their own specific needs has emerged as an issue quite recently. Our empirical knowledge about the sub-population in the developing countries is however limited till now. But even for these countries we know the size of the elderly population has increased significantly in absolute terms.

In Bangladesh changes in the population structure, specially population aging and break down of traditional family life are of concern for the social scientists as well as for the governments and family members. Further the elderly persons of Bangladesh will have to be economically more independent in future to cope with the old age problems.

The process of aging in Bangladesh now taking place in such a time when pattern of life is changing ; kinship bonds are weakening and the family composition is undergoing in a rapid transformation.

The present study focuses on the phenomenon of aging in Bangladesh. It examines the state of the aged population, changes in this sub-population in respect of size, composition and distribution, and the determinants and implications of the process. Judged against any standard old-age scale, Bangladesh population is still demographically young, since the demographic factors causing changes in age structure have rather been weak so far.

The demographic transition has far reaching consequences not only on the structure of Bangladesh's population but also on the country's overall well being. But this being a recent phenomenon, the effect might not be felt immediately. Nevertheless, there is a need to explore the aging situation of the country for its future perspectives and implications. Issues relating to the aging situation should get due attention not only from demographic angle but it also acquires special significance in a situation when the country swings at different levels on the continuum of tradition and modernity (Randhawa, 1991).

DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

The data used and analyzed in this piece of work comes from "The sex and age distribution of World population-1994, United Nations" and "The National census series."

The cross classified categorical data analysis are performed using elderly population by the age group and the variables life expectancy, broad age structure, structure ratios and mortality rates.

The most popular traditional measures of the extent of aging consist of identifying a critical level of age above which a person will be considered as 'aged' and then finding the proportion that is 'aged.' As shown by Basu (1987), a family of poverty measures in economics offers ideas for developing an index which captures the underlying notion of aging.

The conventional aging index is defined as :

$$Z(p) = \frac{m(p)}{n(p)}$$

Where $n(p)$ is the number of people in a population 'p' and $m(p)$ is the number of people aged 60 and over.

By analogy with the "Income cap" measure, another indicator, called the "age-difference Index" is given as :

$$I(p) = \frac{1}{m(p)} \sum_{i=1}^{m(p)} \left(\frac{p_i - 60}{60} \right)$$

Where p_i is the age(sixty plus) of the i th person. Since the index $I(p)$ is concerned only with the extent of oldness among the old, a good measure of aging is derived by some kind of reconciliation of $Z(p)$ and $I(p)$. The improved index is defined as :

$$P(p) = \frac{1}{n(p)} \sum_{i=1}^{m(p)} \left(\frac{p_i - 60}{60} \right)^2 = \frac{1}{n(p)} \sum_{i=1}^{m(p)} \left(\frac{p_i}{60} - 1 \right)^2$$

Further a general index of aging I_r as constructed by Satya R. Chakravarty and Sumita Chakravarty (1993) is used to indicate the differential impact of variables on aging.

$$I_r = \frac{q}{n} \left[\frac{1}{q} \sum_{i=1}^q \left(\frac{y_i}{g} - 1 \right) \right]^r$$

Where, q is the number of old persons

n is the total population

y_i is the age of the i th person

g is the cut of point for old age which is 60 years in our study

r is the non-negative constant.

When $r = 0$ then I_0 is simply the head count ratio H . The term within third brackets measures how old the old are. I_0 does not indicate how old the old are and does not satisfy the properties continuity and monotonicity.

The index I_r possesses the properties Continuity, Monotonicity in old age line for all $r > 0$ and the index meets the properties Focus, Symmetry, Normalization, Principle of population and Additive decomposability for all permissible values for r .

FIXING AGE BOUNDARY FOR ELDERLY

The definition of old age is very much dependent on its use in a particular context. Thus old age is often determined on the criterion of retirement from the labour market. The way of fixing the entry into old age ignores that a large number of women has not been in the gainful occupation and the age of retirement varies not only between countries but also between public and private sectors within a country. Further, majority of the working-age population is engaged in the unorganized sector in which there is no formal age of retirement.

Old age has typically been fixed in terms of years birth, usually an arbitrary fixed number of years. An alternative concept is linked to level of longevity. Progress in longevity has also been measured traditionally in terms of years from birth. A very different concept of old age being advanced is based on the average number of years until death (Ryder, 1975 and Jackson, 1980).

The demographer commonly uses simple chronological designations to define the bounds of old age corresponding to those ages cited in the principal legislation affecting older persons. These may be 60,62,65,or 72. Then there are other bounds for young of age, middle-old age, old-old age, and frail old (Neugarten, 1974).

Cultural definitions of old age vary according to the longevity of a population, the proportion of persons in the old ages, and the degree to which persons at different ages are engaged in useful activities. In these terms, a redefinition of old age is now occurring in the United States.

Going by the criterion of self-identification of one being aged may lead to different cut-off points even within a culture. Developing societies commonly recognize that a person attaining age 60 has become old. The United Nations, on the other hand, considers the beginning of old age at 65 years. Quite obviously, developing countries differ from developed countries in consideration of what constitutes old age. For convenience of standardized comparisons, the threshold of demographic old age is usually considered at 60 or 65 years, but no sex differential of the lower bounds is generally made.

For Bangladesh the life expectancy at ages 60, 65, and 70 are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Life Expectancy at Ages 60, 65 and 70 for Bangladesh : 1974 - 1994

Period	e^o_{60}		e^o_{65}		e^o_{70}	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1974	14.4	14.1	11.6	11.3	9.1	8.8
1981	14.7	16.0	11.7	13.1	9.0	10.4
1983	15.8	15.9	13.0	12.7	9.5	9.6
1986	14.1	14.8	11.0	11.2	8.9	8.4
1987	15.5	15.8	12.2	12.0	9.6	8.8
1990	15.2	14.8	12.3	11.7	10.0	8.9
1991	14.8	15.3	11.8	11.9	9.6	9.2
1993	14.6	14.6	11.7	11.4	8.9	8.3
1994	15.2	15.0	12.0	11.9	9.1	8.6

Source : 1980-81, 1982, 1983-84, 1987, 1992, 1993, 1995. *Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh*. BBS, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Further the proportion of population at these higher ages is still very low as shown in Table 2. It turns out that the basis for fixing age boundary for the elderly should not be a single criterion like $e^o_x=10$ or specified proportion of people at certain higher age, etc. A sound approach seems to be the consideration of a combination of the above two criteria. To this we should add that however low the extent of aging for any country for any period, the lower age should not be less than 60

years. With the current demographic background and the above criteria, however, age 60 is fixed as a boundary point for elderly in Bangladesh.

TABLE 2
**Percentage of Population at Ages 60+,65+ and 70+for Bangladesh
 1950 – 2030**

Year	Male			Female		
	60+	65+	70+	60+	65+	70+
1950	6.07	3.37	1.62	6.19	3.85	2.12
1960	6.51	3.86	1.94	5.78	3.56	1.97
1970	6.50	3.74	2.16	5.60	3.54	2.11
1980	5.19	3.38	1.95	5.37	3.51	1.96
1990	4.46	2.83	1.67	4.92	3.17	1.86
2000	4.77	3.05	1.75	5.29	3.31	1.87
2010	5.55	3.50	2.03	6.14	3.95	2.29
2020	7.54	4.51	2.61	8.05	5.08	2.96
2030	10.72	6.75	3.85	11.44	7.28	4.28

Source : *The Sex and Age Distribution of World Populations, the 1994 Revision*, United Nations, New York, p.178-179.

FUTURE TREND IN AGE STRUCTURE

The present trends in the components of growth of the population are the determinants of age structure in the future. The prospective trend in broad age-structure of Bangladesh is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3
 Prospective Trend in Broad Age-Structure of Bangladesh
 Population 1950, 1980-2030

Population in Million

Year	Male			Female		
	0-14	15-59	60+	0-14	15-59	60+
1950	7.9	13.0	1.4	7.8	10.4	1.2
1980	21.0	22.1	2.3	19.5	20.8	2.3
1990	23.5	29.7	2.6	21.7	28.0	2.6
2000	25.6	40.3	3.4	24.2	37.5	3.4
2010	27.7	51.3	4.7	26.2	47.9	4.8
2020	25.2	62.8	4.7	26.2	58.9	7.3
2030	24.2	70.5	7.2	23.8	66.4	11.5

Source : *The Sex and Age Distribution of World Populations, the 1994 Revision*. United Nations, New York, p.178-179.

Table 3 shows a consistent increase in the proportion aged 60+ compared to the population those of young and adult age-groups since 1950. This has clearly been indicated that the old population of Bangladesh is going to increase gradually up to year 2000 and then remarkably increase between the decades 2010 to 2020 and 2020 to 2030.

Among the other indicators used to show the process of population aging: mention may be made of the several population structure ratios such as the proportions of working age population in relation to children, aged, and all dependents. Another index is considered to show that with increase in the number of old people, the oldness of the old will also increase. The Table 4 shows the trends of some population structure ratios for Bangladesh : 1950, 1980-2025 for both males and females.

TABLE 4

**Trends of some Population Structure Ratios
for Bangladesh : 1950, 1980 –2030**

Year	15-59/<15		15-59/60+		15-59/<15+60+		60-69/80+	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1950	1.66	1.33	9.57	8.66	1.41	1.16	19.8	16.00
1980	1.05	1.07	9.36	9.09	0.95	0.96	11.3	11.00
1990	1.26	1.30	11.30	10.87	1.14	1.15	7.23	8.03
2000	1.57	1.55	11.98	10.88	1.39	1.36	7.81	8.50
2010	1.86	1.83	11.06	9.89	1.59	1.55	7.88	8.27
2020	2.50	2.48	8.76	8.10	1.94	1.89	8.29	7.59
2030	2.91	2.90	6.18	5.77	1.98	1.93	8.28	7.42

Source : *The Sex and Age Distribution of World Populations*, The 1994 Revision, United Nations, New York, p.179-179.

If the basic sex-structures of the population from which the indices have been derived are at least approximately accurate, the population can be considered to be heading towards high degree of aging, The direction of change of the first two indicators in Table 4 is expectedly just opposite, and indicated convincingly the decline in children and concomitant increase in the elderly. The third indicator is, in fact, the reciprocal of the conventional dependency ratio, and will maintain an increasing trend so long as the decrease in 0-14 ages population out numbers the increase in the 'aged population.' The last index 60-69/80+ considered here is of special interest is the oldest old age ratios. The oldest old ratios shows increasing trend.

MORTALITY PATTERNS AND TRENDS FOR THE ELDERLY

The mortality rates for persons in the old-age are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Mortality Rates for Persons in the Old – Age Ranges for Bangladesh : 1984, 1994

Age Group	CRL 1984		CRL 1994	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
60-64	38.2	28.1	34.5	22.6
65-69	70.0	51.1	66.4	41.6
70-74	76.4	67.5	94.0	61.9
75+	147.1	122.4	154.2	120.4

Source : *Demographic Surveillance System-Matlab, Scientific Report No.-67, 77, ICDDR,B, Dhaka, Bangladesh.*

The data collected by CRI from Demographic Surveillance System, though not representative of the country as a whole, give insight into the patterns of mortality by age and sex. With the passage of time death rates for both the sexes of the aged shows decreasing trend which indicates increasing number of aged in Bangladesh.

AGING INDEX

Based on the Index, the trend in population aging in Bangladesh is illustrated with reference to sex-age distributions of the population estimated by the United Nations, 1994. The data used as the input for the index are presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6
 Estimated sex-age Distribution of Population of Bangladesh in the
 old age Range : 1950, 1980--2030 (Population in 000)

Age Group	1950	1980	Male				
			1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Total	22227	45492	58785	69305	83713	95220	106061
60-64	600	822	958	1251	1718	2882	4209
65-69	390	654	685	904	1237	1812	3076
70-74	215	466	463	592	829	1200	2094
75-79	105	288	292	341	490	719	1111
80+	50	131	226	276	375	566	880
60 and over	1350	2361	2624	3364	4649	7179	11370
Female							
Total	19556	42729	52333	65113	78787	89970	100893
60-64	457	796	921	1291	1725	2672	4195
65-69	340	662	685	935	1310	1902	3036
70-74	230	447	467	600	902	1280	2077
75-79	134	267	304	356	533	812	1262
80+	50	122	200	262	367	604	975
60 and over	1211	2294	2577	3444	4837	7240	11545

Source : *The Sex and Age Distribution of World Populations, the 1994 Revision*, United Nations, New York, p.178-179.

The conventional aging Index, $Z(p)$, and the Improved Index $P(p)$ are presented in Table 7

TABLE 7
 Expected Trend in Aging of Population according to Two Indicators
 for Bangladesh : 1950, 1980--2030

Year	Improve $P(p) \times 100$		%Change of $P(p)$		$Z(p) \times 100$		% Change of $Z(p)$	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1950	0.53	0.39	-	-	6.12	6.19	-	-
1980	0.71	0.72	33.96	82.62	5.19	5.37	-15.2	-13.3
1990	0.72	0.73	1.41	1.39	4.70	4.93	-9.5	-8.2
2000	1.02	1.15	41.67	57.53	4.85	5.29	3.2	7.3
2010	1.66	1.89	62.75	64.35	5.55	6.14	14.4	16.1
2020	3.80	3.88	128.92	105.29	7.54	8.08	35.9	31.6
2030	8.44	8.89	122.11	129.12	10.72	11.44	42.2	41.58

Source : Computed from Table 6. For description of the indicators, see text.

While both indicators reveal a clear trend towards further aging in Bangladesh, well into the next century, the $P(p)$ Index seems to be more sensitive, and registers a steeper and larger increase compared to the conventional index, $Z(p)$. The sex differential in aging is also brought out more sharply by the new index than does the traditional index.

Using age data of Bangladesh for the year 1950, 1980-2030 the general index I_r for $r = 0, 1, 2, 3$ are computed by dividing the entire population by sex (Male and Female). The numerical results are presented in Table 8. The decomposition of the population with respect to a characteristic is given in the first row, the second column gives the proportion of the total population in different subgroups. Numerical values of I_r for $r = 0, 1, 2, 3$ are given in columns 3-10.

We note from Table 8 the contribution of males towards the aging is more pronounced than the females which indicates that males live longer than females in Bangladesh. Further the percentage contribution of males and females for different values of the parameter do not differ significantly. However, we note that approximately 55 per cent contribution to total aging comes from male population. The contribution to the total aging by the female population is approximately 45 per cent. It is to be mentioned that the contribution made by the males to total aging is monotonically decreasing in r . But the contribution made by the female population to the total aging in Bangladesh is monotonically increasing in r .

From the comparison of differential impact of sex on aging it is revealed that males contribution to aging is much more pronounced than that of female for Bangladesh whereas in India differential sex impact in aging is not notable as noted by Chakravarty. This clearly indicates that males survive more in Bangladesh than females. Under age marriages, malnutrition, more birth, social inadvancement are the factors might be related to the sex differential in aging pattern in Bangladesh.

TABLE 8

Measures of Aging for the Population in Bangladesh
by sex : 1950, 1980, 2030

Year	Proportion of all Bangladesh Population	Male					Female				
		I_0	I_1	I_2	I_3	Proportion of all Bangladesh Population	I_0	I_1	I_2	I_3	
1950	0.53196	.00023	.00077	.0053	0.0418	0.046804	.00025	.00078	.0039	0.0213	
1980	0.51566	.00011	.00072	.0071	0.0744	0.48434	.00012	.00077	.0072	0.0741	
1990	0.51596	.00009	.00066	.0072	0.0828	0.48404	.00009	.00072	.0073	0.0856	
2000	0.51515	.00007	.00074	.0112	0.1882	0.48441	.00008	.00081	.0115	0.1939	
2010	0.51515	.00006	.00087	.0176	0.3935	0.48485	.00007	.00096	.0189	0.4189	
2020	0.51417	.00005	.00121	.0380	1.4464	0.48583	.00006	.00129	.0388	1.3655	
2030	0.51248	.00004	.00188	.0844	4.7572	0.48752	.00005	.00254	0.889	4.9451	
Percentage of Index											
		I_0	I_1	I_2	I_3		I_0	I_1	I_2	I_3	
1950		47.92	49.68	57.61	66.24		52.08	50.32	42.39	33.76	
1980		47.83	49.66	49.67	50.10		52.17	50.33	50.35	49.90	
1990		47.05	47.83	49.66	49.69		52.95	52.17	50.35	50.31	
2000		46.67	47.74	49.34	49.35		53.33	52.26	50.66	50.65	
2010		46.16	47.54	48.22	48.75		53.84	52.46	51.78	51.25	
2020		45.45	48.40	49.48	51.42		54.55	51.60	50.52	48.58	
2030		44.44	48.50	49.75	51.23		55.56	51.50	50.25	48.77	

Source : Computed from Table 6.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF AGING

The last few decades bear witness to the tremendous changes in population structure, particularly age and sex structure, traditional socio-cultural values, specially filial piety. These changes can be traced back to the rapid rate of urbanization, industrialization, and modernization. Among these changes two significant evolutionary processes—population aging and break-down of traditional patterns of family life, have drawn apt attention of social scientists following the declining trend in mortality and fertility levels.

The process of aging in Bangladesh now taking place in such a time when pattern of life is changing, kinship bonds are weakening and the family composition is undergoing a rapid transformation. But with rapid increase of elderly in their number and under the condition of changing family pattern, the elderly population already seems to be experiencing difficulties.

From the analysis of the sex differential in aging in Bangladesh it is concluded that more care are to be taken for females so that socio-economic deprivation in any respect is removed for females. Hence recent steps taken by the government of Bangladesh paying more important role to the upliftment of the socio-economic condition of the females are timely. Specially free education upto secondary levels, pensions for the widows till death, involvement of the destitute in food for works. etc., are to be channeled properly by the government and the NGO's.

The rapid growth of the aged population in Bangladesh in the next century raises a major policy issue about the funding of health services. Efforts is to be made to redesign medical and health facilities.

The aged population are the respected senior citizens of a country, their needs and demands are different from other segment of the population. There is a need for government policies with respect to senior citizens of the country. In order to facilitate employment of the elderly it is necessary to set up organizations which can provide resource information on talent pool of aged persons (60+) for the purpose so that the elderly are able to do what they can for the society and the future generations.

Besides the government will have to establish a National Council/ Institute which deal with the welfare of the aged. A national policy for the aged has to be framed in such manner that it includes all social security measures.

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SAARC Economic Union by 2008

Dr. KHAWAJA AMJAD SAEED

PRELUDE

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was set up in the 1980s. Since then productive meetings were held to develop ideas. This unique forum has brought home several messages of goodwill, peace and tranquility in the region. On several occasions, heads of states of all SAARC countries have met and agreed on several issues of mutual interest. This platform has enabled sharing of thoughts, exchange of ideas and creation of awareness regarding innovative initiatives to be taken for achieving the objectives of SAARC in the light of founding principles laid down for SAARC. Hopefully these initiatives will continue in future so that efforts are solidly undertaken for alleviating poverty, accelerating socio-economic and scientific progress in SAARC region to pave the way for ushering in an era of prosperity on wider dimensions. The sincerity and commitment by the governments and the people of SAARC region are the crying need of today. In this background, the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry deserves full congratulation for taking the initiative of starting the debate on *SAARC Economic Union by 2008*. This paper is an effort in presenting some thoughts on the above issue.

STARTING DEBATE : FOCUS VISION 2008

Status quo is never a permanent feature. Change is an on-going process. SAARC Economic Union by 2008 is the result of a positive thinking approach. An excellent debate has been initiated in this respect.

Khawaja Amjad Saeed, Fellow Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (FCA); the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan (FCMA); the Institute of Marketing Management (FIMM); the Institute of Taxation Management (FITM); Institute of Chartered Secretaries (FICS) and Chartered Manager (FICM) President, Institute of Cost Management Accountants of Pakistan.

It is hoped that this subject of vital importance will be discussed and debated at various levels namely Government, Private, Public, NGOs institutional and even individual levels. Ideas need to be pooled together. Experiences need to be shared. Dimensions of cooperation need to be identified and a framework needs to be evolved to serve as a basis for the proposed Economic Union of SAARC by 2008.

SAARC : PRINCIPLES

Clear cut principles have been spelled out and these require firm commitment by all the SAARC countries. The cooperation among SAARC countries will not be a substitute for bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation but will complement them. Further such cooperation will not be inconsistent with bilateral and multi-lateral obligation.

Principles on which cooperation will be based include respect to the following :

1. Sovereign Equality.
2. Territorial Integrity.
3. Political independence.
4. Non-interference in international affairs of other states and mutual benefit.

The foregoing principles represent strong conceptual logistics on the basis of which SAARC Economic Union can be strongly visualized by 2008.

SAARC : OBJECTIVES

Objectives of SAARC include promotion of socio-economic developments within SAARC countries and also develop a productive relationship with regional and international organizations. Based on this objectives can be categorized as under :

Inter-SAARC

1. To promote the welfare of the people of South Asia and to improve their quality of life.
2. To accelerate economic growth.
3. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields.
4. To promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia.
5. To contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems.

Intra-SAARC

1. To strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums and with other developing countries.
2. To strengthen cooperation with other developing countries.
3. To cooperate with international and regional organizations.

WORK PACKAGES FOR SAARC COUNTRIES

Ten areas of work within SAARC region have been identified and assignment have been given to various SAARC countries. Topics allocated together with the countries responsible are now identified. India has been given four assignments namely, Business Information and Data, Networking, Human Resource Development, Source & Technology and Social Dimension of Business Development. Pakistan has two topics, Trade and Investment. Sri Lanka has an interesting topic namely women entrepreneurs. Bangladesh will handle telecommunication. Travel and Tourism will be handled by Nepal. Bhutan and Nepal have joint responsibility of energy.

SAARC : INRETROSPECT AND BACKGROUND FOR SAARC ECONOMIC UNION BY 2008

Initial steps taken for a long-term objectives of SAARC Economic Union by 2008 so far include the following :

1. Agreement on SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement) was signed during the Seventh SAARC Summit in Dhaka. This entered into force on December 7, 1995. This has the following two forward linkages :
 - (a) Gradual reduction and eventual elimination of tariffs with in SAARC.
 - (b) A step on the road to creating a SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area). Accelerated efforts are needed to implement bilateral and multi-lateral initiatives to promote economic cooperation.
2. Bold initiatives have also been taken in respect of developing institutional framework. These institutions need to be strengthened for their vibrant functions so that positive steps are taken to crystallize the dream of SAARC Economic Union by 2008.

Some of the pertinent institutions include :

- (a) Promoting people-to-people contact.
- (b) SAARC Regional Institutions :
 - (i) SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC), Dhaka, Bangladesh.
 - (ii) SAARC Documentation Centre. (SDC), New Dehli, India.

(c) The following SAARC Funds have been established so far :

- (i) SAARC Fund for Regional Projects (SFRP) (1991).
- (ii) SAARC – JAPAN Special Fund, September 27, 1993, Kathmandu.
- (iii) South Asian Development Fund SADF, 1995, New Delhi.

There is a need to consolidate gains from the above institutional framework and carry forward the same towards achieving the goal of SAARC Economic Union by 2008.

LOGISTICS FOR VISION 2008 **SAARC : A BLUE PRINT : TEN POINTS**

SAARC is the largest geo-economic block of the world with 1.2 billion people. Its GDP, based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), is \$ 3.57 trillion. Its combined average growth is over 7 per cent. Its plan includes a common market, i.e., SAPTA. This represents a hope for the largest pool of poor people of the world, with a consumer base of over 425 million people in the middle class bracket. It is larger than any economic block of the world. It has the potential of contributing a great deal to the ever evolving global economy.

SAARC region has the following unique features of the world :

1. It has one of the most ancient living civilizations in the world.
2. It is a sleeping giant and has started to move its arms.
3. All religions, faiths, and ideologies of the world have yet to learn to live together.

4. It is maturing and is poised to become an important economic force forming a common market called SAPTA. This is expected to usher in a new era which will change all traditionally known economic parameters.
5. It has the second largest railway network of the world after the US.
6. It has the largest irrigated land areas in the world with, over 67 million hectares.
7. It offers one of the largest English speaking area.
8. It has labour force of 423 million people. This is the largest of any other economic block in the world.
9. It also is home to some of the poorest living people on the earth but has increased job opportunities and self-employment schemes in all nations.
10. Having a combined average growth rate of more than 7 per cent by year 2000, SAARC will have a combined population of 1.3 billion people and the total consumer base will surpass 750 million. This will be largest number of consumers in a single economic block in the world.

SCCI : A STRONG LOGISTIC FOR SAARC ECONOMIC UNION BY 2008

SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) was set up in 1992 as the official recognition by all the regional governments and as the apex body of all the national federations of chambers of commerce and industry with its headquarters in Pakistan. It consists of seven component members representing each country. Its mission is to enhance economic cooperation with a view to improving SAARC's position in the World trade as well as within SAARC itself.

SCCI's Philosophy

It will gradually endeavour to achieve SAARC Economic Union through :

1. Economic Cooperation.
 - (a) Bring about harmonious and healthy economic relations among the business communities of the region.
 - (b) The general belief is that the above Union will serve as a step forward to globalization and will help to overcome the socio-political differences within the region.
2. SCCI's contributions towards establishment of SAARC Economic Union by 2008 can be in the following dimensions :
 - (a) Serve as voice of business community of the region at national, regional and global fora.
 - (b) Endeavor to bring about necessary economic cooperation in all spheres of the SAARC region.
 - (c) Encourage investments and joint ventures within and outside the region to ensure that the benefits of economic cooperation are realised for the region.
 - (d) Encourage private sector in the process of industrialization and also to act as the change agent while allowing the governments to develop the infrastructure jointly with them and setting in place policies which can minimize dislocations to economic growth and social development.

INTRA-REGIONAL INVESTMENT

The business community of SAARC need to be encouraged to come forward with intra-regional investment proposals covering the following areas :

1. Investment Promotion.
2. Investment Protection.
3. Repatriation of Profits.
4. Avoidance of Double Taxation.
5. Arrangements for settlement of trade disputes among SAARC member states.

Strategy needs to be developed to evolve common agreements for the region as a whole or sub-region on bilateral basis for the above aspects.

The following Table shows how big is the potential of intra-regional trade in SAARC :

TABLE I

Intra-Regional Trade in SAARC : 1985- 1995

Year	Intra-Regional Trades in World Trade Percentage
1985	2.70
1991	3.02
1993	3.39
1995	4.02

Source : Computed from *Directions of Trade Statistics*, IMF.

AGENDA FOR SAARC ECONOMIC UNION BY 2008

Year 2001 has been set as target date to achieve, SAFTA. This is expected to set pace of development in core trade and economic cooperation in the member countries.

Ninth SAARC Summit was held in Male, Maldives during May 12--14, 1997 and has directed the establishment of Group of Eminent Persons (GEP). This group has been asked to undertake the following tasks :

1. Develop a long range vision.
2. Formulate a perspective plan of action including a SAARC agenda for 2000 and beyond.
3. Spell out the targets that can and must be achieved by the year 2020.

SAARC Economic Union by 2008 is expected to result as under :

1. With new enthusiasm in the markets and shifting economies on combined scale, dependence of their GNP will reduce in coming years.
2. An increased collaboration and harmonious relationship could help reduce the defense budgets to much lower points. On the assumption that these funds are allocated for developmental programmes, the growth indicators will sharply move forward.
3. Marketing plans for these countries can be more or less unique and specially for consumer products and services like entertainment.

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State Policies and the Status of Women : A Comparative Assessment of India and China

KHANDAKER M. SHARIFUL ISLAM

INTRODUCTION

China and India together possess a substantial number of the world's population. They are by far the most populous countries in the world, together accounting for 2 billion of the world's 5.3 million. Their individual populations are projected to stabilize in the 1.5 to 2 billion range by the middle of the next century, with India probably being slightly larger.¹ Therefore, it is obviously of great importance to focus on these two countries to understand the status of Asia's women to a large extent as they cover a substantial number of populations of the region. Moreover, the characteristics or approaches to development in the two countries represent two major patterns in the developing world. In the past India and China followed two distinct approaches : These are the free market economic system with some elements of state planning in India and the socialist centralized planning system in China. Under these different political and economic circumstance, it is interesting to observe the policies for women development and their impacts.

There is no question now that women are an essential component of the development process that can take place only if both men and women are included. This process of inclusion greatly involves the question of policy intervention, which requires policy planners to understand the women's scenario from a comparative perspective by referring experience from different cultures. Though India and China followed different political systems, the problems they encounter in managing a

large economy are similar in many respects. In both countries, state was the main engine of economic development, and centrally guided decisions of development. Attempts are made in this article, to offer an overview of the development strategies with regard to women and the actual achievement under these broad policy guidelines of the two countries. This comparative discussion will hopefully provide an opportunity to analyze the importance of women policy and identify required areas of improvement in policies towards women's development both in India and China.

POLICY TOWARDS WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

India is one of the few countries in the world with fewer women than men (927 women per 1,000 men). With a mixed-type of political system and traditional social values emanated from Hinduism, Islam and other local religions, India has had adverse effects on the development of women's social and economic positions. Although the state is defined as a secular one, the politics has often led the form of religious fundamentalism or revivalism, especially Hindu chauvinism.² Unwritten norms and social customs have prevented women from attaining equal status with men. For example, although Hindu revivalism adopted elements of feminist discourse, in practice affirming the subordinate status of women, and used traditional symbols of female strength to argue that "Hindu women did not need liberation because they already had it within traditional Hinduism."³ Swrup and Rajput (1994) observed, "Even though the Hindu Law in the mid fifties provided for daughters to receive parental property along with sons, still the law is hardly implemented. Landed property is particularly denied."⁴

Indian Policy makers were concerned primarily with overall economic development of the country and under this policy direction, despite more than 40 years of planned development activities, the socio-economic status of women did not appear to have improved by any

measurable extent.⁵ The policies and programmes aimed at women development were very limited in scope and resources and it was not until last fifteen years or so that, "It has been recognized that though women constitute an overwhelming majority among the poor, development programmes are structurally biased in favour of men."⁶

Indian society invested far less in women than in its men despite, women's vital role in the economy. "Women are associated strongly with the home and courtyard, with bearing children and nurturing the family. The male domain is outside, in marketplaces and workplaces, where livelihoods are earned and economic and political power is wielded."⁷

A major element of discrimination against women in India is their unacceptably low status in the society, with continuing legal discrimination against them. In India, women's right of inheritance is given by religious laws which are different between religions. Where the civil code exists alongside other systems of law, it is usually overridden by these systems of religious law, as well as by custom.⁸

The Government of India, however, issued a National Perspective Plan for Women in 1988, which has dual goals of integration of women into the mainstream of the economy and equity and justice for all women. Since the Government's Sixth Plan (1982-83--1986-87), emphasis has been placed on access to health care and family planning services.⁹

POLICY TOWARDS WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA

Women account for approximately 49 per cent of the Chinese population. The Government has a commendable policy framework in place to improve the health, education, economic, legal, and social status of women.¹⁰ The Chinese communists regarded themselves as engaged not just in class war but also in social liberation: "Women hold up half

the heaven' was a favourite epigram of Maye.¹¹ Under this system Chinese women did make significant gain in social status and economic position. The legislative principle of equality of the sexes established by the socialist system is embodied in the policy of equal pay for equal work. Under the influence of this policy, a broad section of Chinese women came out from their families and engaged in various social and economic activities together with men. Women are found in almost all kind of jobs.¹²

In China, land reform and the Marriage Law of 1950 provided for equality between the sexes, as well as equal property rights within the family that abolished the system of arranged marriages in order to establish a democratic marriage system based on freedom of choice, monogamy, equal rights, and protection of the legal interests of women. The law also prohibited interference with the remarriage of widows, and requests for wedding money by parents. Subsequently, the Marriage Law of 1980 incorporated the principles of the 1950 Marriage Law and retained many of its useful and effective stipulations.¹³ Legally women and men have equal rights to own, control and inherit property in China, although, the *de facto* situation is somewhat different.

The Chinese Government's policies to redress women discrimination over the past forty years, by integrating women into the process of development and by redefining traditional gender roles, "have brought about remarkable improvements, such as legislative measures have revised land labour, and marriage laws and have recognized women's roles in the economy as well as in the reproductive sphere."¹⁴ For example, between 1983 and 1989, twenty-eight provincial level legislatures passed regulations protecting women's and children's right and interest and a national law, *Law Yearbook 1993*, was promulgated in 1992.¹⁵ Although these legal protections for women vary in length and detail, they have common goal of reaffirming the equal status of women in the family and in society at large.

During 1978-79 the Government introduced the one-child family policy recognizing the implications of uncontrolled population growth. This policy has helped China achieve the desired effect of decreasing the birth rate to near replacement level.

Even so, women in China are discriminated in many ways. Although under the commune and production brigade and team system in China, women retained their right of access to land but were discriminated against in the form of lower work points (even for equal work done), and were considered as a labour reserve, to be used mainly when men were not available. Women were also deprived of the control of their income; the wife's earnings were automatically added to that of the husband and handed over to him as the head of household. Under the new family responsibility system, "there is the danger that women labour becomes invisible; their rights of access to land are still evolving."¹⁶

A COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Although women in India and China constitute half of the major population of the region, their status has been inferior to men as is in other parts of the world. As is observed in the following Table they are deprived of many opportunities and discriminated against in many ways and counts, although they play as important role as their male counterparts.¹⁷

TABLE
Indicators on the Status of Women

Indicators	India	China
Female adult literacy rate (%) 1995	37.7	72.7
Female net enrollment in primary education (%) 1995	61	98
Female combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrollment ratio (%) 1995	46.5	61.5

Continued to next page

Female life expectancy at birth (year) 1995	61.8	71.3
Total fertility rate 1998	3.2	1.8
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births) 1990	570	95
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) 1995	73	38
Birth attended by trained health personnel (%) 1990-96	34	84
Women's share of earned income (%) 1995	25	38
Female economic activity rate (as % of male rate) 1995	46	82
Female administrators and managers (%) 1992-96	2	12
Female professional and technical workers (%) 1992-96	21	45
Seats in Parliament held by women (%) 1995	8	21
Women in government at ministerial level (%) 1995	4	6
Women in government at sub-ministerial level (%) 1995	6	6

Source : *Human Development Report, 1998*. UNDP¹⁸ AND Bureau of Census, 1999.¹⁹

An attempt has been made below to make a comparative assessment of status of women in India and China in terms of the basic indicators of women development such as Education, Employment, Health Facility and Political Participation.²⁰

Education

Education is one of the most potential means of empowering women which leads to better health and nutrition, improved socio-economic opportunities and helps influence their environment. Chinese women's literacy rates more than doubled in the past 50 years and their enrollment in tertiary education increased tenfold. The adult female literacy rate in China is 72.7 with an average combined gross enrollment ratio of 61.5.²¹ There were over 120 million females with at least a junior high school education (in 1987) which demonstrates their emerging influence of political affairs. Their rising educational level foretells that they will play a more important role in politics and the other affairs of the country.²²

India has a long way to go though it is encouraging to note that the literacy rates of women have increased from 18.7 per cent during 1971 to 37.7 per cent by 1995. Also the sex differentials in literacy reveal a discouraging trend. About 62 per cent of Indian illiterates are girls or women.

Health Security

In both the countries, for the last twenty years, not only life expectancy gap between men and women narrowed, but also the life expectancy at birth for females has become higher than that of males.²³ In the last twenty years period, women's life expectancy at birth rose by more than 16 per cent in India. In 1970 she could expect to live nearly 45 years, whereas now she can expect to live above 62 years. Although this evidence implies an improvement, the incidence of high maternal mortality rate reflects the poor health care. The maternal mortality rate of 570 per 100,000 live births is one of the highest in the world. Also incidences of high infant mortality rate and low birth attended by trained health personnel (see the table) are the indication of slow progress in the overall health care. Therefore, part of the improvement in women's life expectancy in India may have occurred due to the prevention of higher births among educated couples.

China has a higher life expectancy of women and a lower maternal mortality as compared to that of India, which is obviously an indication of significant relative improvements in the health care. This is due to China's successful population control policy which has been able to keep the total fertility rate at 1.8 as compared to India's 3.2. Concerted government efforts have engineered the world's largest drop in fertility rates---from 5.6 live births per women in 1960 to 1.8 in 1998 in China.

Employment and Economic Opportunities

Although the Employment opportunities provided to women have had profound impact on the self-dependence of women, discrimination

against women has been noted in many spheres of employment in both countries. Between 26 and 45 per cent of all Indian women and aged 15 or over are engaged in waged work or trade, and represent between 26 and 35 per cent of their countries' national labour forces.²⁴ In comparison with India and many other countries, Chinese women stand out prominently in their employment status. China has one of the highest female labour participation rates in the world at about 82 per cent (1995), and this has laid a solid foundation for their future development. Whereas, in India 46 per cent of women are engaged in earned economic activities. Moreover, the figures of women administrators or managers and professional or technical workers represent the poor participation of Indian women in work as compared to their Chinese counterpart (see the table). As a result of the spread of education, Chinese women have extensively diversified their traditional roles, and in fact women in China are more employed outside home than women in other developing countries of the world. Indian women lag far behind them due to the vagaries of development and century old retrogressive cultural constraint.

Political Participation

Men in Asian countries have always monopolized political space. Women's political participation is still limited in these two countries, as only a few women are elected to the Parliament and to different political bodies. While women vote in great numbers, few hold high political office, in both India and China (see the table). Even though more than 10 per cent of the Indians who went to prison in the struggle for independence were women, their representation in political power structure has remained low for the following years. For example, in 1977 and 1989 respectively, only 3.4 and 5.2 per cent of the Lok Sabha (upper chamber) and since 1952, the year when women were first allowed to stand for election, women's representation has never risen above 8 per cent.²⁵ However, Indian women are relatively better represented at local levels than in the national ones. In 1994 India

reserved a third of *Panchayat* (Local Council) seats for women. As a result, at least 800,000 women entered the local political pipeline from which national leaders emerge.

The corresponding figures of female political participation for China are also not satisfactory although there has been little improvement (see the table). This low level of women's participation mainly stems from their heavy burden of work followed by household chores and care of children in the home in addition to their formal work either in the field or in the office. Data from many sources indicate that in China, recent economic reform efforts have reduced political participation of women at all levels of government. For instance, membership of women at the Central Committee peaked in 1973 at 10.3 per cent, whereas it was down to 7.5 per cent by 1992. When women constituted 25 per cent of the members of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of 1975, in 1993 they made up only 9 per cent.²⁶

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The above comparative analysis reveals that social indicators for women in India are worse in many respects as compared to those for Chinese women. When the progress of women is viewed in terms of their emancipation, education, employment, participation in social, public and political life, health and control of maternal mortality, etc. Chinese women appear to be ahead of their Indian counterparts. In UNDP's 1997 Gender-related Development Index (GDI),²⁷ China ranks 93rd whereas India ranks 128th among 163 countries for which the GDI has been constructed. Furthermore, India's lower Gender Empower Measure (GEM)²⁸ rank (100th) relative to that of China (33rd) among 103 countries indicates that performance of India in achieving gender equality in the key areas of economic and political participation and decision making is less than that of China. In sum, as available data shows, although neither the Chinese nor the Indian approach to gender development can be considered optimal with respect to the achievement

of women, the Chinese approach appears to have been significantly more conducive to some areas of women development than the Indian approach, both with respect to actual achievement and to potential for further growth. Chinese women's problems are, to a large extent, social problems and their future is closely dependent upon political and economic development. For example, family planning is not only a personal issue for married couples but a national issue about the speed of economic development and about the future existence of the Chinese nation.

However, in spite of progressive developments for emancipation of women both in India and China as compared with their own past, girl children still continue to face discrimination, neglect and even infanticide as a result of the legacy of their respective cultures. While education and health facilities in these two countries have improved considerably in the last few years, the opportunity to participate in economic and political spheres are yet to be opened for women. The gender gaps in income and political have remained wide and sometimes increase. Therefore, there is still a long way to go to fully emancipate women from their present predicament. Moreover, rural-urban inequality has further deteriorated the socio-economic position of the rural women. Poverty is more widespread and pervasive in rural areas than in urban areas. For example, in India, a disaggregated GDI²⁹ for 16 states constructed in 1996 by the United Nations further indicates significant disparities among these states in basic female capabilities.³⁰ Government intervention is necessary through policy reforms and affirmative actions. Eradicating gender disparity through providing education, health and nutrition although is significant, takes much narrower approach than through improving income earning and decision making opportunities. Through policy reforms women's equal right in property, access to credit and, etc., should be established. What is required most is women's widespread involvement in decision making, both within the family and outside it at all levels of government. Women's opportunities should be regarded as their right rather than as welfare. Finally, women's household work should be reflected in respective country's GNP.

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Crown Prince of Nepal's Visit to Pakistan : An Over View

NADEEM SHAFIQUE MALIK

Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Nepal, an important member country of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).¹ Recent visit of the Crown Prince of Nepal, Dipendra Bir Shah Dev to Pakistan from February 17 to 22, 1998, has further enabled the two countries to discuss ways and means to enhance cooperation among all SAARC countries and further strengthen multi-faceted ties between Pakistan and Nepal, in particular. During his first ever official visit to Pakistan, arranged on the invitation of the Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the Crown Prince met the President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Defence Secretary and other senior officials. In these meetings, views were exchanged on matters relating to Pak-Nepal as to how to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries, especially in economics, trade, investment, commercial and industrial fields. The discussion also took place in which the ideas were explored how to make the SAARC a more effective organization.

The Crown Prince visited historical places including the Taxila Museum, Mohenjodaro and other historical sites in Punjab. He appreciated rich cultural heritage of Pakistan.

Nepal's Crown Prince Dipendra arrived at Karachi on February 17, 1998 accompanied by Nepal's Minister for Population and Environment Parkash Man Singh and other high ranking officials. He laid a floral wreath at the mausoleum of founding father of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, soon after his arrival.² On February 18, 1998, he along with his entourage, visited 5,000-year old archeological relics at Moenjodaro in Sindh Province before leaving for Islamabad. At his arrival at Mohenjodaro, he was given a warm reception. Two children, clad in traditional Sindhi dress, presented bouquets to the Crown Prince and he also witnessed folk dance at the airport. Thereafter, he along with

his associates visited archeological sites and they were briefed about that ancient pre-historic site. The Crown Prince also made a visit to the museum established at the site and attended a lunch there. Later, he flew back to Karachi along with Sindh Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Saleem Zia who was accompanying him on his visit to Mohenjodaro.³

On February 19, 1998 the Crown Prince of Nepal flew to Islamabad to meet President of Pakistan Muhammad Rafiq Tarar and Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. He was received at the Islamabad Air Port by Foreign Minister Mr. Gohar Ayub Khan and Minister in Waiting Mr. Haleem Siddique. He was presented 21-gun salute on his arrival.⁴ Then the Crown Prince called on the Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at the Prime Minister's House. The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere. The two leaders exchanged views on various issues of bilateral and mutual interests. The Prime Minister welcomed the Nepalese Crown Prince on his first ever official visit to Pakistan and expressed the confidence that his tour would further strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries. He said that the two countries were linked together by cultural and historical affinities and he was looking forward to building "very strong relationship with Nepal."⁵

The two leaders also discussed the prevailing situation in South Asia. Nawaz Sharif underscored Pakistan's commitment to peace and stability in the region, which he said was an essential pre-requisite for the socio-economic well being of its people. The key to peace, progress and prosperity in the region, he said, was the resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute which had bedevilled relations between Pakistan and India for the past 50 years. He further said that his government had initiated a peaceful solution to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN resolutions.⁶ Both the leaders felt that economic and trade relations between Pakistan and Nepal were not commensurate with the excellent political relationship that existed between the two countries. The Crown Prince expressed complete satisfaction over the current state of bilateral relationship which he said reflected the aspirations of the government and the people of the two countries.⁷

Later, the Prime Minister hosted a banquet in honour of the Crown Prince of Nepal. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister of Pakistan said that “the affinities between our two countries are many while we also share a strong commitment to democracy and freedom.” The Prime Minister said that Pakistan was also determined to fulfil the objectives of progress and development and his government had initiated far reaching structural reforms which had begun to yield results. He said that these reforms provided unmatched incentives for foreign and domestic investors. Adding that although there would be no sudden reversals in this regard, but, “continuity in the process will be ensured as we have established an environment for progress and growth and are poised for a take off.”⁸ The Crown Prince of Nepal during the course of his speech said that as the members of the SAARC, which embodied the great vision and foresight of its founding fathers, an additional dimension had been added to Pak-Nepal relationship. He said that Nepal was also “pursuing liberal economic policies which encourage foreign investment,” adding that there were already signs of Pakistan entrepreneurs showing that there was much the two countries could learn from each other in addressing their respective problems. He was confident that his visit to Pakistan would contribute significantly towards further promoting mutual goodwill and strengthening the friendship between the two countries.⁹

Later in the evening, the Crown Prince first visited the *Daman-i-Koh* view-point in Islamabad. The Capital Development Authority had made special arrangement for his visit and had tastefully decorated the area and the route as well.¹⁰ The Crown Prince of Nepal went over to Shakarparian Hills on Thursday evening and planted a *Michelia Champaca* tree to commemorate his visit. He and members of his entourage had a panoramic view of the capital sprawling at the foot of Margalla Hills. He also saw the trees planted by various heads of states and governments at Shakarparian Hills, popularly known as Friendship Hills.¹¹

On February 20, 1998 the Crown Prince of Nepal called on the President Muhammad Rafique Tarar at the President House. Welcoming the Crown Prince, the President underscored the importance that Pakistan

attaches to its relations with Nepal. He expressed the hope that the visit of the Crown Prince would significantly contribute to the strengthening of the bilateral relationship. The President underlined the importance of the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in order to bring peace and stability in the region. He informed the Crown Prince that the King of Nepal His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev was highly respected in Pakistan 'for his statesmanship.' The two countries, the President said, belonged to the same region and share common aspirations. The President also laid stress on expanding economic relations between the two countries.¹² The Crown Prince said that he was greatly impressed by the progress that Pakistan had made in diverse fields, particularly in the field of information technology, in which he pointed out, the two countries could have mutually beneficial cooperation. The meeting was also attended by the Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan, and Minister of State for Water and Power Haleem Siddiqui, who is also Minister in Waiting for Crown Prince of Nepal, Secretary Foreign Affairs, Nepal's Ambassador to Pakistan and other senior official.¹³

Later the Crown Prince of Nepal was briefed by Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan on the salient features of Pakistan's Foreign Policy. The Foreign Minister told the visiting dignitary that the Foreign Policy of Pakistan is based on the internationally recognized forms of inter-state relations. It includes, "sovereign equality of all countries, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states and non-aggression and the peaceful settlement of disputes," "Guided by these principles, he said, Pakistan sought to promote peace and stability in the region and play a positive and constructive role in the community of nations in furthering international understanding, security and prosperity."¹⁴ In his neighbourhood, the Foreign Minister said, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had taken the initiative to resume the dialogue with India in a bid to resolve the outstanding issues between the two countries. These include the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir whose resolution was an essential prerequisite, for peace and stability in the region, which in turn would give a tremendous impetus to regional economic cooperation as envisaged under SAARC. The Foreign Minister also emphasized that

“Pakistan had also a vital interest in bringing an end to the turmoil in Afghanistan and towards this end had launched a peace initiative which had been welcomed by all Afghan parties as well as the UN, OIC and regional countries. The Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan also informed the Crown Prince that Pakistan was a strong proponent of nuclear non-proliferation and was supportive to any regime as long as it is equitable and non-discriminatory. Pakistan, the Foreign Minister pointed out, had made a number of proposals with regard to non-proliferation, including the establishment of a NWFZ in South Asia. Regrettably India's response to these proposals had been negative. The Crown Prince was also briefed on Pakistan's relations with neighbouring Iran, China and the Central Asian Republics as well as the United States and Russia. The Foreign Minister also briefed the Crown Prince on the increasing importance that Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is assigning to economic reform and growth and as natural corollary to the strengthening of economic ties with foreign countries. The economic dimensions of Pakistan's Foreign Policy had thus become markedly pronounced. The briefing was rounded off with a review of Pakistan-Nepal relations.¹⁵

On February 21, 1998 Crown Prince of Nepal called on Defence Secretary Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Iftikhar Ali Khan. Welcoming the Crown Prince to the Ministry of Defence, the Defense Secretary said that Pakistan and Nepal enjoyed excellent relations and “are cooperating closely at the regional and international fora for the promotion of peace and economic development.” He expressed the hope that the visit of the Crown Prince would further cement economic and political ties between the two countries. He also apprised the distinguished guest that Pakistan would always be prepared to extend its facilities to Nepal. The Crown Prince of Nepal thanked Pakistan for allocating seats to Nepalese armed forces personnel in various defense related training institutions.¹⁶

Nepalese Crown Prince arrived in the provincial capital Lahore, on the last leg of his tour on Sunday 22nd February, 1998. A warm welcome was accorded to the Crown Prince on his arrival at the Lahore Airport. He was received by Punjab Governor Shahid Hamid and Chief Secretary Pervaiz Masoud. Two children presented bouquets to him.

Later, the Crown Prince visited the *Mazar* of Allama Muhammad Iqbal where he placed floral wreath to pay homage to the great poet. Then he visited the famous Badshahi Masjid and the Lahore Fort. The distinguished guest and his entourage also visited various sections of the Lahore Museum, including the Ghandhara Art Gallery, coins section, miniature painting and arts and crafts section. Later, the Crown Prince drove to see a part of the motorway and termed it the 'eighth wonder' of the world.¹⁷ The distinguished guests left for Nepal on Monday 23rd February, 1998.

Visits like these are of immense significance. The personal touches are given to the official relations. Bridges of understandings are built. The warmth is added to the existing ties and new vistas are opened to build more solid understanding. Mutual good-will is strengthened. Even the SAARC's importance was high-lighted. This visit of the Crown Prince was indeed a marked success for both the countries.

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Modern State and the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1972

M. HABIBUR RAHMAN

INTRODUCTION

At present the concept of state based on defined territory, population, government, independence and sovereignty is not limited. Nevertheless, fusion and defusion of state and religion cannot be treated unquestioned. Confusion on such matters is still going on. The purpose of the paper is to deal with the emergence of modern state bringing out its foundations and objectives along with concomitant events so far occurred. The study will make out spirits of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1972 commensurable with the urges of modern state.

EVOLUTIONARY BACKGROUND

The background of evolution of state to its present phase is of a long-standing historical interest. Without being acquainted with the earlier position to the ongoing stage of state, an attempt on modern state will be an inadequate deal and as such, needs arise to highlight to this end.

Earlier Phase

The existence of nations such as the Jews, Greeks and Romans is of antiquity. Each nation had its own religion and gods, its own language, law and morality. The reality of Greek city states and later Rome's dominance of the ancient world cannot be encountered. The Greeks before the Macedonian conquest were never united into one powerful national state. They lived in numerous more or less small city states, which were totally independent of one another.¹

The Roman Empire gradually absorbed nearly the whole civilized world, so far it was known to the Romans. They hardly knew of any independent civilized states outside the borders of their Empire. It is true that at the borders of this world Empire there were always wars but these wars gave opportunity for the practice of a few rules and usages only. And matters did not change when under Constantine the Great (306-337 A.D.) the Christian faith became the religion of the Empire, and, further, when in 395 A.D. the Roman Empire was divided into the Eastern and the Western Empires.

The Western Empire disappeared in 476 A. D., when Romulus Augustine the last Emperor, was deposed by Odoacer, the leader of the Germanic soldiers, who made himself ruler in Italy. The land of the extinct Western Roman Empire passed into the hands of different peoples, chiefly of Germanic extraction. In Gallia the kingdom of the Franks sprang up in 486 A. D. under Chlodovech the Merovingian. In Italy the kingdom of the Ostrogoths under Theoderic the Great, who defeated Odoacer, rose in 493 A.D. In Spain the kingdom of Visigoths appeared in 456 A.D. The Vandals had, as early as 429 A.D. erected a kingdom in Africa, with Carthage as its capital. The Saxons had already gained a footing in Britannia in 449 A.D.

All these peoples were Barbarians in the strict sense of the term. Although they had adopted Christianity, it took hundreds of years for raising them to the standard of more advanced civilized people. And, likewise, hundreds of years passed before different nations emerged out of the amalgamation of the various peoples that had conquered the old Roman Empire with the residuum of the population of that Empire. It was in the eighth century that matters became more settled. Charlemagne built up his vast Frankish Empire and, in 800 A.D. he was crowned Roman Emperor by Pope Lee III. Again, the whole world seemed to be one empire, headed by Emperor as its temporal and by the Pope as its spiritual master. But the Frankish Empire did not last long. According

to the Treaty of Verdum it was, in 843 A.D. divided into three parts and with that division the process of development set in, which led gradually to the rise of the several states of Empire.

In theory, the Emperor of the Germans remained for hundreds of years to come the master of the world; but in practice he was not even master at home, as the German Princes, step by step succeeded in establishing their independence. And although, theoretically, the world was well looked after by the Emperor as its temporal and the Pope as its spiritual head, there were constantly treachery, quarrelling, and fighting going on. The practice in war was the rest cruel possible. It is true that the Pope and the Bishops succeeded on occasions in mitigating such practice, but as a rule there was no influence of the Christian teaching visible.²

After the arrival of the Norman's in 1066 we find a great change. The Norman Kings possessed orderly minds and were efficient administrators. They unified the kingdom, administered the local English customs and taxes and introduced feudalism. Under this system the King made grants of land to his nobles and followers in return for a promise of allegiance, offered active help in time of war and the payment of feudal dues. The nobles who held, their land, directly from the King also make subgrants of land to their tenants, again in return for allegiance and the payment of feudal dues. The lord on his part promised protection and justice. William I went further and ordained that all land holders owed a duty of allegiance to him as King. This quantified the immediate allegiance, which a land holder owed to his immediate overlord. Thus loyalty to the King was the supreme and universal duty of all English freemen (or freed elders, as the were called). This form of feudalism introduced from the continent made for greater unity and cohesion within the kingdom.³

Medieval Phase

Medieval history relates to period from 5th to 15th centuries. Frederic III, the last of the Emperor of the Germans from 1440 to 1493 was crowned in Rome by the Popes. At that time Europe was, in fact, divided into a great number of independent states.

The Hundred Years' War (1337 – 1453) resulted in the possession of French territory by English Kings from the days of the conquest onward was a frequent cause of Angle-French conflicts, but the series of wars known as the Hundred Years' War was not continuous. This time is 1453 the Turks had victory over the Roman Byzantium Kingdom. Such defeat of the Roman Kingdom gave rise to Renaissance and Reformation particularly effective in 1520 – 1620. The Renaissance of science and art in the fifteenth century, together with the resurrection of the knowledge of antiquity, revived the philosophical and aesthetical ideals of Greek life and transferred them to modern life through their influence the spirit of the Christian religion took precedence of its letter. The conviction arose that the principles of Christianity ought to unite the Christian world more than they had done hitherto, and that these principles ought to be observed in matters international as such as in matters national. The Reformation on the other hand, put an end to the spiritual mastership of the Pope over the civilized world. Protestant states could not recognize the claim of the Pope to arbitrate as of right in their conflicts either between one another or between themselves and Catholic states.⁴

Importantly, profound alterations occurred in the fifteenth and sixteenth countries. The discovery of the New World the Renaissance of learning, and the Reformation as a religious revolution disrupted the facade of the political and spiritual unity of Europe, and shook the foundations of the medieval Christendom. Theories were evolved to meet the new conditions, intellectually, the secular conceptions of a modern sovereign state and of a modern independent sovereign found expression in the works of scholars of different nationalities.⁵

In the early period the expansion of the trade played a decisive role. It created a need for better police protection and security in transportation and communication. The story of these activities is a long and complicated one, but there is little disagreement concerning the fundamental facts as revealed in the mounting trade figures in Venice, Florence, Antwerp, London, Frankfurt, and many other centers of urban progress. The citizens of London and Paris as well as the imperial cities of Germany were on the whole, willing supporters of the princely overlord against local feudal barons, regarding him as the likeliest guarantor of the public peace. But in Italy, where the development of trade was perhaps most marked, the cities did not support such a central head, these cities, in fact, offered the most violent opposition to imperial as well as papal pretensions. Here traders preferred to rely upon the growing power of their own city. This led to incessant warfare between the cities, which eventually, in the age of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469 – 1527), brought foreign intervention and subjugation. It was the success of the Northern monarchs in integrating and pacifying their kingdoms, which in part inspired Machiavelli's ardent concern with Italian unification. In the Europe north of the Alps, by increasing the security of commercial intercourse, these political developments provided a fertile field for the expansion of trade activities as if between sovereign states.

Sovereignty as first considered by Louis XI (1461 – 1483) the founder of French absolutism means the absolute and perpetual powers within a state. Henry VIII (1509 – 1547) of England is similarly ranked as the most absolute of Monarchs. It is difficult to single out Louis XI and Henry VIII as the founder. Bodin (French) in his *De La Republique* (1576) expressed sovereignty perpetual and absolute safe and except the "Commandments of God" the "Law of Nature."⁶

Modern Phase

The evolution of modern state system was a process greatly influenced by the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) making the end of Thirty Years' War. It started as a quarrel between the Catholic and Protestant

states: developed into a struggle for supremacy in Europe between Hapsburg Empire and France. The principle of religious independence was secured and Switzerland was recognized as an independent state. France in Bodin's time, had been rent by faction and civil war, and he was convinced that the cause of her miseries was the lack of a government strong enough to curb the subversive influences of feudal rivalries and religious intolerance, and that the best way was to strengthen the French monarchy. He saw, too, that a process of this kind was actually taking place in his own day throughout western Europe; unified states were emerging out of the loosely compacted states of medieval times, and the central authority was everywhere taking the form of a strong personal monarchy supreme over all rival claimants to power secular or ecclesiastical.

The essential manifestation of sovereignty, Bodin thought is to make the laws and since the sovereign makes the laws, he clearly cannot be bound by the laws that he makes. However, Bodin went on to say that the sovereign is not a *potestas legibus Omnibus soluta*; there are some laws that do bind him, the divine law, the law of nature or reason, the law that is common to all nations, and also certain laws which he calls the *legis imperii*, the law of the government. These *legis imperii* which the sovereign does not make and cannot abrogate, are the fundamental laws of the state, and in particular they include the laws which determine in whom the sovereign power itself is to be vested, we should call them the laws of the constitution.

As regards state and its sovereignty the development reached its culmination in the *Leviathan* (1651) of Thomas Hobbes (English) and it is interesting to note that Hobbes, like Bodin, was writing with his eyes on the events of his time; for he, too, had seen a civil war (English Civil War 1642 – 1649), and for him, as for Bodin, sovereignty was the essential principle of order. Hobbes believed that men need for their security "a common power to keep them in awe and to direct their

actions to the common benefit.” and for him the person or body in whom this power resides, however, it may have been acquired, is the sovereign. Law neither makes the sovereign, nor limits his authority; it is might that makes the sovereign, and law is merely what he commands. Moreover, since the power that is the strongest clearly cannot be limited by any thing outside itself, it follows that sovereignty must be absolute and illimitable; that means, the sovereign power is as great as possibly much can be imagined to make it. This, of course, called totalitarianism pure and simple. Hobbes, in fine, ascertains to have cherished sovereignty being absolute, had a right over everything even over religion.

Whereas a good many writers followed Hobbes, others, especially the founder of the naturalist school of international law, Samuel Pufendorf (German) in his *De Jure Natural et Gentium* (1672) denied in contradistinction to Hobbes, that sovereignty involves omnipotence. According to Pufendorf, sovereignty is the supreme power in a state but not absolute power, and sovereignty may well be constitutionally restricted.⁸

With the coming of constitutional government John Locke (English) in his *Treatise of Civil Government* (1690) propounded a theory that the people as a whole have the sovereignty; and in spite of all the differences in the definition of sovereignty, all the authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries agree that sovereignty is indivisible.⁹

In the eighteenth century matters changed again. Several hundred reigning princes of the member states of the German Empire had in practice although not theoretically, become more or less independent since the Westphalia Peace enforced upon writers the necessity of recognizing a distinction between an absolute, perfect, full sovereignty, on the one hand, and, on the other, a relative, imperfect, not full or half sovereignty. Absolute and full sovereignty was attributed to those monarchs who enjoyed an unqualified independence within and without

their states. Relative and not full sovereignty, was attributed to those monarchs who were, in various points of internal or foreign affairs of state, more or less depended upon other monarchs. By this distinction the divisibility of sovereignty was recognized. And when in 1787 the United States of America turned from a Confederation of states into a Federal state, the division of sovereignty between the sovereign Federal state and the sovereign member states became prominent in political theory. But the divisibility of sovereignty was not universally recognized in the eighteenth century. It suffices to mention Jean-Jacques Rousseau (French) whose *Contract Social* appeared in 1762 and who again defended the indivisibility of sovereignty.¹⁰

Lock, and after him Rousseau propounded the theory that the people as a whole were the sovereign, and in the eighteenth century this became the doctrine which was held to justify the slogan, as a protest against arbitrary government and a demand that government should serve the interests of the governed and not only of the governors, the doctrine of popular sovereignty has had beneficent results, but as a scientific doctrine it rests on a confusion of thought. It tries to combine two contradictory ideas: that of absolute power somewhere in the state, and that of responsibility of every actual holder of power for the use of which he puts it.¹¹

During the nineteenth century the old controversy regarding divisibility of sovereignty had by no means died out. It acquired a fresh stimulus, on the one hand, through Switzerland and Germany turning into federal states, and on the other, through the conflict between the United States of America and her Southern member states. The theory of the concurrent sovereignty of the federal state and its member states, as defended by *The Federalist* (Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay) in 1787, was in Germany taken up by Waitz, who found many followers. The theory of the indivisibility of sovereignty was defended by Calhoun, and many European writers followed him in time.¹²

It is noticeable that as statehood developed international law and relation gained momentum in the sense that states fell to constitute doctrinal principles to be related with one another on the basis of *pacta sunt servanda* effectuating through consent common to each other. The modern law of nations, e.g., international law is a product of Christian civilization. It originally arose between the states of Christendom only, and for hundreds of years was confined to these states. Between Christian and Muhammedan nations a conditions of perpetual enmity prevailed in former centuries. And no constant intercourse existed in former times between Christian and Buddistic states. But from about the beginning of the nineteenth century matters gradually changed. Many interest which knit Christian states together, knit likewise some non-Christian and Christian states.¹³

The old Christian states of western Europe were the original members of the Family of Nations, because the Law of Nations grew up gradually between them through custom and treaties. Whenever afterwards a new Christian state made appearance in Europe, it was received into the existing society by the old members of the Family of Nations. It is for this reason that this law was in former times frequently called "European Law of Nations." But this name has nowadays historical value only, as it has been changed into "Law of Nations" or "International Law" pure and simple.

The Congress of Vienna, 1815 by far first time incorporated principles of the Law of Nations. But in fact International Law until this time was limited to the Christian states – so called civilized nations. However, the Peace Treaty of Paris of 1856 gave rise to all independent and sovereign states to be members of the family of nations. Discrimination of states on the criterion of religion since this treaty ceased. Specifically mentioning, with the reception of Turkey into the Family of Nations in 1856 International Law ceased to be a law between Christian states only.

For many years more and more rules have grown up in the conduct of the states between them to each other. These rules of conduct in the international community are to a great extent customary rules. But side by side with these customary and unwritten rules more and more written rules are daily created by international agreements, such as the Declaration of Paris of 1856 the Hague Rules concerning land warfare of 1899 and 1907, and the vast number of general conventions often referred to as law-making or legislative treaties. Independent and sovereign states emerged with the notion enabling to enter into the community of states under International Law.

When, in the course of events after the French Revolution, central control was wrested from the princes and appropriated by the "people" through its representatives, the control of the military establishments passed into the latter's hands. Maintenance of this control has always seemed of vital importance to those who reflected upon the conditions of successful constitutional government. It is a striking confirmation of their views that the collapse of constitutional orders in Europe after World War I occurred where that monopoly of control over the military was not or could not be maintained.¹⁴

The twentieth century is generally not forgetful for eventual scourge of the two Great Wars but nation state came into existence in Europe after War I and in Africa, Asia and in other areas after War II. Although nation state particularly of Africa, Asia and of other areas are mostly politically unstable, economically dependent but statehood criteria of sovereignty and independence inspired to come out with self entity.

The French Revolution marked the emergence of nationalism as a dominant force in the world. Up until this time, sovereign states had existed and people had been aware of belonging to distinct cultural groups, but now for the first time loyalty to the state and national consciousness were combined in a force which was coexistent with the

emergence of democracy. In a sense nationalism became the cement holding together a people no longer subjected to the rule of an absolute monarch. Loyalty to the ideal or reality of the national state, such as the state consisting of a unified central group, became the most potent force of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Even though communism has within the past few decades seemed a potentially more powerful influence, recent events suggest that even communism must yield to nationalism in the strength and ubiquity of its appeal.¹⁵

In the context of community attainment twentieth century is mentionable for the formation of the League of Nations during its first quarter and the creation of the ongoing United Nations during the second quarter. These organizations have made nation states interested in becoming its member, thereby coming in contact with one another and promoting internationalism in their relations. The new states (in particular the Afro-Asian group) have challenged certain of the basic principles of International Law, stemming from its early European evolution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Moreover, many long-standing rules and concepts of International Law have been subjected to severe strains and stresses under the impact of modern developments in technology of modern economic exigencies, and not least--the more enlightened sociological views and attitudes which prevail today. Above all, there is the present unprecedented political state of affairs, for which the traditional system of International Law was not devised, namely, the division of the world into global and regional blocs, the existence of a "third world" of numerous newly emerged states underdeveloped economically and technologically (and sometimes possessing unstable governments), and numerous groupings and associations into which states have formed themselves.

The twenty-first century as aheading is preceded by the guide of states to call upon to find new rules to govern the fields of nuclear and thermonuclear energy, and scientific research generally, to regulate state

activities in the upper atmosphere and in cosmos, to protect and control the environment of man, and to a new legal regime for the exploitation and exploitation of the resources of the seabed beyond the limits of national sovereignty. Irrefutably, nation states such as modern states do not mean to remain awful to the interests of its own people but to the benefit of mankind as a whole.¹⁶

CONSTITUTIONAL STRESSES : BANGLADESH CONSTITUTION, 1972

A constitution is regarded to be a legal document in which there is a place for rules of law but for practically, nothing else than a sort of manifesto, a confession of faith, a statement of ideals, and a charter of land. These are generally treated as stresses embodied in a constitution. Characteristically, the Constitution of Bangladesh is rigid because which its alternations are subjected to specific provision (Art. 142). The Constitution of Bangladesh was adopted on 4th November 1972. It consists of 153 Articles in XI Parts specifying Part I : The Republic (1--7 Articles); Part II : Fundamental Principles of State Policy (8 – 25 Articles); Part III : Fundamental Rights (26 – 47 Articles); Part IV : The Executive (48 – 64 Articles); Part V : The Legislative (65 – 93 Articles); Part VI : The Judiciary (94 – 117 Articles); Part VII : Elections (118 – 126 Articles); Part VIII : The Comptroller and Auditor-General (127 – 132 Articles). Part IX : The Services of Bangladesh (133 – 141 Articles); Part X : Amendments of the Constitution (142 Article); Part XI : Miscellaneous (143 – 153 Articles).

Fundamental principles of state policy are not judicially enforceable, Artical 8 (2). Fundamental principles as enunciated in Article 8 (1) are nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism along with which other principles under Part II are treated as constituting the fundamental principles of state policy. Headingwise, national unity, socialism and emancipation from exploitation, democracy and human rights, secularism and freedom of religion, principles of ownership,

emancipation of peasants and workers, rural development and cultural revolution, free and compulsory education, public health and morality, equality of opportunity, work as a right and duty, duties of citizens and of public servants, separation of judiciary from the executive, national culture, national monuments, and promotion of international peace, security and solidarity are all the guaranteed fundamental principles under the constitution.

Secularism under Article 12 is perpetuated by provisions such as : (a) communal activity of any king; (b) declaration of any religion by state, (c) abuse of religion for political purposes; and (d) discrimination of a person following some religion or torture inflicted to him to be abolished.

Part III specifies fundamental rights relating to equality before law, discrimination on grounds of religion, equality of opportunity in public employment, abolition of titles, honours and decorations, right to protection of law, protection of right to life and personal liberty, safeguard as to arrest and detention, prohibition of forced labour, protection in respect of trial and punishment, freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of thought and conscience and of speech, freedom of profession or occupation, freedom of religion, right to property, protection of home and correspondence.

Secularism criterion in relation to the fundamental principles has been substituted by inserting, "The Principles of Absolute Trust and Faith in the Almighty Allah."¹⁷ Article 12 as regards secularism and freedom of religion has been omitted.¹⁸ A person whose fundamental rights are infringed is entitled to remedy by filing suit out of writ through the Supreme Court. More specifically, the person so affected can apply to the High Court Division of the Supreme Court for remedy.¹⁹

It is a fact that confusion on matter of state and religion is still going on. Bangladesh is not an exception to this end. The Constitution of Bangladesh, 1972 is above limitations in regard to religion which to all intents and purposes had been left as a personal mechanism to follow.

MODERN STATE WHAT FOR ?

State, government and people are integrally related. None of this can be singled out. Where there is state there is government and where there is government there is people and conversely, it is applicable to entirety. Administration of state can categorically be identified by the nature of the reigning authority. That is to say, what kind of the government is in power, its administration would be of likewise nature. A dictator whatever he would be whether benevolent or other wise, aims at imposing his policies on the governed. Nothing is taken to be considered for the governed. Satisfaction for the dictator is with his credit to the running of the state with such administration. An autocrat takes himself vested with unlimited power to the running of the state. Interests of the people as governed need not be considered. What a dictator or an autocrat does seemingly for the people as practically done for the ruler's interests in disguise of people's interests through state functionings.

A democrat is committed to the goal of promoting government of the people, by the people and for the people. The basis of democratic authority is to ruled by the majority party. Democracy although governed by the majority command but care should be taken to the interests of all concerned. However, the majority party holders seem to be in the upper hand. At present it is not unusual to see corruptions, malpractices and riggings in election results particularly of the poor developing countries whose people suffer from poverty, malnutrition, medical care and shortage of accommodation. Demoratic ideals remain in theory but election results to win stand to be their goal. They want power to rule in their interests. Their authority is defined on the plea that they have majority as a result of which what they do should not be defied. This has caused in saying a truth what democracy is the rule of majority party where minority party holders have no guarantee of the interests at par with the majority ones.

However, it is the very objective of modern state to give away its facilities and privileges to the people. Neither the government nor its bureaucrats understand state facilities and privileges for their own but must conceive all these to the interests of the people. People's access to all concerns of interests needs to be ensured. State functionings should be for the people to get facilities and privileges. Government must be committed to the welfare of the people whatever possible out of the constitutional command.

Bangladesh Constitution, 1972 is not limited to ensure state facilities and privileges. Fundamental principles of state policy and fundamental rights are practically basic rights and freedoms for the people and for the state as obligations. That means, government is under an obligation to promote the principles and the rights for the people on behalf of the state. More specifically, state ownership, cooperative ownership and private ownership, emancipation of the toiling peasants and workers – and backward sections of the people from all forms of exploitation, attainment of basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care, right to work, reasonable rest, recreation and leisure, and social security, removal disparity in the standards of living between the urban and the rural areas, establishing a uniform mass oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children with a view to removing illiteracy raising of the level of nutrition and the improvement of public health and prevention of prostitution and gambling, removal of social and economic inequality, ensuring all citizens equal before the law for equal protection of law and subject to any restriction imposed by law, every citizen shall have the right to acquire, hold, transfer or otherwise dispose of property, and no property shall be compulsorily acquired, nationalized or requisitioned save by authority of law.

The Bangladesh Constitution as it aims is undoubtedly people's interests oriented. But its ends depend on how far the government takes measures for implementing. As long as measures are not made effective at grass root level, there can not then be said people as having the fruits of constitutional provisions although aiming at people's interests.

WHAT TO SUGGEST?

The theory of modern state as propounded by Machiavelli in his celebrated work *The Prince* (1513): "The state is an end in itself and owes allegiance to no law other than that of its own interests."²⁰ The interests of the state cannot be sorted other than the people to be benefited. The doctrinal approach of dictatorship or autocracy cannot be treated as people's interests oriented. Democracy seems to be to the interests of the people. But it cannot be above the majority party's dictation. As a result, what to think for the interests of the people cannot be achieved in certain circumstances. It is therefore, natural to think of some alternative for the sake of the interests of the people. The doctrine of welfare state needs to be considered. The welfare state or the social service state comes to be accepted by the citizens and by the rulers of certain states, particularly of those in which universal suffrage exists, that it is the duty of governments to ensure that all citizens should be provided with a minimum standard of welfare, whether they can afford it or not. They should be provided with education, with health services, with maintenance in times of sickness or unemployment or old age. A fair share of the food that is available should be allocated to each citizen at prices which he can afford to pay. These policies have two characteristics of importance. They are expensive to carry out for they call for a great provision of buildings and equipment and they require for their execution, a large force of salaried workers—teachers, nurses, doctors, administrators, visitors, and inspectors—and that their wages and salaries bill is consequently high.

The welfare services are also needed most by those we can, as a rule, afford them least. It is the rich, the healthy, the employed who must supply the funds from which the poor and the sick and the unemployed receive their assistance. Measures should be provided so that these welfare services will be available wherever they are needed in a country. They have access to what there is and they can transfer it from the better-off citizens or regions to those where the need is greater.²¹

In any case, until people at all level whether governmental or public are limitations free such as free from nepotism, self and group interests and so on, there is little scope for the people to have state facilities and privileges as blessing of sovereign and independent state even under modern theories. However social services oriented doctrine effective to the state machineries suggests to some extent satisfactory for the people about their facilities and privileges achievable out of the functioning's of modern state.

CONCLUSION

In framing a constitution which is intended to last for ages, there should not lose the sights which ages will produce. The Bangladesh Constitution, 1972 was framed ensuring people's rights and religion was enshrined as a tool of personal rite. This sort of provision obviates to be constituted to promote communal amity with a view to removing all forms of communal discrimination. But power hankering attitude of political artisans does not ignore objectives to gain the upper hand. Assertion of "*Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim*" and declaration of Islam as state religion in the Constitution can be said to have been made to the achievement of power through support of the overwhelming Muslim majority of which majority being unquestioned to religious rites in the country.

No human actions are perfect. As a result, changes should not be unwanted. Although the Bangladesh Constitution, 1972 embodied fundamental rights, but the position of fundamental rights may not remain unchanged in certain situation especially in emergency under which circumstances any rights even fundamental rights should in some degree be affected. Emergency powers on the part of the President of the country were subsequently provided under Article 141(a) on the strength of which fundamental rights remain for that time suspended. Although the Bangladesh Constitution is rigid, changes to it as time passes, are getting in assertion of political objectives and in articulation of the needs for the people and thereby to the state in quest of national and international interests as if to the meeting of modern state's exigencies.

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Book Review

Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan : Crisis and Conflict*,
Har-Anand, Publications, Pvt. Ltd.,
New Delhi, 1998. Price : Rs. 495

Based on papers and articles, the book is cast in eight main subjects with forty-six entries. The main subjects are : Pakistan's Democratic Experience, Pakistan's Systematic Crisis, Islam and Pakistan, Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan, Pakistan in the World Politics, Indo-Pakistan Relations and Ethnicity, Democracy and National Integration in Pakistan.

On fundamental question, the author does not agree with the extreme view : "some observers of Pakistan's development have even suggested that Pakistan is a failed state. That would be a rather harsh judgment which could be also applicable to many other developing countries in Asia and Africa."

In his judgment : "Pakistan's major failure has been the inability of the political leadership to mobilize the people on the nation building programmes."

Concentration of power through high offices in the Punjab has been viewed pretty gravely. Military, though holding power for long period, "subverted constitutions and the democratic processes in Pakistan."

He criticized both Nawaz and Benazir as they "have not been able to provide a clean, efficient and popular administration." About Nawaz Sharif's success in consolidation of powers, he concludes : "Media has already begun calling the Prime Minister a democratic despot." These are derogatory views. In his estimation, the Majlis-i-Shoora of Zia-ul-Haq in 1982, a nominated body, had "no legitimacy whatsoever." The creation of Bangladesh has been noted : "One of the major issues which broke up Pakistan in 1971 was the failure of the ruling people to resolve the problem of national integration."

On the 1993 elections, and the new development likely to take place, he observed : "Benazir Bhutto returned to power after forty months in

wilderness. In a way she proved the point that her dismissal in August 1990 was unjustified and the 1990 election was rigged. However, Benazir Bhutto cannot afford to rest on her laurels. She has now a President of her own party and the armed forces have also shown every intention to remain neutral and thus she has no reason to be constantly looking over the shoulders.”

Pakistan's leader of the Opposition Mian Nawaz Sharif gave an ultimatum to President Leghari and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to resign by 11th September, 1996 or else he would start a nationwide campaign against the Government.” He promised to put both the President and the Prime Minister “on trial for the treason if and when he assumes office again.” The author is unwilling to give credit to Nawaz Sharif who diagnosed correctly the political pulse of the time.

The repeal of the Eighth Amendment, the abolition of CDNS (Council for Defence and National Security) the 14th Amendment which curbed the defection of the elected members created a new image of Nawaz Sharif. The author holds that Sharif “weakened the democratic institutions and strengthened the rule by his family coteries.” Unfortunately, for the country, “the political opposition is in disarray.” The author is not prepared to appreciate the strengthening of democratic forces through these measures.

Pakistan in world politics, and Indo-Pakistan relations, were discussed, but there is hardly any new information except the nuclear explosion of May 1998.

Ethnicity, Democracy and National Integration in Pakistan have been treated with a view to stress the rise of the new forces such as provincial languages and political actors. Women and minorities were also discussed.

Studies such as these have the advantage of viewing and expressing opinions on the current subjects. But at the same time, to build a firm view on such diverse material becomes difficult attempt. Such studies are haphazard and not coherent. However, there are a number of opinions which could be gathered from the studies such as these. On many controversial views, one has to read the book with a cautious mind.

Statements

SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL COOPERATION

July to December, 1996

MOU ON SAARC-EU COOPERATION SIGNED

**Brussels : Head Quarters of The European Union,
July 10, 1996**

A Memorandum of Understanding on Administrative Cooperation was signed between SAARC and the European Commission on July 10, 1996 at the Headquarters of the European Union in Brussels. SAARC Secretary-General Naeem U. Hasan and the Director for South and South East Asia, Emiliano Fossati signed the Agreement on behalf of SAARC and EU respectively. The Memorandum of Understanding focuses primarily on exchanges of information, institutional support and training, and technical assistance.

Notwithstanding the bilateral cooperation which already exists between the European Union and all of the SAARC member countries, a strong willingness to improve and strengthen the relations between SAARC and the European Union has been seen in recent years on both sides. The signing of the MOU between EC and SAARC is a first step in setting up a mechanism for promoting cooperation between the two organizations.

While in Brussels, the Secretary-General held meetings with Vice-Chairperson of the South Asia Delegation of the European Parliament. Anita Pollack, Secretary-General of the European Parliament Enrio Vinci, and Director-General in the European Commission Juan Prat Col.

These Statements have been prepared by Syed Karim Haider, Pakistan Study Centre, Quaid-i-Azam Campus, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

A detailed round of discussions was held between the officials of the various services of the Commission and the delegation of the SAARC Secretariat on July 9, 1996. They focused on specific areas/projects in which cooperation could be immediately initiated to implement the Memorandum of Understanding.

The Secretary-General also met the SAARC Ambassadors based in Brussels and briefed them on on-going activities and programmes of the association.

**PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE THIRD SAARC
MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN
OF SOUTH ASIA HELD**

Bhurban, Murree, Pakistan : July 24 – 35, 1996

The Preparatory Committee Meeting preceding the Third SAARC Ministerial Conference on Children of South Asia was held in Bhurban, Murree (Pakistan) on 24--25 July, 1996. The Meeting was attended by representatives from all SAARC member states, SAARC Secretariat and UNICEF.

The meeting was inaugurated by Additional Secretary Shakeel Ahmed of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education. Who in his statement noted that SAARC initiatives have led to substantial impact towards promoting regional cooperation on a range of policy, legal, technical and operational issues relating to the welfare of children in the region. Highlighting the issues before the Committee, the Additional Secretary pointed out that the task before the Preparatory Committee was to reach a consensus on technical issues to be addressed at the forthcoming SAARC Ministerial Conference to be held in Pakistan and also present a "Vision for Children for the Year 2000 and Beyond" by considering emerging issues, trends and future strategies for the development of children.

The meeting opened by Director SAARC Secretariat, Mrs. Kunzang C. Namgyel was chaired by Dr. Ghulam Mustafa Awan, Joint Chief Economist, Planning and Development Division, and leader of the delegation of Pakistan.

The Meeting considered the recommendations made by the Expert Group which had met earlier in June 1996 and noted that its recommendations had been appropriately reflected in the background papers as well as the draft Rawalpindi Resolution prepared by Pakistan. The Committee also considered the draft background papers on the seven themes of the Conference and decided to approve these papers with the amendments proposed by member states.

The meeting while considering the constitution of Working Groups for the Ministerial Conference to discuss the seven themes, decided that the Chairpersons of the seven Working Groups would be as follows :

Basic Education	Bangladesh
Environment of the Child	Pakistan
Young Child Nutrition	Sri Lanka
Maternal Mortality and Women Health	Maldives
Girl Child	Bhutan
Child Health	Nepal
Child Protection	India

The draft Agenda of the Third SAARC Ministerial Conference on Children of South Asia scheduled to be held in Rawalpindi on 20--22 August, 1996 was approved. Likewise the draft Rawalpindi Resolution was considered by the Committee.

SOUTH ASIAN WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL COOPERATION IN TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION SECTOR

Hyderabad, India: July 24--26, 1996.

A South Asian Workshop on Regional Cooperation in Transport and Communication Sectors was organized by Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) in collaboration with the Coalition for Action on South Asian Co-operation (CASAC) in Hyderabad, India on 24 - 26 July 1996.

For the last 12 years, ASCI has been undertaking research and organizing seminars and workshops with a view to promoting regional co-operation among the SAARC countries. The Workshop attended by 24 experts from the SAARC member states was held with a view to examine the role of transport and communication infrastructure facilities towards promoting and enhancing economic co-operation in the SAARC region. The SAARC Secretariat was represented by Director Ashok K. Attri, who presented a paper detailing the activities and programmes of SAARC in the field of economic co-operation, transport and communications.

The workshop provided a useful forum to identify country-specific problems in transport and communication sectors in a South Asian perspective : to suggest specific bilateral and multilateral strategies, programmes and projects aimed at developing more integrated and coordinated regional transport and communication networks with the view to promoting more cost-effective, faster and more reliable movements of goods, services, information and people across and through regional borders and to delineate the roles of SAARC fora, governments, public and private enterprises, and multilateral agencies in the development of these sectors in a coordinated regional framework.

SAARC-CIDA COOPERATION AGREEMENT IN THE OFFING

Ottawa, Canada : July 25-- 26, 1996

SAARC Secretariat and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) have been holding consultations with a view to finalizing a SAARC-CIDA Cooperation Agreement for the mutual benefit of the two institutions. In this connection, SAARC Secretary-General Naeem U. Hasan during the course of a private visit to Canada was in Ottawa from July 25 to 26, 1996 for discussions with Canadian officials.

During his visit to Ottawa the Secretary-General called on Canadian Assistant Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Leonard

Edwards and the senior officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. He visited CIDA Headquarters and exchanged views with Yves Bolanger, Director Bangladesh and South Asia Regional Programmes ; Ernest Loevinsohn, Director-General Food Aid Centre ; and Jean Marc Metivier, Vice-President, Asia Branch. He also paid a courtesy call on Member of Parliament and Parliamentary Secretary to the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Francis Lebiac.

The Secretary-General was also invited to deliver a lecture at the Carleton University, Ottawa as part of the University's South Asia Seminar Series Presentation. The Secretary-General's address was devoted to the ongoing SAARC activities and programmes with focus on economic and trade cooperation and also reviewed the prospects of SAARC to forge closer cooperation and interaction between the countries of South Asia. The lecture was attended by a cross-section of Canadian society including Government officials, academicians, scholars and representatives of NGOs dealing with South Asia.

The draft of the SAARC-CIDA Cooperation Agreement is presently under active consideration of the member states.

EXPERT GROUP REVIEWS SAARC CHAIRS, FELLOWSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS SCHEME

Colombo, Sri Lanka : July 26 - 27, 1996

A meeting of SAARC Group of Experts was held in Colombo on July 26--27 1996 to review the SAARC Chairs, Fellowships and Scholarships scheme. The Deputy Minister of Higher Education of Sri Lanka, Prof. W. A. Wiswa Warnapala, in his inaugural address stressed the need to breakaway from the colonial mould and construct a SAARC tradition that would be in keeping with the national needs of the SAARC countries. He further stressed the need to develop regional strategy to encourage academic interaction and the linkage between Universities in the region and expressed the hope that the present scheme will be

instrumental in achieving these objectives. Director SAARC Secretariat, Suresh Pradhan briefed the delegates at the inaugural session on the objectives of the meeting and highlighted the issues that needed to be addressed by the member states to streamline the operation of the scheme.

The Meeting conducted its deliberations under the Chairmanship of Prof. S. Tilakaratna Chairman of the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka. After extensive discussions, the meeting proposed a number of recommendations aimed at improving the implementation of the Scheme. Representatives from member states attending the meeting presented status reports on the implementation of the Scheme in their respective countries. The recommendations of the Group include those relating to preparation of a comprehensive information brochure by each member country giving details of their offers under the Scheme, expediting dissemination of such information and sending in applications within specified time-frames as well as improving the terms and conditions of the offers to make them more attractive and prestigious. It also recommended to appoint a committee, where necessary, at national level consisting of representatives from relevant agencies such as Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Education/Higher Education, and Finance as well as University Grants Commission for improvement of the monitoring of the Scheme and sought regular and periodic review of the progress by the Technical Committee on Education, Culture and Sports.

SAARC CONFERENCE ON COOPERATION IN POLICE MATTERS HELD

Colombo, Sri Lanka ; July 29--31, 1996.

The SAARC Conference aimed at promoting cooperation among the SAARC member countries in the vital area of elimination of drug trafficking and terrorism in the region was held in Colombo from July 29--31, 1996. The three-day conference was attended by delegates from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Minister of

Irrigation, Power and Energy and Deputy Minister of Defence of Sri Lanka General Anuruddha Ratwatta, in his Keynote address at the inaugural session highlighted the areas of work being undertaken in SAARC and underlined the challenges that confronted all nations in their attempt to eliminate drug trafficking, terrorism and related crimes. In this context, the Minister observed that it is only through sharing of information and experiences that SAARC countries could collectively and meaningfully face up to these challenges.

SAARC Secretary-General Naeem U. Hasan through his message to the meeting, read out by Director Ranjit P. Jayasooriya, conveyed his concern at the spread of drug trafficking and terrorism in the SAARC region and the need for taking concrete and collective action.

During the three-day conference, delegations presented county papers which primarily focused on issues of concern to individual member countries. Through these presentations member countries exchanged views on ways and means of further strengthening cooperation, particularly in the areas of terrorism, narcotic drug padding, extradition of offenders, training, transfer of technology and sharing of information. The meeting made a number of recommendations for the consideration of the Standing Committee. They include, strengthening of the existing SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) and SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (SDOMD) in Colombo by providing relevant information from all member states; sharing of expertise, especially in different areas of police investigation particularly relating to organized and drug related crimes; and increasing training opportunities to share knowledge and experience on latest techniques available in the member countries.

The participants recommended to have their second conference in the Maldives in 1997. The regular gatherings of Police officers reflects the growing interaction and cooperation of SAARC countries in various areas of mutual interest.

SECRETART-GENERAL'S ROUND OF MEETINGS**Kathmandu, Nepal : August, 1996.**

The following visitors called on the SAARC Secretary-General during August 1996, at the SAARC Secretariat :

1. Dr. Liam Fox, MP, Parliamentary Under. Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
2. Mr. M. Ali Shah, Resident Chief of Asian Development Bank, Kathmandu.
3. Mr. K.R. Venugopal, Chief Poverty Alleviation of UNDP, Kathmandu.
4. Ms. Sarah Ewans, Director, British Council, Kathmandu

The Secretary-General also met Hon. Santa Bahadur Rai, Chairman of Public Service Commission of Nepal in Kathmandu.

**TOURSIM COUNCIL OF SAARC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
AND INDUSTRY MEETS IN LAHORE****Lahore, Pakistan : August 4, 1996.**

The Tourism Council constituted by the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) to contribute to the development of tourism sector, organized a Seminar in Lahore, Pakistan on August 4, 1996.

The Council aims at promoting tourism in the SAARC region through increased flow of tourists within and outside the region. Promotion of the tourism sector is expected to lead to economic development of the region and strengthen regional cooperation at the private sector level.

The one-day Seminar organized in association with the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) reviewed the current status and existing policies of the industry. It was inaugurated by Senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour, President FPCCI. Riaz H Quraishi, Chairman, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation and Hasan Raja Pasha, Additional Secretary and Incharge. Youth and Tourism Division of Pakistan participated in the Seminar as the Chief Guest and the Guest of Honour, respectively.

The working sessions were chaired by Padma Jyoti, Chairman of the Governing Board of SCCI Tourism Council. The delegations from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated in the Seminar. The SAARC Secretariat was represented by Ashok K. Attri, Director Addressing the Seminar on behalf of the SAARC Secretary-General, Mr. Attri expressed satisfaction that SCCI has shown keen interest in promoting tourism in addition to trade in the SAACR region in keeping with the objectives laid down in it's the Constitution Similar Seminars are planned by the Tourism Council of SCCI in Colombo, New Delhi and Kathmandu during 1996.

COUNCIL FOR SAARC FUND FOR REGIONAL PROJECTS MEETS

Thimphu : August 6--7, 1996

The Council for SAARC Fund for Regional Projects (CSFRP) during its Eleventh Meeting held at Timphu on August 6--7,1996 reviewed progress of project studies and their current status of sponsorship.

The regular readers of SAARC newsletter are aware that CSFRP is currently working on feasibility studies pertaining to thirteen regional projects in Member States. Studies for ten projects have been completed whereas the remaining are under completion. The meeting which was opened by the Chairman National Development Finance Corporation (NDFC) of Pakistan Khalid Iqbal was attended by all members of the

Council. Director, Tahir Iqbal Butt represented the SAARC Secretariat at the meeting.

**SAARC SECRETARY-GENERAL CALLS ON
BANGLADESH PRIME MINISTER**

Dhaka, Bangladesh : August 12--14, 1996.

SAARC Secretary-General, Naeem U. Hasan during his visit to Bangladesh from 12--14 August called on Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina Wajed and briefed the Bangladesh Premier on the on-going programmes and activities of SAARC with special reference to the preparations underway for the next session of the Council of Ministers scheduled to be held in New Delhi in December this year. Matters pertaining to the Ninth SAARC Summit to be hosted by Maldives in May next year were also discussed.

Sheikh Hasina Wajed reiterated her Government's deep commitment to SAARC and expressed the hope that SAARC would play a more active role by focusing on economic and commercial relations among Member States. She also highlighted the need for promoting greater people-to-people contacts within the region and in this context emphasized the importance of exchange of business and trade delegations to promote commercial activity in the region. The Bangladesh Prime Minister also conveyed her country's full support for strengthening of the SAARC Secretariat and the role of the SAARC Secretary-General. The Secretary-General also called on Bangladesh Foreign Minister, Abdus Samad Azad and highlighted on a number of issues relating to SAARC. He also held talks with Foreign Secretary Farooq Subhan during his visit to Dhaka. During the course of these talks, developments since the last Session of the Council of Ministers held in New Delhi in December 1995 were reviewed. Matters pertaining to the next Meeting of the Council of Ministers as well as other important SAARC meeting such as the SAARC Ministerial Conference on Children of South Asia, a high level Meeting to evolve a

common SAARC position for the World Food Summit in Rome, etc., also figured during the discussion. The Secretary-General outlined the increased ongoing contacts being established by the SAARC Secretariat with other regional and international organizations, the most recent of which was the conclusion of a SAARC-European Commission Agreement of Cooperation.

While in Dhaka, the Secretary-General also met the Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament, Humayun Rashed Choudhury and discussed parliamentary cooperation among SAARC countries including the holding of the next meeting of the SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians. It may be mentioned that SAARC Parliamentarians have already been exempted from requirements of visa for travel to Member Countries to encourage increased contact and cooperation between the public representatives in South Asia.

SAARC DRUMMING AND DANCE FESTIVAL

Colombo, Sir Lanka : August 14--18, 1996.

One of the priorities of SAARC has been to facilitate greater interaction and strengthen the affinities among the peoples of South Asia through cultural activities. Newsletter readers would recall that the first ever major SAARC cultural event, the "South Asian Festival," was held in October 1992 in India with popular participation from all member countries.

The second cultural event, the "SAARC Drumming and Dance Festival" in Colombo on 14-18 August 1996, was well received and recognised as an event which showed the South Asian Dance and Drumming skills and traditions. Artists from all member states presented colourful dance and drumming series, indigenous to their individual countries. Prime Minister, Madam Sirimavo Bandaranaike inaugurated the festival at BMICH (Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall) in Colombo. The festival was sponsored under the SAARC-Japan Special Fund.

**SAARC MINISTERS ADOPT
“RAWALPINDI RESOLUTION ON CHILDREN OF SOUTH
ASIA”**

Rawalpindi, Pakistan : August 20--22, 1996

Welfare of the Children of South Asia has always been high in the SAARC Agenda. Successive summits have reiterated the commitment of SAARC leaders to address issues relating to children. The Third SAARC Ministerial Conference on Children of South Asia was held in Rawalpindi on 20 - 22 August, 1996 to give further impetus to the efforts of member countries and to undertake a mid-term review of the World Summit Declaration on Children .

The “Rawalpindi Resolution on Children of South Asia” adopted at the conclusion of the Conference takes into account the implementation of earlier decisions as well as mid-decade goals contained in the National Plans of Action drawn up within the overall framework of the World Summit Declaration on Children. It takes full cognizance of the pioneering work of SAARC focusing on the needs and initiation of a series of organized steps in the area of child development. It stresses on the urgency to achieve the goals for children and women through greater commitment of resources and through increased partnership between the Government and Communities. The Resolution embodies a Vision Beyond . The Year 2000 and the Ministers have recommended through the resolution that the years 2001-2010 be declared as the “SAARC Decade of the Rights of the Child.” The Rawalpindi Resolution reflects SAARC’s common resolve to build a secure future for the children of South Asia.

Prime Minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto while inaugurating the three-day Conference highlighted the need for sustained support from all member states to fulfil the dream of nurturing children in a secure and happy environment. Moving from promise to performance, South Asian countries must implement the commitments already made, in order to decrease the 50 million child deaths predicted over the next decade,

attain economic solvency, end gender discrimination, and fight the spread of epidemics, she said. The Prime Minister identified issues such as gender equality, right of the girl child, rights of the children especially in difficult circumstances and education for the children as priority areas which require strengthening of regional efforts. As a future strategy for the region. She called for realistic examination of new emerging issues like child labour and trafficking of children with the objective to solving them. The Conference must aim to eliminate the gap between the world our children will inherit, and the world they should inherit, she said.

The Conference was formally opened by SAARC Secretary-General, Naeem U. Hasan, and chaired by the leader of the Pakistani delegation, Minister of Social Welfare and Special Education Dr. Sher Afgan Khan Niazi.

SAARC Secretary-General in his statement highlighted the issues relating to the survival, protection and development of children in the region and stated that they were of utmost significance for the countries in the SAARC region, home to more than 410 million of the entire global population of children under the age fifteen. In this context he emphasized the need to make rapid stride in ameliorating the quality of life of large segments of the population and rid the region of acute manifestations of deprivation through first and foremost tackling the problems faced by children.

The leaders of delegations of all Member States presented their country statements which gave an overview of the progress made on the issue and concerns relating to children at national levels.

The Conference also adopted reports by seven Working Groups each chaired by a Member Country on different themes namely, Basic Education (Bangladesh), Environment of the Child (Pakistan), Young Child Nutrition (Sri Lanka), Maternal Mortality and Women Health (Maldives), Girl Child (Bhutan), Child Health (Nepal) and Child Protection (India).

The Conference was attended by all SAARC member states and the SAARC Secretariat. UNICEF attended as a special invitee and closely collaborated in organizing the Conference.

TRAINING WORKSHOP ON THE ROLE OF NGOs IN DEMAND REDUCTION HELD

Islamabad, Pakistan : September 2--3, 1996

The Training Workshop on the role of NGOs in Demand Reduction was held in Islamabad on 2--3 September 1996 under the Chairmanship of Shakil Durrani, Director (Planning and Development), Directorate, Anti Narcotics Force, Islamabad as Chairman of the Technical Committee on Prevention of Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse.

The workshop was attended by participants from India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In his inaugural address the Chairman highlighted the importance of NGOs in the field of drug demand reduction and gave details of the Masterplan for drug control prepared by Pakistan to effectively control drug trafficking, crop substitution, money laundering, prevention and treatment aspects of the drug problem. He also emphasized the need for networking of Drug Control NGOs in SAARC region and establishment of national focal points for drug demand reduction.

The participants presented their country reports at the workshop giving brief outlines of the drug demand reduction programmes presently in progress at the Government and Non-Government levels in their respective countries. In addition, speakers from the host country also presented papers on different themes.

At the end of the deliberations, important recommendations were made covering such areas as exchange of research and survey documents on drug demand reduction among the SAARC countries and NGOs through designated focal points, networking of NGOs active in drug demand reduction, creation of databases on successful demand reduction projects and implementation of harm reduction programmes.

**TOURISM COUNCIL OF SCCI HOLDS A SEMINAR
ON "COMMON POLICY FOR PROGRESS"**

Colombo, Sri Lanka : September 2--4, 1996

The Second Seminar of Tourism Council of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry was held in Colombo on 2--4 September 1996 on the theme "Common Policy for Progress". The seminar, attended by delegates from all SAARC Member Countries, was inaugurated by Minister of Media, Tourism and Aviation Dharmasiri Senanayake. The Inaugural Session was also addressed by the President of FCCISL, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Tourism Council and Ashok K. Attri, Director, SAARC Secretariat. There was high level participation of private sector representatives in the Seminar from all Member Countries. The heads of private sector bodies dealing with hotel and tourism industry and tour operators in Sri Lanka participated in the Seminar. The programmes of the SCCI Tourism Council are being coordinated by the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and industry (FNCCI) Vice-President of SCCI, Padma Jyoti is the Chairman of the Governing Board of SCCI Tourism Council.

"LITERACY"

**SPECIAL TV AND RADIO PROGRAMMES
TO BE AIRED ON 8 DECEMBER 1996**

Colombo, Sri Lanka : September 3--5, 1996

The Fifteenth Meeting of the SAARC Audio Visual Exchange (SAVE) Committee held in Colombo on 3--5 September 1996 auditioned/previewed the special Radio and TV joint productions on "1996 - SAARC Year of Literacy" and decided to broadcast/telecast the programmes on 8 December 1996 to coincide with the SAARC Charter Day. Earlier in June 1996, Colombo hosted a Meeting of Producers, which finalized details of the modalities for the production of the programmes. While the joint production of the Radio programme was coordinated by India, Pakistan coordinated the production of the TV programme.

The Committee during its annual meeting reviewed implementation of its earlier decisions. It noted the usefulness of the two training programmes, i.e., (i) Workshop on Transmitter Engineering and Modulation Systems and (ii) Workshop on Television studio Measurements, held in Pakistan under SAARC-Japan special fund and decided to organize on a regular basis in future, similar training programmes covering other relevant fields.

Under the aegis of the Committee, Member Countries marked the "Tenth Anniversary of SAARC" by broadcasting the programme "Songs from the SAARC Member Countries" and telecasting "The Land of Music (SAACR)" in all Member Countries. The Committee noted that additional programmes were also broadcast/telecast by some Member Countries to mark the decade.

The Committee discussed the feedback of SAVE programmes and noted that a recent research carried out in Sri Lanka showed that whenever SAVE programmes were broadcast during prime time the response was high. Other Member Countries also informed the Committee that the SAVE programmes are well-received in their countries. It was noted that with the inclusion of SAARC in the school curricula in some Member Countries, there was greater interest and appreciation among the youth on SAARC activities including the SAVE programmes.

The meeting was attended by representatives from all Member States. It was inaugurated by the Minister of Media, Tourism, and Aviation of Sri Lanka, Darmasiri Senannayake, who in his inaugural address highlighted the important role of SAVE in creating greater awareness of the South Asian consciousness among the peoples of the region and emphasized the need to provide political leadership to the efforts of technical bodies such as SAVE to encourage them in their work. In addition to the regular SAVE programmes, the Committee decided to telecast on 20th November, 1996 in all Member Countries a special programme on children titled "Children of South Asia – A vision beyond 2000."

The meeting was addressed by the Chairman of Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation, D E W Gunasekara and Director, SAARC Secretariat, Ahmed Latheef who briefed the delegates on the activities of SAVE, particularly since the last meeting of the Committee and highlighted those issues that need to be addressed during the meeting.

It will be recalled that SAARC Radio and TV Quiz programmes are being organized regularly under the aegis of SAVE. The Third SAARC Radio Quiz and the Fourth SAARC TV Quiz will be organized in 1997 in India and Sri Lanka respectively.

EFFORTS UNERWAY FOR “JIONT PROMOTION OF SAARC REGION AS A TOURIST DESTINATION”

Colombo, Sri Lanka : September 5--6 1996

The Sixth Meeting of the Technical Committee on Tourism held in Colombo on 5--6 September 1996 addressed a number of relevant issues aimed at joint promotion of SAARC region as a tourist destination. These include organizing joint pacage production of joint brochures, production of a SAARC trade guide, production of a joint promotional film, SAARC joint participation in International Tourism Fairs and implementation of the SAARC Scheme for Promotion of Organized Tourism.

The Committee felt the need to have a comprehensive strategy for the overall development of tourism for the next five-year period. It recommended the establishment of an expert group to prepare such a strategy including quantified goals/objectives and detailed strategies in a time-bound manner. It was agreed that the group should include representatives of the National Tourism Organization, Civil Aviation authorities, and other relevant government agencies like Immigration and Customs as well as representatives of the private sector apex bodies.

The Committee reviewed progress in the implementation of its earlier recommendations. In this context delegates reported on the action taken in their respective countries to implement the Action Plan on Tourism and discussed such issues as training, exchange of information and transportation.

The Committee welcomed the announcement by Sri Lanka to host the first meeting of the Ministers of Tourism of SAARC countries in March 1997 in Colombo. It also welcomed the establishment of the Tourism Council of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and recommended that the Chairman of the Tourism Council of SCCI or his representative should be made a permanent invitee for making presentation at all future meetings of Technical Committee on Tourism.

The SAARC Secretariat was requested to explore the possibility of entering into a framework agreement of cooperation with Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and World Tourism Organization (WTO), Madrid.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary, Ministry of Media, Tourism and Aviation of Sri Lanka, K. Marimuthu. All Member Countries participated in the meeting.

The meeting was inaugurated by Minister of Media, Tourism and Aviation Dharmasiri Senanayake. Deputy Minister for Tourism and Aviation Mrs. Nirupama Rajapakse, Deputy Minister of Media, Alavi Moulana and other dignitaries attended the inaugural ceremony.

SAARC Secretariat was represented by Director , Ashok K. Attri, who delivered a statement at the inaugural session on behalf of SAARC Secretary-General.

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS UNDER SAPTA CONTINUE

Islamabad, Pakistan : September 7 -- 8, 1996

The Second Meeting of Inter-Government Group (IGG) on Trade Liberalization was held in Islamabad on 7 – 8 September 1996 to carry

forward the Second Round of Trade Negotiations under SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA).

The Group reviewed progress in the implementation of recommendations of its first meeting held in Colombo in March this year. The delegates informed the meeting of the measures being taken by their countries in liberalizing trade and reducing tariff rates and exchanged further information among themselves. They also exchanged lists of products and information on trade control measures applicable on those products. The process of exchange of lists of products was completed during the meeting.

An exclusive session was devoted to matters specifically relating to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The meeting was unanimous in its decision that LDCs deserve special and more favourable treatment for the overall benefit of the whole of SAARC region.

The delegates conducted detailed and in-depth bilateral negotiations on trade concessions. The meeting agreed that all remaining preparatory work should be completed urgently in order to conclude the Second Round of Trade Negotiations at the next meeting of the Group to be held shortly.

The Group recommended that the Committee on Economic Cooperation (CEC) consider convening a separate meeting of a Group of Experts on Trade Facilitation. This Group of Experts should discuss relevant issues including the broad spectrum of trade facilitation measures such as transport, professional and financial services, ports, shipping, air transport, etc.

The meeting was attended by representatives of all SAARC Member Countries. Commerce Secretary of Pakistan, Salman Faruqi inaugurated the meeting. Highlighting the progress made in promoting economic and trade cooperation among the countries of the region, the

Secretary in his inaugural address stated that the agreement to reduce tariffs on 226 HS lines, though modest was of great significance and an important first step. He expressed his hope that the second meeting of IGG and subsequent meetings would carry forward the process to achieve the desired objective of creating the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA).

The SAARC Secretariat was represented by Director, Ashok K. Attri who also addressed the meeting.

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ROUND OF MEETINGS

Held in September, 1996

**During the Month of September, the Secretary-General
Met the following Dignitaries :**

Ms. Robind Raphel, US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs was briefed by the Secretary-General on the ongoing activities of SAARC with particular emphasis on the priority areas of cooperation among the SAARC Member States including the progress of implementation of SAPTA and the ongoing second round of trade negotiations under the Agreement.

This was followed by the visit of Jan Eric Hall, Desk Officer for Nepal and South Asian Affairs of the Department of State, Washington who met the Secretary-General for a broad exchange of views on matters of mutual interest with focus on SAARC programmes and activities .

The Secretary-General's meeting with Hillary Senate, the newly appointed Assistant Under Secretary for South and South East Asia of the British Foreign Office was devoted to a review of SAARC Integrated Programme of Action ; trade and commercial cooperation; and poverty eradication programmes in the SAARC region. The recently signed

SAARC-EC Cooperation Agreement and the joint activities planned under the Memorandum were also discussed. Likewise, the Secretary-General received Michel Cadieux, Head of the Canadian Cooperation Office in Kathmandu in connection with the proposed SAARC-CIDA Agreement.

The growing contacts between the SAARC Secretariat and UN Agencies were reflected in the number of visitors from the UN System who called on the Secretary-General. These included Ms. Carroll Long, UNDP Resident Representative in Kathmandu. It may be mentioned that SAARC and UNDP Cooperation Agreement had been fully activated and a number of joint activities particularly in the area of poverty eradication are being undertaken by the two organization.

Another visitor to the Secretariat was Koli Kouame, Regional Director of UNDCP based in New Delhi, who during his call on the Secretary-General, reviewed in detail the implementation of the SAARC-UNDCP Cooperation Agreement signed in 1995.

SAARC Secretariat has also initiated contacts with the World Bank. In this connection, Dr. Jose Furtado, Senior Environmental Specialist at the Bank paid a courtesy call on the Secretary-General and explored the possibility of organizing a joint SAARC-World Bank activity in the field of Environment which is one of the priority areas of SAARC under the Integrated Programme of Action.

The recently arrived German Ambassador to Nepal, Dr. Klaus Barth also paid a courtesy call on the Secretary-General.

SAARC Secretariat continues to encourage the activities of NGOs and professional bodies to compliment the process of inter-Governmental cooperation. This was reflected in the presence of the Secretary-General as one of the Speakers at the Eighth Annual Fund Raising

Workshop organized by the South Asian Fund Raising Group (SAFRG) in collaboration with Child NGO Federation-Nepal held in Kathmandu from September 22 to 24. The Secretary-General in his address on the occasion underscored the need for Governments and private bodies to work hand in hand for the welfare of the peoples of the region.

Other visitors to the Secretariat included Rolt Bendt, Secretary-General and Dr. Jurgen Axet, Regional Director for South Asia of the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (FNSt). The delegation briefed the Secretary-General on its cooperative ventures with the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) to promote tourism in the SAARC region. The Secretary-General welcomed this development and conveyed his appreciation for their preparation of several studies on South Asia and other forms of assistance to various agencies in the region.

The Secretary-General also received a joint delegation from the Entrepreneurship Institute of India and the Industrial Enterprises Development Centre of Nepal. He acknowledged the work being undertaken by EDI to promote cooperation in South Asia particularly in promoting youth related activities.

EXPERTS MEET ON POPULATION RESEARCH AND TRAINING

Dhaka, Bangladesh : September 16, 1996

A one-day workshop was held in Dhaka on September 16, 1996 to assess the requirements of SAARC countries in the field of Population Research and Training with a view to strengthen coordination and cooperation among the SAARC countries.

Thirteen delegates from India, Maldives, Pakistan and the host country Bangladesh participated in the workshop. The workshop identified areas for enhancing cooperation among the Member Countries

and include those such as population related research and training, networking among research and training institutes of SAARC countries. The need to provide specialized training to medical doctors, nurses, senior officials, programme personnel service providers, administrators and policy makers was also emphasized. The training fields that were identified include specialization training on statistics, population research, demography, health administration motivation and mass communication, IEC, monitoring and supervision, management training, clinical/skill training, curriculum development, programme strategies, family planning impact evaluation, etc. In this regard training facilities and requirements of different countries were also discussed.

The meeting decided to share knowledge and experiences through dissemination of research findings among the Member Countries on such issues as involvement of males in contraceptive practice, reasons for declining of women population, increase in teenage fertility and its consequences, health status of old age population, STD and AIDS prevention as well as health and family planning integration.

SIMINAR ON THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN PREVENTION OF DRUG ABUSE

Dhaka, Bangladesh : September 21--22,1996

The SAARC Seminar on the Role of the Mass Media in Prevention of Drug Abuse was held in Dhaka on 21--22 September 1996. The Seminar was attended by participants from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Delegates presented country reports at the seminar. The two day seminar made a number of recommendations, which highlighted the need to develop an effective media policy that would sensitise the public through dissemination of proper messages to curb the menace of drug trafficking and drug abuse. Such a policy should delineate the code of

ethics and help ensure that messages through mass media are not damaging and counter productive towards awareness creation and prevention. The seminar urged that the media should increasingly propagate a life style free from drugs. It also emphasized that appropriate measures should be taken to avoid drug use being glamourised on cinema especially given the impact of cinema on its viewers. The seminar also recommended that efforts should be made to effectively use folk and traditional media for disseminating proper messages of drug abuse prevention in the rural areas as a vast majority of the people of South Asia live in those areas.

DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR CONTROL OF TB AND AIDS DISCUSSED

Kathmandu, Nepal : September 23--25, 1996

The SAARC Consultative Meeting on TB and AIDS organized by SAARC Tuberculosis Centre was held in Kathmandu on 23--25 September 1996. The three-day meeting was attended by representatives from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan. The main elements of the proposed regional strategy for the control to TB and AIDS in the Member Countries are :

- (i) Advocacy, training, research and care of patients with HIV and TB.
- (ii) STC will function as a Nodal Centre to strengthen coordination and cooperation among Member Countries through the dissemination of information with feedback to be given by Member Countries on initiatives taken at the national level to control the disease.
- (iii) Member Countries to develop a five-year action plan to control the epidemics with facility for annual review of the results and dissemination through STC.

- (iv) Exchange of experts on TB and AIDS control to share information and experiences on programmes.
- (v) Annual meeting of TB/HIV experts from the SAARC region to be held by rotation in the Member Countries to review progress of activities on TB and AIDS control in each country and to identify areas for collaboration.
- (vi) STC will establish a referral laboratory for quality control.

**SEMINAR ON AIR TRANSPORT
HELD IN KATHMANDU**

Kathmandu, Nepal : September 24--25, 1996

A "Seminar on Air Transport" was held in Kathmandu on 24--25 September 1996 as part of the Calendar of Activities of the Technical Committee on Transport for the year 1996. The two-day seminar was attended by participants from Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Director, SAARC Secretariat R.P. Jayasooriya gave a brief background on the activities being held under the Technical Committee on Transport and expressed the hope that the seminar would provide an opportunity to the delegates to exchange information and explore new ideas in the Civil Aviation field.

The seminar was inaugurated by Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Dipendra Purush Dhakal, who in his opening remarks pointed out the need to adopt a common policy and mobilize human resources for the development of tourism sector in the SAARC Region. Stating about Nepal's recent experiment with privatizing aviation services, the Secretary expressed the hope that the private sector would also soon be granted permission to operate international flights.

During the two-day seminar, delegates presented their country papers highlighting the areas of work being done by their Civil Aviation authorities in the areas of air traffic control, air safety measures, etc.

The recommendations emerging from the Seminar include those relating to launching of the ICAO Flight Safety Oversight Programme, expeditiously completing the formalities to establish SARCA (South Asian Regional Cooperation in Aviation), enhancing Human Resource Development in the area of Civil Aviation and Airlines, linking SAARC capitals by national carriers and provision of fifth freedom rights. It was proposed to make the Seminar on Air Transport an annual feature in the Calendar of Activities of the Technical Committee on Transport and the theme for the 1997 Seminar was decided as "Air Transport Liberalization."

SAARC WORKSHOP ON COMMERCIALISATION OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

Dhaka, Bangladesh : September 29--30, 1996

The SAARC Workshop on Commercialization of R & D Result was held at Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), Dhaka on September 29--30, 1996 with participation from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

The workshop underlined the need to accelerate and strengthen human resource development efforts in Member Countries to successfully implement R&D activities in the region. It also highlighted the importance of judicious selection of R & D projects taking into account individual needs of Member Countries. It recommended that selection should be based on proper planning and market survey and availability of indigenous raw materials and should use environment-friendly technologies. It also called for the creation of a common fund under SAARC Secretariat for successful implementation of Research and Development (R&D) activities and subsequent commercialization of R&D results.

The Workshop adopted several recommendations for successful implementation of activities in SAARC countries and for accelerating

and strengthening human resources development in the region. These include provision of incentives to scientists and technologists--the personnel directly involved in R&D activities, to accelerate commercialization of R&D results. Dissemination of Agricultural R&D results among farmers, safeguarding indigenous technology based on industries and preparation of comprehensive directory of scientists were also highlighted during the workshop.

The two-day workshop was chaired by Chairman-in-Charge of BCSIR Dr. F Z Majid. Secretary-in-Charge of the Ministry of Science and Technology of Bangladesh M Fazlur Rahman, addressing the Closing Session as the Chief Guest expressed his hope that the recommendations of the workshop will be duly implemented leading to fruitful developments in the region.

EFFECTIVE UTILISATION OF INDIGENOUS METHODS FOR TREATMENT OF DRUG DEPENDENCE DISCUSSED

Islamabad, Pakistan : October 1--2, 1996

A Workshop on effective utilization of indigenous methods for treatment of drug dependence was held in Islamabad on 1--2 October 1996.

The two-day workshop after detailed deliberation included presentation of papers covering subjects such as effective and rational use of allopathic medicine, Homeopathic medicine, and Hikmat (practice of traditional medicine) in detoxification of drug dependent persons : effectiveness of Acupuncture in detoxification of drug addicted persons : economic models of treatment and rehabilitation Centres : as well as Islamic teachings and disciplines as tool for rehabilitation of drug dependent persons.

The recommendations of the workshop include the adoption of indigenous systems, i.e., Unani Hikmat, Homeopathic, Acupuncture. Siddh. Yoga and Meditations, towards the treatment of drug addicts in all

the SAARC countries, in view of their proven efficacy in tackling physical and psychological conditions associated with addiction.

The importance of dissemination of technical knowledge and professional experience in the utilization of indigenous systems of medicine in the treatment of drug addicts on a regular basis was highlighted and the workshop recommended the development of systematic policy measures to establish and strengthen cooperation in this field among the member countries of South Asian.

The workshop held under the chairmanship of Shakil Durrani, Director Planning and Development, Anti-Narcotics Force, Islamabad was attended by participants from Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Country reports covering relevant aspects of the theme were presented and discussed at the Workshop.

SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSES THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT

Islamabad, Pakistan : October 8--9, 1996

The Secretary-General in his Address presented the salient features of the common position adopted by the SAARC Agriculture Ministers at their meeting held in Islamabad from October 8 to 9 before the Summit which, *inter-alia*, recognized that the right to adequate and nutritional food is the basic right of each individual, and made an appeal for action at all levels-global, regional and national – to rid the world from hunger and malnutrition. The Secretary-General while highlighting the widespread food insufficiency and malnutrition in different parts of the world, informed the Summit of the resolve of SAARC Countries to eradicate poverty from the region preferably by the year 2002, and touched upon SAARC efforts towards achieving this goal.

He also made a special reference to the SAARC Food Security Reserve established in 1993 with the prime objective of providing food-grains for meeting emergencies in member countries.

Referring to the complex issues before the World Food Summit, the Secretary-General observed that a comprehensive and serious approach was required to address them. He called upon all nations individually and the entire international community collectively to rise to meet the challenge with a single minded determination and firm resolve to make the dream of a world free from hunger and malnutrition a reality.

SOUTH ASIAN REGULATOR'S FORUM TO BE SETUP

Male', Maldives : October 8--9, 1996

A South Asian Regulator's Forum is to be setup under the auspices of Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) to act as a regional forum to address policy, strategic and regulatory issues in telecommunications which are of mutual interest to the countries of South Asia. This was decided during the first meeting of the ITU Regulatory Forum for South Asian Countries, held in Male' on 8--9 October, 1996. Some of the issues of relevance identified by the meeting include those relating to Radio frequency coordination standards, regulatory trends and issues, strategies for telecommunications development and international affairs. The Council will also identify and promote areas of potential cooperation in telecommunications among SAARC countries and facilitate exchange of information in these areas through activities such as seminars, training programmes and workshops.

The meeting inaugurated by the Minister of Transport and Shipping Ahmed Zahir brought together representatives of all Countries of SAARC. ITU and APT. Director, Ahmed Latheef represented the SAARC Secretary-General at the meeting. The two-day meeting worked out the details of the functioning of the Council. The meetings of the Council are to be held annually with the Chairmanship rotating in alphabetical order. The second meeting will be held in Nepal in 1997.

**SAARC AGRICULTURE MINISTERS MEET IN ISLAMABAD
COMMON POSITION FOR THE WORLD
FOOD SUMMIT FORMULATED**

Islamabad, Pakistan : October 8--9, 1996

The First Meeting of the SAARC Agriculture Ministers was held in Islamabad on 8--9 October 1996 to prepare a common position of the SAARC countries before the World Food Summit scheduled to be held in Rome from 13 to 17 November 1996.

Inaugurated and presided by Nawab Muhammad Yousaf Talpur, Minister for Food, Agriculture and Livestock of Pakistan, the Meeting expressed serious concern at the widespread food insufficiency and malnutrition in different parts of the world. It also noted that greater national production supplemented by meaningful regional and international cooperation to enhance food production storage, distribution and strengthening of research capabilities of developing countries and assured transfer of technology together with greater flow of development resources must form the corner stone of all efforts to eradicate hunger and famine. The Meeting adopted a comprehensive resolution calling for action at all levels -- global, regional and national to rid the world of hunger and malnutrition.

The Meeting was also addressed by SAARC Secretary-General. Naeem U. Hasan. He drew attention to the fact that poverty eradication reinforced by rapid population growth, has proved to be a daunting element of the food problems and food insecurity of the developing countries. He stressed that it was imperative to undertake comprehensive plans and programmes to eradicate poverty side by side with sustained efforts to encourage rapid growth in food grain production. The SAARC Secretary-General strongly urged the forthcoming World Food Summit to create an enabling international environment supportive efforts of developing countries to attain food security. The Meeting also considered several issues on the agenda of the World Food Summit and concrete steps to further intensify intra-SAARC cooperation to implement effective plans and programmes to address key agricultural concerns in the SAARC region.

Ministers and high level officials of all the Member Countries participated in the Meeting. Directors Tahir Iqbal Butt and Liaquat Ali Choudhry also attended the Meeting on behalf of the SAARC Secretariat.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REVIEWS PROGRESS ON PREVENTION OF DRUG TRAFFICKING AND DRUG ABUSE

Islamabad, Pakistan : October 15--16, 1996

The Eleventh Meeting of the Technical Committee on Prevention of Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse held in Islamabad on 15--16 October 1996 reviewed progress made by Member States to prevent drug trafficking and drug abuse in the region.

During the two-day annual meeting, the participants through their country reports highlighted the drug scenario and the efforts made by their respective countries since their last meeting to curb the menace of drug trafficking and drug abuse.

The delegates also discussed new developments in the area of drug abuse control and prevention. The specific issues covered during the discussions included development of local and indigenous methods/modalities for treatment and rehabilitation inclusion of additional/updated information in the Directory of NGOs : training and transfer of know-how expertise in law enforcement rehabilitation and preventive education; and expeditious implementation of the Global Programme of Action (GPA) and formulation of multi-year master plans.

The Committee in particular reviewed the progress in implementation of various decisions taken by it at its last meeting. The participants, informed the Committee about the progress in the implementation of the SAARC Conventions on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances as well as mechanisms and strategies for implementation, consolidation and harmonization of national drug

legislation in their respective countries. Most of the Member States are nearing completion of the process by amending the present laws and through the introduction of new Money Laundering laws.

The functioning of the SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (SDOMD) was thoroughly reviewed by the Committee.

The Committee agreed that all major drug seizure cases should be reported to SDOMD by Member States on the current IFR/DRF and that all Member States should send annual reports to SDOMD so that it could analyse these reports and make its own report for dissemination to Member States.

The Committee also suggested that SDOMD consider publishing periodically a bulletin with the available information.

The Committee identified possible areas for funding under the SAARC-Japan Special Fund. They include programmes for law enforcement and demand reduction; development of a pool of experts from Institutions of all Member States for law enforcement related activities as well as establishment of a Drug Rehabilitation Centre in Nepal.

The Meeting discussed the possibilities of expanding cooperation with UNDCP under the existing MOU, and strengthening the Working Relationship with the Colombo Plan Bureau. In addition, the Committee also finalised the Calendar of Activities for 1997.

The Meeting attended by participants from Bangladesh India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka was inaugurated by the Secretary, Narcotics Control Division of Pakistan Muhammad Afzal Kahut. Director, R.P. Jayuasoriya represented the SAARC Secretariat at the meeting.

FIRST MEETING OF ENVIRONMENT AND METEOROLOGY TAKES PLACE

Colombo, Sri Lanka : October 23--25, 1996

The First Meeting of the newly merged SAARC Technical Committee on Environment and Meteorology was held in Colombo on October 23--25, 1996. The Committee reviewed in-depth the activities carried out in the member states and the progress made in areas of environment and meteorology. It noted with satisfaction that progress was being made in networking of Meteorological Communication within the region. The Committee, also adopted the State-of-the Art Reports on Storm Surge including Prediction by Various Methods by M.F. Qayyum (Bangladesh) and North-East Monsoon by A.K. Sen (India). It decided that the Heads of the National Meteorological Services of SAARC Member States will continue to act as nodal points on all matters related to meteorological activities.

The Meeting also decided to continue the Scheme of Regional Awards for Scientists and declared Ghulam Rasul of Pakistan as the winner of the Twelfth Award. The Committee formulated guidelines for the grant of Research Awards to encourage senior scientists and young scientists.

One of the important areas looked at by the Committee relates to monitoring the implementations of the recommendations of the Regional Studies on "Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and Protection and Preservation of Environment," and "Greenhouse Effect and its Impact on the Region." The Committee is expected to submit a Report on this to the Ninth SAARC Summit in 1997.

The Meeting was inaugurated by the Minister of Science Technology and Human Resources Development Bernard Soya, who emphasized the importance of closer cooperation among Member States of SAARC.

particularly in the vital areas of environment and meteorology. The Secretary Ministry of Transport, Environment and Women's Affairs Cecil Amerasinghe, who chaired the meeting read out the speech of Minister of Transport. Environment and Women's Affairs Srimani Athulathmudali, who was unable to be present. Director SAARC Secretariat, Suresh Pradhan gave a brief overview of the previous meetings of the Technical Committee and highlighted the issues that needed to be addressed by the Member States.

The three-day meeting was attended by representatives from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS UNDER SAPTA SECOND ROUND TO BE COMPLETED SOON

New Delhi, India : October 25--26, 1996

The Third Meeting of Inter-Government Group (IGG) on Trade was held in New Delhi on 25--26 October, 1996.

The delegates conducted detailed and in-depth bilateral negotiations on trade concessions and significant progress was achieved during these negotiations as most of the information about tariff concessions had been exchanged by the delegates. The work relating to finalization of National Schedules of Concessions was largely completed. An exclusive session was devoted to matters relating to Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The IGG decided to hold its fourth and final Meeting as soon as possible in order to conclude the Second Round of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA.

The Meeting was inaugurated by the Commerce Secretary of India, Tejendra Khanna, who in his address emphasized the importance and urgency of expanding economic cooperation and moving from SAPTA to SAFTA as per the mandated schedule. He further emphasized that it is not sufficient to merely exchange tariff concessions but efforts should

also be made to simultaneously remove non-tariff barriers and para-tariff. Suggesting that the European Union could serve as a model for the SAARC region, the Secretary said that steps should be taken by all Member Countries to move steadily forward towards achieving higher levels for regional cooperation as the European Union had done.

The Meeting was attended by all SAARC Member Countries. SAARC Secretariat was represented by Director, Ashod K Attri.

**EXPANSION OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION
INTER-GOVERNMENTAL EXPERT GROUP ON TRANSITION
TO SAFTA ESTABLISHED**

New Delhi, India : October 28--29, 1996

The Committee on Economic Cooperation (CEC) during its Seventh Meeting in New Delhi on 28 - 29 October 1996 reviewed the progress achieved in the implementation of its earlier recommendations for expansion of economic cooperation in the region : completion of the Second Round of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA; transition from SAPTA to SAFTA : implementation of recommendations of the First Meeting of SAARC Commerce Ministers and promotion of intra-regional investment and establishment of joint ventures catering to national, region and international markets. The Meeting also reviewed the progress of the Tripartite Study being conducted by the governmental, business and academic sectors for expansion of economic cooperation. It recommended that the SAARC Expert Group established for this purpose submit its report by March 15, 1997. The other matters discussed by the Committee included Consultant's Report on transport infrastructure and transit facilities, cooperation among customs administrations of SAARC Member Countries, overseas bulk purchases by member governments, visa facilitation, etc.

The Committee directed the Inter-Governmental Group on Trade Liberalization to hold its final meeting in the SAARC Secretariat.

Kathmandu on 29 – 30 November, 1996 and conclude the Second Round of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA. It also decided to hold Meetings on Avoidance of Double Taxation in Pakistan and on Investment Promotion and Protection in India. Pakistan announced that it will host the first meeting of the newly created Group on Customs Cooperation (GCC) on January 27 – 28, 1997.

The Committee decided that the Group of Experts on SAFTA, now to be called "Inter-Governmental Expert Group (IGEG) on Transition to SAFTA will prepare an action plan with timeframe for individual steps for moving from SAPTA to SAFTA. This IGEG on transition to SAFTA will start its work immediately on the conclusion of the Second Round of Trade Negotiations. The Member Countries have been requested to nominate their Members on the IGEG by December, 1996.

It also decided to hold its next meeting in early April 1997 in New Delhi to examine the recommendations of the Tripartite Study on Expansion of Economic Cooperation including sub-regional cooperation and informal trade and also to finalize the Terms of Reference for the IGEG on Transition to SAFTA.

The Committee also deliberated on the Second Meeting of SAARC Commerce Ministers and Second SAARC Trade Fair to be held in Pakistan 1997.

The Meeting was inaugurated by Dr. B.B. Ramaiah, Commerce Minister of India. Who in his statement reiterated the firm commitment of India to expand regional trade and economic cooperation under the framework of SAARC with a view to achieving South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) preferably by the year 2000. The Commerce Minister appreciated the pivotal role being played by CEC in assisting the SAARC Member Countries by suggesting various measures for improvement in the regional trade regime, tariff structures, removal of non-tariff barriers, investment promotion and transport and transit infrastructure.

The SAARC Secretary-General in his address expressed satisfaction at the completion of most of the preparatory work for conclusion of the Second Round of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA.

On behalf of the President of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), the President-elect of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) A. S. Kasliwal presented, a report on the activities of the regional apex body.

The meeting was attended by participants from all the Member States. The SAARC Secretariat was represented by SAARC Secretary-General, Naeem U. Hassan and Director, Ashok K Attri.

WORLD INFRASTRUCTURE FORUM – ASIA 1996

New Delhi, India : October 28--29, 1996

In accordance with the decision taken by the Economic and Social Commission for the Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) a World Infrastructure Forum was organized in New Delhi on 30--31 October, 1996. It was preceded by Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure held on 28--29 October, 1996.

The Conference and the Forum were inaugurated together by the Prime Minister of India on 28 October 1996. T.G. Venkatraman, Minister for Surface Transport of India delivered the welcome address. The inaugural session was also addressed by ESCAP Executive Secretary, Adrianus Mooy, Peter M. Benson on behalf of the private sector, and Bong-Suh Lee, Vice-President of Asian Development Bank, Director, SAARC Secretariat Ashok K. Attri, represented the SAARC Secretariat at the meeting.

The Conference was convened in pursuance of Commission Resolution 51/8 of 1 May 1995 on implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific. The Plan covers the period 1997 - 2006 and its main objectives are to

accelerate infrastructure development in Asian and Pacific region commensurate with differing economic and social conditions prevailing in the countries and areas of the region : and to improve efficiency in the provision of infrastructure facilities and services. The delegates from many countries of the region participated in these Meetings.

COORDINATION OF DISTRICT LEVEL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN POVERTY ERADICATION DISCUSSED

Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka : October 28--31, 1996

Sri Lanka organized a workshop as a part of the project – “SAARC Seven Sisters : District Development Co-ordination and Improve Poverty Project Design.” The four-day workshop participated by representatives from SAARC Countries, SAARC Secretariat, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and UNDP was held in Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka from 28--31 October 1996.

The delegates discussed various issues relating to the improvement in the functioning of the district level co-ordination fora established in five districts of SAARC countries to facilitate better coordination among different development agencies, the NGOs and other social organizations engaged in poverty eradication programmes at the grass-root level.

The decision to form these district level co-ordination fora was taken during the first meeting under the project – “SAARC Seven Sisters” held at the SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu from 26 - 29 June 1996. These fora are expected to bring together representatives of development agencies, NGOs and beneficiaries of Poverty Eradication Programme at the local level with a view to improving the designing and the implementation of Poverty Eradication Programmes through enhanced coordination. The Workshop in Nuwara Eliya reviewed the progress in the establishment of the District level fora in five designated Districts in the SAARC Countries.

It was felt that these new co-ordination fora showed considerable promise and could be useful. The workshop also considered various issues relating to the sustainability and possible replication of these district level fora in other areas. Delegate suggested several additional steps for further improvement of functioning of such fora. They also examined various concrete steps to further enhance beneficiary participation in these fora.

The workshop strongly urged all concerned to continue the project – “SAARC Seven Sisters” and organize regular meetings at the sub-regional level to facilitate sharing of experiences of the member countries in successfully operationalising these district level fora. The workshop was rounded up by a field trip to areas surrounding Nuwara Eliya to apprise the participants of significant progress made in initiating and implementing poverty eradication programmes by the people, government agencies and NGOs in Nuwara Eliya through greater coordination of their development efforts.

RICAP SUB-COMMITTEE MEETS

New Delhi, India : October 30, 1996

The First Meeting of the Regional Inter-Agency Committee for Asia and Pacific (RICAP) Sub-Committee on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific was held in New Delhi on 30th October, 1996. This meeting was organized to consider a number of important issues related to the implementation of the regional action programme for Phase-II (1992-96) of the Decade including its evaluation in 1997, reorientation of some of its activities under UNDP's fifth inter-country programme, preparations for UNDP's Sixth cycle, the regional action programme on infrastructure development for Phase-I (1997-2001), and agency membership of the Asia Infrastructure Development Alliance (AIDA).

The SAARC Secretariat was represented by Director, Ashok K. Attri.

SAARC HOMEPAGE ON THE 'NET'**Kathmandu, Nepal : October 31, 1996**

The Growing Demand for Information on SAARC has prompted the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu to put up its own *Homepage* on the INTERNET. With the launching of the page beginning from 31st October, 1996, it is now possible to have easy access to information on the organization, its programmes and activities. The page located in the "South-Asia" website maintained by the Mercantile Communications Pvt. Ltd. in Kathmandu can be accessed through the address <http://www.south-asia.com/saarc>.

The SAARC *Homepage* presently includes information contained in the Brochure "*SAARC in Brief*"; *SAARC Charter*; SAARC Declarations adopted by the Head of States or Governments beginning from the first Summit in Dhaka in 1985 until the Eighth Summit held in New Delhi in May 1995. and selected articles of interest from the SAARC Magazine "*SPECTRUM*." The page also contains monthly *SAARC Newsletters* published by the Secretariat beginning from January 1996 until now.

This new facility will greatly benefit students, researchers, academics policy makers and others who are interested to know more about the organization and the process of regional cooperation in South Asia. The Secretariat hopes to update periodically its *Homepage* to provide as much updated information as possible to its users.

**MEETINGS ON ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE (EDI)
AND TRADE FACILITATION****New Delhi, India : October 30 – November 2, 1996**

The Edicom'96 Conference and Exhibition--From EDI to Electronic Commerce was held in New Delhi on 30th October to 2nd November, 1996. It was an international conference on Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)

held under the auspices of Asia EDIFACT Board. It was inaugurated by B.B. Ramaiah, Commerce Minister of India. Several experts from National Informatics Centre (NIC), New Delhi, UN, ESCAP, WCO, IBM, Indian Customs, etc., made presentations on various relevant topics relating to Electronic Data Interchange detailing their technical, operational and legal issues.

The Fourth Meeting of UN/ESCAP Network on Trade Facilitation was held in New Delhi on 31st October–1st November 1996. The ESCAP Executive Secretary, Adrianus Mooy, addressed the Meeting during the inaugural session. EDI experts from ESCAP, WCO, European Commission, Asian Institute of Technology made their presentations on the issues relating to networking using electronic commerce to facilitate intra-regional trade in Asia, policy implications for the rationalisation of customs process and procedures.

Director, Ashok K. Attri represented the SAARC Secretariat in the meeting.

SECRETARY-GENERAL VISITS SOUTH KOREA

October 30 to November 2, 1996

Of late, SAARC has attracted attention of the outside world and the interest in SAARC is growing day by day in the activities of the Association. The Korean Government invited Secretary-General Naeem U. Hasan to visit Seoul from October 30 to November 2, 1996.

During his three-day visit to Seoul, Secretary-General delivered a lecture on SAARC and its activities at the Korean Institute for Foreign Affairs and National Security which is run by the Korean Foreign Office. The talk attended by a large number of senior officials from the Korean Foreign Ministry covered important subjects on the evolution of SAARC; its organizational set-up; its main activities with focus on cooperation in the economic, trade and social sectors; and its growing contacts with regional and international organizations. During the course

of his visit, Secretary-General also met Ambassadors of the SAARC countries based in Seoul.

The Secretary-General also met the Korean Vice-Foreign Minister over a dinner hosted in his honour. Included in the Secretary-General's programme were visits to industrial establishments of LG Electronics and Daewoo Motor Plants. He was also taken on a visit to Pan Moon Jeom and was given a briefing on the de-militarized zone between North and South Korea.

**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY
ESTABLISHMENT OF "SAARC BIOTECHNOLOGY
COUNCIL" PROPOSED**

Islamabad, Pakistan : November 5--6, 1996

During its Fourteenth Meeting held on November 5-6, 1996 in Islamabad, the Technical Committee on Science and Technology reviewed the activities since its last meeting

The Committee decided on a new time-frame for holding of meeting of Experts on Energy Modeling with special reference to Rural Areas : Meeting of Experts in the areas of Astronomy and Astrophysics for Policy Makers and Experts : and Meeting of Experts on Bio-processing of Food and Enzymes.

The Committee noted that some of the State-of-the-Art Reports were not completed due to lack of information by Member Countries, including those on : (i) Building Materials and Technologies, (ii) Integrated Management of Tannery Wastes, (iii) Selected Rural Technologies Food Processing Technologies and Handicrafts, (iv) Local Electronic Products in the SAARC region, and (v) Biotechnology. The Meeting fixed new time-frames to complete these reports and member states were urged to provide requisite information in this regard.

The Committee decided that the Directories on Specialized Analytical Instrumentation Facilities and Techniques ; Processing Engineering/Pilot Plant Facilities : Agro-Food Processing Area and S&T activities of SAARC countries should be finalized in 1997.

Bangladesh and Pakistan recommended one project proposal each, i.e., Utilization of Wind Energy, and Connectivity of the member states through INTERNET for establishing the Information Processing System and Databases on Technologies for funding under the South Asian Development Fund. The Committee requested respective countries to provide details of these projects for submission to the Council. While evaluating the functioning of the Committee since its inception, the Committee made suggestions and recommendations to improve its functioning. The importance of various activities including Symposia, Workshops, Training Courses and Experts Group Meetings which have helped to create awareness of the unlimited potential of new technologies was recognized by the Committee. The Committee proposed two activities to be funded under SAARC-Japan Special Fund.

The Meeting was inaugurated by Lt. Gen (Retd) Javed Asharf, Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology of Pakistan. He highlighted the problems prevalent in the SAARC region and the common goals of the SAARC member states. The Secretary encouraged the Committee to take steps towards formulating programmes which would have a regional impact towards achieving SAARC goals such as eradication of poverty in the region by the year 2002 A.D.

Delegates from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka attended the meeting. Director, Kunzang C. Namgyel represented the SAARC Secretariat at the meeting.

**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT
CARRY OUT EVALUATION OF ITS FUNCTIONING
ESTABLISHMENT OF "SHELTERNET" EMPHASIZED
Kathmandu, Nepal : November 28, 1996**

The Technical Committee on Rural Development met at its Fifteenth Meeting in Kathmandu on 28th November 1996. The Committee reviewed the status of establishment of "SHELTERNET" (Shelter

Information Network) and recommended to the Standing Committee the approval of the funding arrangements. Matters relating to the establishment of SAELTERNET has been under discussion since 1993 following the meeting of the New Delhi Expert Group Meeting, worked out the details of the network including the estimated expenditure (US\$ 310.000) to operationalise the network.

The Committee evaluated its functioning since its establishment and observed that during the last decade its activities suffered due to :

- (a) Isolated selection and their short term nature.
- (b) Inadequate participation.
- (c) Lack of resources to implement projects.
- (d) Weak monitoring of implementation of recommendations decisions.

The meeting identified several measures for improving functioning of the Committee in future. They include selection of activities in the line with the priority list and clearly spelt out targets; adequate and wider participation. implementation of projects/decision; interaction and coordination among national sectoral focal points and SAARC Secretariat.

While considering the list of priority areas for its future activities, the meeting identified issues such as income and employment generation on a sustained basis; creation of assets, enhancing availability of credit access to the same by the rural poor; human resources development in the rural areas ; development and maintenance of rural infrastructure; development and introduction of appropriate technology to enhance productivity in the rural areas; rural environment, issues related to diversification of rural economies; and gender perspective of rural development. These areas, the Committee decided, would form the core of its future activities.

The Meeting was inaugurated by the Minister for Local Development of Nepal, Kamal Thapa. In his inaugural statement, the Minister stressed that at the threshold of a new millennium, SAARC countries should focus on the challenges of rural development with a sense of urgency.

He noted that to accelerate rural development, all the development practitioners in the SAARC region should come up with comprehensive plans and programmes and their implementation should be accelerated with active participation of people at the community level.

The Meeting was attended by representatives from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The SAARC Secretariat was represented by Director Liaquat Ali Choudhury.

IGG COMPLETES SECOND ROUND OF TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Kathmandu, Nepal : November 29--30, 1996

The Fourth Meeting of the Inter-Government Group (IGG) on Trade Liberalization held at the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu on 29--30 November, 1996, successfully concluded the Second Round of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA after detailed discussions and in-depth bilateral trade negotiations. The Meeting will be remembered in the history of SAARC as another important mile-stone in its journey towards trade liberalization in the region and in transition from SAPTA to SAFTA. The meeting, held under the chairmanship of Joint Secretary U.S. Bhatia, Ministry of Commerce of India was opened by Director, SAARC Secretariat Ashok K. Attri and attended by all SAARC Member Countries. Welcoming the delegates to the SAARC Secretariat, Secretary-General Naeem U Hasan emphasized the crucial role played by the Group towards trade liberalization in the region and realizing the goal of launching the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) preferably by 1998.

It may be recalled that as per the mandate of the Council of Ministers, the Second Round of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA began with the First Meeting of the Inter-Governmental Group held in Colombo on 14--15 March, 1996. The process of trade negotiations was carried forward by the Second and Third Meetings of the Group held in Islamabad and New Delhi on 7--8 September, 1996 and 25 - 26 October, 1996 respectively. The Group has recommended that the Schedules finalized at the conclusion of the Second Round of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA should enter into force latest by 1st March 1997.

The Group has also recommended that the Third Round of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA should be launched immediately for further broadening and deepening the Schedules of Concessions. It may be recalled that with the conclusion of the First Round of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA covering 226 items, the Agreement on SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement entered into force on 7th December, 1995 which recovered 226 items. The Schedules agreed to in the Second Round will increase this figure manifold. The Group also recommended that the First Meeting of the Committee of Participants, established under Article 9 of SAPTA Agreement, should meet at the earliest to review the progress achieved in the implementation of SAPTA Agreement. It also recommended that this meeting should be held at the SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu.

The report of Kathmandu Meeting and the National Schedules of Concessions as finalized and adopted by the Group, will be considered by the Seventeenth Session of the Council of Ministers scheduled to be held in New Delhi in December this year.

SAARC STANDING COMMITTEE

CONCLUDES ITS TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

New Delhi, India : December 16--18, 1996

The Twenty-Second Session of the Standing Committee was held at New Delhi on December 16 - 18, 1996 under the chairmanship of the Foreign Secretary of India, Salman Haider. The Committee during its deliberations discussed a number of issues pertaining to strengthening cooperation under the SAARC umbrella.

While considering the matters relating to Economic and Trade, the Committee noted with appreciation the successful conclusion of the second round of trade negotiations under SAPTA. Pakistan's offer to host the First Meeting of the Group on Customs Cooperation in 1997 was welcomed by Member States. The Committee expressed its appreciation of the commendable initiative by SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry in organizing the SAARC Economic Cooperation Conference (SECC) in New Delhi in November 1996.

A review was carried out on the implementation of activities under the SAARC-Japan Special fund. The list of programmes/activities for the year 1997 was approved which include workshops/training programmes on Planning and Management; Computer Software Area: Geographical Information System for Cable Network; Poverty Focused Rural Development; Meeting of Experts of Poisoning in the SAARC Region ; and Training Programme for Highway Engineers in Pavement Designs.

The Standing Committee reviewed progress in the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA), and considered the Reports of the Meetings of the Technical Committees on Agriculture; Communications Education, Culture and Sports ; Environment and Meteorology; Health Population; Activities and Child Welfare: Prevention of Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse : Rural Development; Science and Technology; Tourism; Transport and Women in Development, which met since the last Session of the Standing Committee. The Committee stressed that the activities under the IPA should be of direct relevance and benefit the people of the region and decided that the possibility of rationalizing the number of Technical Committees and their fields of work may be explored in order to provide the much needed goal-oriented focus to the IPA. The Committee also stressed the need to create effective mechanisms for coordination between the various IPA sectors

The Standing Committee also considered and approved the Reports of the Governing Boards of the four SAARC Regional Centres. It advised the Secretary-General to carry out a detailed review on the working and re-organization of the Centres after having a coordination meeting of the Directors of the Centres.

The Committee while reviewing cooperation with international and other regional organizations noted with satisfaction that the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between SAARC and European commission has been signed. The two organizations would work closely in a number of areas, including the eradication campaign for rinderpest.

SAARC has already signed agreements with other international and regional organizations such as UNCTAD, ESCAP, UNICEF, APT, UNDP, UNDCP, and Standing Committee reviewed progress on SAARC's cooperation with them. Efforts are being made to strengthen cooperation with other agencies and organizations such as ITC, UNFPA, ABD, ASEAN.

The Standing Committee authorized the Secretary-General to sign the proposed Memorandum of Understanding with ITU. The Committee also authorized the Secretary-General to coordinate with the Chinese authorities in connection with convening of a Seminar on SAARC-China cooperation.

While reviewing progress in the implementation of SAARC regional Convention of Suppression of Terrorism, and the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, the Standing Committee emphasized the need for regular flow of relevant information to enable the SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) and the SAARC Drug Officers Monitoring Dest (SDOMD) in Colombo to function effectively. The Committee also took note of the recent international initiatives, particularly by the United Nations Organizations to combat terrorism and called upon the Member States to cooperate regionally as well as support international measures towards the elimination of terrorism.

The Standing Committee considered the Report of the SA AFC Conference on Cooperation in Police Matters and welcomed the offer of the Maldives to host the Second Conference in Male' in 1997. The Committee also approved the guidelines for granting observer/guest status at SAARC meetings. While it was decided that SAARC recognized regional apex bodies and international and regional organizations that have signed cooperation agreements with SAARC would be provided Observer Status, Guest Status would be provided to individual countries having cooperation agreements with SAARC; international and regional organizations which have expressed interest in SAARC activities; and international NGO's having cooperation agreements with SAARC.

The Committee recommended that Member States may organize Youth Camps such as Adventure Camps, Science/Arts Camps, Social Service Camps, Entrepreneur Development Camps, etc., to further encourage youth interaction within the region.

SAVE activities play an active role in strengthening people-to-people contact under the aegis of SAARC. On expansion of the scope of SAVE programmes, the Standing Committee recommended that the SAVE Committee should examine the possibility of holding SAARC Film Festivals, including TV Film Festivals.

Several other reports as well as the Calendar of Activities out-side IPA, for the year 1997 were considered by the Standing Committee.

The meeting of the Standing Committee was preceded by the Seventeenth Session of the Programming Committee on December 14--15, 1996. The meeting held under the chairmanship of Sudhir Vyas, Joint Secretary (SAARC) Ministry of External Affairs of India considered the Report of the Fifteenth Meeting of the SAVE Committee held in Colombo in September 3--5, 1996. Noting the usefulness of the training programmes organized under the aegis of SAVE in Pakistan, the Committee welcomed the offer of Pakistan to organize similar programmes in future.

The Committee noted that the SAVE joint productions on "SAARC Year of Literacy" were telecast/broadcast in member countries to coincide with the SAARC Charter Day.

The Committee also reviewed the implementation of the Calendar of Activities under the Integrated Programme of Action since its last session. It also proposed the Calendar for the year 1997, which include a number of short-term activities such as workshops, seminars and training programmes.

SAARC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETS IN NEW DELHI

New Delhi, India : December 19--20, 1996

The Seventeenth Session of the Council of Ministers was held in New Delhi on 19th – 20th December 1996 under the chairmanship of Inder Kumar Gujral, Minister of External Affairs of India.

The current Chairperson of SAARC the Prime Minister of India H.D. Deve Gowda inaugurated the Session. In his inaugural address, the Prime Minister stressed that the South Asian region cannot remain immune from the logic of collective self-interest and advancement and must, like other regions in the world, endeavour to prosper by opening channels for the flow of goods, services, capital and people.

The Foreign Ministers of Member States made their general statements in which they highlighted various measures taken by their respective countries for further strengthening the process of regional cooperation in South Asia within the framework of SAARC. The Ministers welcomed the conclusion of the Second Round of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA, the impressive strides made by the Member States on a number of key issues in the social agenda of SAARC as well as the effective projection of SAARC collective positions in various important international conferences. They hoped that cooperation

amongst the Member Countries in the core economic areas would gain further momentum in the future, facilitating the eventual transition of SAPTA into SAFTA by the mandated time schedule.

The Foreign Ministers highlighted the importance of further work to be done to deepen and widen the process of trade liberalization in the SAARC region and promotion of useful complementarities which would reinforce cooperation in trade and commerce. They also referred to a number of new ideas to widen the scope of intra-SAARC cooperation on the basis of existing and perceived potentials. They underlined the importance of strengthening the SAARC Secretariat to effectively contribute to the emerging challenges before the SAARC countries.

The Council considered and approved the Report of the Twenty-Second Session of the Standing Committee. During the meeting, the Council :

- Expressed satisfaction at the conclusion of the Second Round of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA and approved the Report of the Fourth Meeting of the IGG (Kathmandu, 29th--30th November, 1996) and the National Schedules of Concessions and decided that all necessary procedures should be completed so that the Schedules as finalized during the Second Round enter into force latest by 1st March 1997.
- Directed that the newly established Inter-Governmental Expert Group on Transition to SAFTA should start its work at the earliest to prepare an action plan with timeframe for each individual step for moving from SAPTA to SAFTA preferably by the year 2000 but not later than 2005 A. D.
- Welcomed the proposed Meeting on Investment Promotion and Protection to be held in India; Meeting on Avoidance of Double Taxation in Pakistan ; and the First Meeting of Group on Customs Cooperation also in Pakistan.

- Endorsed the Joint Statement of First Meeting of SAARC Commerce Ministers (New Delhi, 8th – 9th January 1996) to the Ninth SAARC Summit for approval. The Council further welcomed the offer of Pakistan to host the Second Meeting of SAARC Commerce Ministers and the Second SAARC Trade Fair in 1997.
- Took note of the Report of the Third SAARC Ministerial Conference on Children of South Asia and the Rawalpindi Resolution adopted by the Ministers at the Conference and endorsed it for submission to the Ninth SAARC Summit.
- Decided to submit the Report of the Second Meeting of the Finance/Planning Ministers to the Ninth SAARC Summit.
- Deliberated on the theme for the SAARC Year 1997 and in view of the recommendation of the Second Meeting of Finance/Planning Ministers, decided to propose for the Summit's consideration that the Theme for the SAARC year 1997 be "Participatory Governance."
- Urged that highest priority should continue to be accorded to poverty eradication by all Member States in their national plans.
- Welcomed the proposal of Sri Lanka to host a SAARC Film Festival in 1998.
- Noted with satisfaction that SAARC collective positions were formulated by the concerned Ministers of SAARC Member Countries and presented at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlement (Habita-II) held in Istanbul in June 1996 and at the World Food Summit held in Rome in November 1996.

- Welcomed the proposals to organize :
 - (a) Meeting of SAARC Information Ministers.
 - (b) Meeting of SAARC Environment Ministers.
 - (c) Meeting of SAARC Tourism Ministers.
- Approved the establishment of a SAARC Human Resource Development Centre in Pakistan.

TOURISM COUNCIL OF SCCI INAUGURATED IN KATHMANDU

SEMINAR ON TOURISM PROMOTION HELD

Kathmandu, Nepal : December 26, 1996

The Tourism Council of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) was formally inaugurated in Kathmandu on 26th December 1996. The inaugural ceremony was followed by a two-day Regional Seminar on Promotion of Tourism.

The Chairman of the Council, Padma Jyoti welcomed the delegates to the Seminar. Inaugurating the Seminar, the Prime Minister of Nepal Sher Bahadur Deuba, expressed the view that governments should create an atmosphere where healthy growth of the economy could take place with the involvement of the private sector. Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal, Chakra Prasad Bastola also addressed the Seminar.

Addressing the formal launching SAARC Secretary-General Naeem U. Hasan complimented SCCI for its initiatives in the sector of tourism and termed the event as a significant landmark in SAARC's

on-going endeavors to promote the South Asian region as a Tourist Destination. He also informed the gathering of the forthcoming first ever Meeting of the SAARC Tourism Ministers in Colombo in April 1997 to intensify cooperation in the field of tourism.

The Secretary-General also underlined the need to fully exploit the potential of tourism and expand regional cooperation in this sector for mutual benefit. Ashok K. Attri, Director, SAARC Secretariat also attended the Seminar.

The Tourism Council has been constituted by SCCI with the overall mission of contributing to the development of the tourism sector and through it to the economic development of the region and to promote regional cooperation at private sector level. Its main objective is to promote tourism in the SAARC region by way of promotion of flow of tourists within the region and from out side the region. The programmes of the SCCI Tourism Council are being coordinated by the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry. On the recommendation of the Technical Committee on Tourism, the Chairman of the SCCI Tourism Council or his representative has been made a permanent invitee to all future meetings of the Technical Committee on Tourism to make presentations on the activities/programmes and views of the Tourism Council of SCCI on regional tourism cooperation.

The Regional Seminar in Kathmandu concluded with the adoption of SCCI Tourism Council Declaration which calls for unified action on the part of all concerned private and governmental bodies for concerted efforts towards promotion of tourism in the region.

REGIONAL UNIVERSITY FOR HIGHER STUDIES ON LAW PROPOSED

Dhaka, Bangladesh : December 27--29, 1996

The Fifth SAARCLAW Conference held in Dhaka on December 27-29, 1996 proposed that a regional university for higher studies on law be established to further strengthen cooperation in the field.

Inaugurating the Conference, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina said that her government was pledge-bond to safeguard, protect and defend the Constitution and to maintain its supremacy as the embodiment of the will of the people and the foundation of the rule of law.

The inaugural session of the Conference held at the International Conference Centre (ICC), Dhaka was presided over by SAARCLAW President K.K. Venugopal. In his introductory statement, Mr. Venugopal said that judiciary was a strong guiding force for attaining social change, economic growth and prosperity. The Chief Justice of Bangladesh and Justice A.T.M. Afzal, Chairman of SAARCLAW Bangladesh Chapter Amir-ul-Islam and SAARCLAW General Secretary Dhara Wijayatilake also addressed the inaugural session.

Chairman Amir-ul-Islam, while highlighting the theme of the Conference "Development Through Law", pointed out that law and development are integral part of each other. Director, SAARC Secretariat, Suresh Pradhan read out the message of the SAARC Secretary-General on the occasion. M. Haffizullah, Vice-Chairman, SAARCLAW (Bangladesh) proposed the vote of thanks.

Noted jurists, advocates academicians and bar association leaders of the SAARC Countries attended the Conference. The Chief Justices of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and former Chief justices and Judges of the SAARC Counties also attended the Conference. The SAARC Chief Justices Conferences was held simultaneously.

The Sixth SAARCLAW Conference would be held in October 1997 in Pakistan.

ECONOMIC AND TRADE DATABASES AVAILABLE IN THE SECRETARIAT

The Following trade-related computerized databases are available in the SAARC Secretariat :

- (a) CD-ROM TRAINS for Windows developed by UNCTAD :
- (b) CD-ROM PC-TAS developed by international Trade Centre (ITC), UNCTAD/WTO;
- (c) DBI (Doing Business with India) developed by the Government of India;
- (d) Revised Harmonized System Nomenclature (HS System) developed by World Customs Organization, Brussels, valid w.e.f., 1.1.1996.
- (e) Opportunities for Private Investment in Roads and Ports in India, Ministry of Surface Transport, Government of India.
- (f) Electronic Commerce Initiatives of ESCAP-EDI/EDIFACT--a Technical Overview (version 1.1) developed by International Trade and Economic Cooperation Division of ESCAP.

Some of the other published trade and tariff-related documents available in the Secretariat for reference include latest import policy orders and customs tariff publications of a SAARC Member Countries, lists of products agreed to by Member Countries under preferential tariff regimes of SAPTA, publications of Asian Development Bank, World Bank, ESCAP and other UN bodies, etc.

For further information, please contact Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, SAARC Secretariat on Tel # 221692; Fax # 227033 and 223991; Telex # 2561 SAARC NP; E-Mail saarc@mos.com.np.

**SCHEDULE OF SAVE PROGRAMMES
FOR 1996/97**

RADIO

Pakistan	Music and People of Pakistan	14:30	Oct.96
India	<i>Rimjhim Parve Phuhar</i> (Folk Songs on Rainy Season)	14:05	Nov.96
Sri Lanka	Sound of Play and Leisure	15:00	Dec.96
Pakistan	Sounds of Pakistan	15:30	Jan.97
India	<i>Natya Sangeet</i> (Songs from Maratti Theatre)	13:10	Feb.97
Maldives	<i>Gaa-odi Neshun</i> (A traditional Dance)	15:00	Mar.97
Nepal	Wedding Songs of Nepal	15:00	Apr.97
Pakistan	Historical Places of Pakistan	15:00	May.97
Sri Lanka	18 Vannams-Introduction to Traditional Kandyan Dance	15:00	Jun.97
India	Folk Songs from Derala	15:00	Jul.97
Nepal	Visit Nepal. 98	14:20	Aug.97
Pakistan	Folk Songs of Pakistan with Modernize Orchestration	15:00	Sep.97

Note : SAVE Radio Programmes are broadcast on the 15th of every month

TELEVISION

Maldives	Vilingili (A newly inhabited island documentary)	17:00	Nov.96
India	One Horned Rhino A Documentary on the endangered Specie-Rhinos	29:30	Dec.96
Bangladesh	Life in the Green Hills of Bangladesh	27:30	Jan.97
Nepal	Contemporary Songs of Himalayan Kingdom	24:00	Feb.97
Pakistan	Margalla National Park (Form the series of National Parks in Pakistan)	22:00	Mar.97
Sri Lanka	Isle of Serendipity-- A Documentary on attraction of Sri Lanka	22:30	Apr.97
Maldives	The bounty from our Living Reefs (A Documentary on fishing industry)	27:00	May.97
India	A Sacred Legacy (Documentary on Tabo Buddhist Monastery)	29:30	Jun.97
Bangladesh	Life Weavers (Documentary)	25:00	Jul.97
Nepal	In the Lap of the Annapurnas (Documentary)	22:45	Aug.97
Pakistan	Zar V'irsa – Golden Heritage (A Documentary on Jewellery making)	23:00	Sep.97
Sri Lanka	Mother of Mothers (Life of a Midwife – Documentary)	24:00	Oct.97

Note : SAVE TV Programmes are telecast on the 1st of every month.

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Chronology of Important Events : South Asian Region

July to December 1996

BANGLADESH

- July 1 :* Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajjad invited the former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, to join a National Consensus Government.
- 2 :* Former Bangladesh President, Hussain Muhammad Ershad, would be released on parole to enable him to attend the first session of Parliament.
- 18 :* While speaking at a press conference in Dhaka, Foreign Secretary Najmuddin A. Shaikh said that Pakistan and Bangladesh had a common desire to expand economic cooperation and also to work for ensuring peace and stability in South Asia.
- 22 :* According to a Foreign Office spokesman Pakistan would not accept the Biharis stranded in Bangladesh and denied that Pakistan had agreed to take them back.
- 19 :* Diplomatic sources in Islamabad confirmed that Pakistan had finally declared that it would not accept Biharis stranded in Bangladesh and denied that Pakistan had earlier agreed to take them back.
- October 1 :* The Bangladesh Nationalist Party had announced a fortnight long action programme for six divisional headquarters to press its demand for end to governments "repressive" measures against the leaders and workers.
- 9 :* Justice Shahab-ud-Din Ahmad was sworn in as President of Bangladesh.
-

- October 13 : Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina praised Indian leaders for their role in striking a long term pact on Sharing Ganges River Water, said that it was a milestone in relations between these two countries.
- 22 : Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajjad had called for strengthening the process of regional cooperation within the frame work of SAARC to facilitate the task of national building.

INDIA

- July 2 : Indian Minister for External Affairs Inder Kumar Gujral, during a meeting with Pakistan High Commissioner Riaz A. Khokhar in New Delhi, said that the stalled dialogue between Pakistan and India would be resumed at an early date.
- 9 : Indian Minister for External Affairs Inder Kumar Gujral in an interview to *Khaleej Times* in New Delhi, said that? "I want to open a new chapter in Indo-Pak relations. I look to the future with hope and optimism and, therefore, will not like to comment on the historical role of anybody else on either side."
- 10 : Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmed Ali, talking to newsmen in Islamabad, said that Pakistan would respond to India's offer for resumption of talks within the next 10 days after necessary domestic consultation.
- 15 : Indian Minister for External Affairs Inder Kumar Gujral in a statement to Parliament, said that India was prepared to discuss the entire gamut of bilateral relations with Pakistan and even sign a non-aggression treaty.
- 21 : Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said in Islamabad that Pakistan was ready to hold talks with India on all issues including Kashmir. He added that Pakistan had never rejected the option of dialogue, but according to him the ball was in India's court.
- 27 : Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) signed a contract in New Delhi with the Indian Sugar and General Industry Export-Import Corporation, Limited (ISGOEC) for the supply of 15,000 tones of sugar. This was the biggest deal in a financial year between the two countries since the partition of the Subcontinent in 1947.

September 1 : Minister for Interior Naseerullah Khan Baber claimed that the Government had substantial proof of India's involvement in recent terrorist attacks in Punjab and could take the matter to international community.

Replying to a question in the National Assembly, he said India had implicated Pakistan in various terrorist activities, including a bomb blast in Bombay, but could not prove its charge.

In an article titled "The politics of identity in South Asia," Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto observed, "the political process in Pakistan will resolve the Mohajir Qaumi Movement problem in Karachi." She accused India of training MQM activists and transforming them into terrorists.

Ms. Bhutto further observed, "South Asia will have a bleak future if such cross-border interference, masterminded by overgrown intelligence services, continues. The political process will resolve MQM problem in Karachi and Indian interference will result only in injecting unavoidable tensions into inter-state relations."

- 2 : According to a senior military official, a heavy exchange of fire took place between Pakistani and Indian troops at Siachen during the last few days, including a number of air violations by New Delhi in the area.
- 5 : Indian Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda told newsmen in New Delhi that India would take all steps needed to tone up its security if Pakistan acquired sophisticated arms from the United States. He further said that "we know what Pakistan's game plan is. India is ready to face any eventuality."
- 7 : At least four people were killed in scattered violence and heavy cross-border exchange of fire during Occupied Kashmir's first state elections since an independence movement launched by the All Parties Hurriyet Conference (APHC) against Indian rule began six years ago. In Islamabad, officials said that a "war like situation" existed along the Line of Control as two sides traded artillery and machine-gun fire.

- September 9* : Pakistan reiterated that it would not block adoption of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) but at the same time declared that its adherence to the Treaty was possible only if India did the same. Official sources told a group of reporters in Islamabad that it was India which had so far blocked the adoption of CTBT.
- 12 : Pakistan conceded that the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as adopted at a special meeting of the UN General Assembly on 10th September in New York "brings no dividend to South Asia." A statement read out by a Foreign Office spokesman in Islamabad said, "We reserve the right to respond adequately to any nuclear escalation by India."
- 13 : President Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari reiterated that Pakistan would not sign the nuclear test ban Treaty unless India ratified the document. He told reporters in Kampala, "We agreed with the Treaty in principle and we shall sign the agreement the moment India signs because we have great security concern over nuclear activities in our region."
- 18 : Indian High Commissioner during a meeting in Karachi with President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Senator Ilyyas Ahmed Bilour said that Pakistan would not be forced to grant India the Most Favored Nation Status under World Trade Organization agreement, but could reciprocate the gesture when it feels convenient.
- 30 : Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi accused Indian Intelligence Agencies of abducting one of its official and detaining him for 16 hours illegally, while India declared the official Noor Mohammad Mattoo as *Persona Non-Grata* for alleged indulgence in activities "incompatible with his official status."
- October 14* : According to the Press Trust of India, Indian Foreign Minister Inder Kumar Gujral said in New Delhi that India wanted to resume high-level peace talks with Pakistan.
- 26 : According to informed sources, a staffer of the Indian Embassy Ashok Kumar Wahi was arrested in Islamabad when he was allegedly exchanging some sensitive information with a Pakistani contact Mohammad Latif. Later he was handed over to an Indian Embassy representative and was ordered to leave Pakistan within a week.

October 26 : India ordered the expulsion of a Pakistani diplomat Hafiz Mushtaq Ahmed Khoso whom police had earlier detained and accused of acquiring secret documents on the Indian Navy from an Indian contact.

27 : According to Press Trust of India, India criticised an alleged attack on one of its personnel Ashok Kumar Wahi in Islamabad and his expulsion.

31 : According to Press Trust of India, India warned that it would review the entire gamut of bilateral relations with Pakistan in case it failed to protect Indian diplomatic staff in Islamabad. The Indian move came after it expelled Embassy staffer Ashok Kumar Wahi from Pakistan.

November 2 : While talking to newsmen in Karachi on arrival from New Delhi after being expelled by the Indian authorities on alleged charges of espionage and acquiring secret documents of the Indian Navy from an Indian contact, Hafiz Mushtaq Ahmed Khoso an Assistant in the Information Section of the Pakistan High Commissioner, termed the charges as baseless and said that the Pakistan High Commission termed the action of the "Indian intelligence agencies as totally unwarranted the deliberate provocation."

Commenting on the reports emanating from New Delhi regarding the protest lodged by the Indian Ministry for External Affairs over the alleged manhandling and expulsion of one of its Embassy personnel, a Foreign Office spokesman said that the concern expressed by them was inappropriate.

12 : While commenting on caretaker Prime Minister Malik Meraj Khalid's appeal to resume the stalled dialogue between Pakistan and India (since January 1994), a spokesman of the Indian Ministry for External Affairs said in New Delhi that India was ready to discuss contentious bilateral issues with Pakistan but urged Islamabad to prepare the right environment for it.

20 : Indian Minister for External Affairs Inder Kumar Gujral said in New Delhi that India was keeping a close watch on Pakistan in case any rise in political and economic instability spilled over the border. He further said that it would be unrealistic for Pakistan's caretaker Government to take any major initiative towards India before general elections in 1st February.

- November 21* : According to a Foreign Office spokesman, the statement of Indian Minister for External Affairs Inder Kumar Gujral about political changes in Pakistan was "unhelpful in the area of improvement in relations between the two countries."
- 22 : While speaking in Washington at the Conference on Non-Proliferation in South Asia, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to Geneva Munir Akram warned that the prospect of a twofront conventional threat to Pakistan had revived due to renewed intervention in Afghanistan by Russia, in concert with India.
- 30 : While talking to newsmen in Agartala, Inspector General of Indian Border Security Force R. K. Niyogi blamed Pakistan for waging a "proxy war" against India by helping secessionist insurgents of the northeastern states operating from Bangladesh. He further said that there was specific information that Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence had set up four camps in Bangladesh.
- December 2* : Indian Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda blamed Pakistan and alleged that New Delhi's efforts to cool tension had failed because of Islamabad's "negative attitude." Mr. Deve Gowda also said that Pakistan's alleged support to "terrorist and subversive activities" had further clouded bilateral relations.
- 3 : Caretaker Foreign Minister Sahibzada Yaqub Khan told the Senate in Islamabad that Pakistan would not reverse its decision not to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) until "threats" to its security from India's nuclear missile programme were removed.
- 5 : Replying to a two-day parliamentary debate on foreign policy in New Delhi, Indian Minister for External Affairs Inder Kumar Gujral ruled out snapping diplomatic ties with Pakistan. During the debate, the members of the Bharatiya Janata Party had called for snapping ties with Pakistan.
- 8 : In an interview to the Press Trust of India, Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda said that recent instability in Pakistan was off no interest to New Delhi, adding that his government was keen on maintaining closer bilateral ties.

December 12: Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Najmuddin A. Sheikh, at a news briefing at the Foreign Office in Islamabad, expressed serious concern on increase n allocation of Indian supplementary defence budget and deployment of missile on borders. The Foreign Secretary said that Pakistan remained concerned on the production of Prithvi missiles which he described as Pakistan-specific. He further said that there had been no stoppage or reversal of the Indian programme of weapons of mass destruction and missiles for carrying them.

13: India ruled out any formal talks with Pakistan during the South Asian Regional Ministerial Conference next week but Indian Government spokesman, before the two-day Ministerial Session of the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), said: "There is nothing formal or official. It is but natural that there be informal interaction between the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan.

18 An Indian spokesman said in New Delhi that Pakistan and India had decided to make efforts to revive top-level contacts between the two countries which remained dormant since 1994. The suggestion came up in talks between Indian Minister for External Affairs Inder Kumar Gujral and his counterpart Sahibzada Yaqub Khan in New Delhi.

23: A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and the Federation of India Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) at the Federation House in New Delhi.

26: Commenting on a recent statement of Indian Minister for External Affairs Inder Kumar Gujral in which he had confirmed deployment of Prithvi missile, a Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad that Pakistan reserved its rights to take "necessary measures" to counter the Indian threat to its security.

A Foreign Office spokesman denied that Pakistan was under US pressure to resume talks with India, keeping aside the Kashmir issue for the present and reiterated that Pakistan stood firm on its Kashmir policy and no change was contemplated under anyone's instructions. He emphasized that the Kashmir issue would "form an important part of meaningful discussions" in talks with India whenever they took place.

December 27 : Talking to newsmen in Srinagar. Indian Home Minister Indrajit Gupta said that India would continue fencing along border in Jammu sector with Pakistan. Mr. Gupta further said, "in intermittent firing from across" the border continues and this "would not discourage India from fencing the borders in the Jammu region.

NEPAL

November 1 : Prime Minister of Nepal Sher Bahadur Deuba arrived in Islamabad on five-day official visit to Pakistan. In a meeting with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Nepalese Prime Minister exchanged views on a wide range issues of bilateral and mutual interest including SAARC and parliamentary system.

2 : Pakistan and Nepal signed two agreements in Islamabad. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba attended the signing ceremony of an agreement by the two countries' Federations of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and another accord on regular consultations between their Foreign Ministers.

4 : Addressing a luncheon meeting in the honour of Prime Minister of Nepal Sher Bahadu Deuba and members of his entourage by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Karachi, the Nepalese Primer urged the businessmen of his country and those of Pakistan to translate the existing cordial relations between the two countries into meaningful bilateral economic and trade links.

SAARC

December 20 : A two-day South Asian Regional Meeting ended in New Delhi with a pledge to make the region a free trade zone as soon as possible. Indian Minister for External Affairs Inder Kumar Gujral, at the conclusion of the Summit, said, "We agreed that the transition to South Asian Free Trade Area should start at the earliest preferably by 2000."

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