

CHAPTER 3

Contemporary South Asia

EXERCISE QUESTIONS

1. Identify the country:

- (a) The struggle among pro-monarchy, pro-democracy groups and extremists created an atmosphere of political instability.
- (b) A landlocked country with multi-party competition.
- (c) The first country to liberalise the economy in the South Asian region.
- (d) In the conflict between the military and pro-democracy groups, the military has prevailed over democracy.
- (e) Centrally located and shares borders with most of the South Asian Countries.
- (f) Earlier the island had the Sultans as the head of state. Now, it is a republic.
- (g) Small savings and credit cooperatives in the rural areas have helped in reducing poverty.
- (h) A landlocked country with a monarchy.

Answer: (a) Nepal (b) Bhutan

- (c) India (d) Pakistan
(e) India (f) Maldives
(g) India (h) Nepal

2. Which among the following statements about South Asia is wrong?

- (a) All the countries in South Asia are democratic.
- (b) Bangladesh and India have signed an agreement on river-water sharing.
- (c) SAFTA was signed at the 12th SAARC Summit in South Asian politics.
- (d) The US and China play an influential role in South Asian

politics.

Answer: (a) All the countries in South Asia are democratic.

3. What are some of the commonalities and differences between Bangladesh and Pakistan in their democratic experiences?

Answer: Bangladesh has been the part of Pakistan itself. Both of these countries bear some similarities and differences as follows:

Commonalities

1. Both Bangladesh and Pakistan were under a military rule.
2. At both the places, the struggle for democracy took place in their own way.
3. Pakistan's administration began under the command of General Ayub Khan and gave up due to dissatisfaction among people giving way to Yahya's military rule and continued with the army rule though elections were held by military rulers to give a democratic shape to their own rule.
4. In the same way, Bangladesh drafted its own constitution to begin with democracy. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman formed presidential setup by abolishing all the parties except Awami League. But after his assassination the new military ruler Zia-ur-Rahman formed his own party and won elections in 1979. Later on he was also assassinated and another military leader Lt. Gen. H.M. Ershad took over.

Differences

1. In Pakistan, military, clergy and land-owning aristocrats dominated socially to overthrow elected government whereas in Bangladesh the leaders and their party members dominated for the same.
2. Pro-military groups have become more powerful due to conflict with India in Pakistan whereas in Bangladesh, pro-military groups are powerful due to friendship and encouragement of India.

4. List three challenges to democracy in Nepal.

Answer: The three challenges to democracy in Nepal were the result of a triangular conflict between-

1. the monarchist forces
2. the democrats
3. the Maoists

These challenges created massive, countrywide, pro-democracy protest in April 2006.

5. Name the principal players in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. How do you assess the prospects of the resolution of this conflict?

Answer: The principal players in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka were Sinhala and Sri Lankan Tamils.

After its independence, politics in Sri Lanka was dominated by the interests of Sinhala community who was hostile to Tamils, who migrated from India to be settled there. Sinhalese presumed Sri Lanka to be belonged to them only, hence no concession should be given to Tamils. This created militant Tamil nationalism

i. e. 'Ethnic conflict'.

Despite the revenges of internal conflict Sri Lanka has maintained democratic political system and registered considerable economic growth and high level of human development.

6. Mention some of the recent agreements between India and Pakistan. Can we be sure that the two countries are well in their way to a friendly relationship?

Answer: Although Indo-Pakistan relations seem to be the story of endemic conflict and violence, there have been a series of efforts to manage tensions and build peace under the various agreements:

1. Agreed to undertake confidence building measures to reduce the risk of war.
2. Social activists and prominent personalities have collaborated to create an atmosphere of friendship.
3. Leaders have met at summits to better understanding.
4. Bus routes have been opened up between these two countries.
5. Trade between the two parts of Punjab has increased substantially in the last five years.
6. Visas have been given more easily. No, despite the above mentioned agreements and initiatives, we can not be sure that both the countries are well in their way to friendship, still some areas of conflict exist there to be sorted out,

7. Mention two areas each of cooperation and disagreement between India and Bangladesh.

Answer: Disagreement

1. Differences over the sharing of the Ganga and Brahmaputra river waters.
2. Illegal immigration to India.
3. Refusal to allow Indian troops to move through its territory.
4. Not to export natural gas to India.

Cooperation

1. Economic relations have been improved considerably within last ten years.
2. Bangladesh is the part of India's 'Look East' policy to link up with southeast Asia via Myanmar.
3. Cooperated on the issues of disaster management and environment.
4. Cooperation on identifying common threats and being more sensitive to each other's needs.

8. How are the external powers influencing bilateral relations in South Asia? Take any one example to illustrate your point.

Answer: The external powers influence bilateral relations in South Asia because no region exists in the vacuum. It is influenced by outside powers and events no matter how much it may try to insulate itself from non-regional powers:

1. China and the US remain key players in South Asian politics.
2. Sino-Indian relations have improved significantly in the last ten years, but China's strategic partnership with Pakistan remains a major irritant.
3. The demands of development and globalisation have brought the two Asian giants closer and their economic ties have multiplied rapidly since 1991.
4. The US enjoys good relations with both India and Pakistan and works as a moderator in Indo-Pak relations.
5. Economic reforms and liberal economic policies in both the countries have increased the depth of American participation. . _
6. The large South Asian economy remains in the US and the huge size of population and markets of the region give America an added stake in the future of regional security and peace.

9. Write a short note on the role and the limitations of SAARC as a forum for facilitating economic cooperation among the South Asian Countries.

Answer: Role of SAARC: Role of SAARC can be identified as follows:

1. 'South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation' (SAARC) is a regional initiative among South Asian states to evolve cooperation since 1985 onwards.
 2. It consists of seven members to encourage mutual harmony and understanding.
 3. SAARC has initiated SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Agreement) to free trade zones for whole south Asia for collective economic security.
 4. SAARC has projected on economic development of its member states to reduce their dependencies on the non-regional powers.
- Limitations: SAARC is growing slowly due to political differences among its member states—

1. Only the conflicts led to bilateral issues as Kashmir problem between India and Pak.
2. Some of the India's neighbours fear that India intends to dominate them by influencing their societies and politics.
3. SAARC members are from among the developing or least developing countries which creates insufficiency of funds.

10. India's neighbours often think that the Indian government tries to dominate and interfere in the domestic affairs of the smaller countries of the region. Is this a correct impression?

Answer: No, the impression is not correct because India makes efforts to manage its neighbours beyond its size and powers which can be justified on following grounds-

1. India often feels exploited by its neighbours.
2. On the other hand, India's neighbours fear that India wants to dominate them regionally but India is centrally located who shares borders with other countries geographically, which should be accepted on mutual understanding.
3. India avoids political instability in its neighbouring states so that outsiders should not take advantage of influence in the region.

2MARKS

1. Mention the names of member states of SAARC.

Answer: India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Maldives.

2. Mention any two objectives of SAARC.

Answer: 1. To provide an integrated programme for regional development.
2. To accelerate economic growth, social progress in the region.

3. “Democracy in South Asia has expanded the global imagination of democracy”. Do you agree? Justify.

Answer: The various countries in South Asia have experienced mixed record of democracies and the people also share an aspiration for democracy to be flourished not only in rich or developed countries but in developing and underdeveloped countries also which can be drawn from the examples of Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Maldives, because—

1. Every ordinary citizen, rich or poor belonging to different religions view the idea of democracy positively and support the institutions of representative democracy.
2. They prefer democracy over any other form of democracy and think that democracy is suitable for their country.

4. Explain the problems that India have with Pakistan.

Answer: India have following problems with Pakistan:

1. The problem of Kashmir on the issues of Pak occupied Kashmir (Pok) and Line of Control (LOC). India claims Kashmir to be its integral part and Pakistan refuses to accept it. Hence, wars took place in 1965 and 1971, but issue remained unsettled.
2. Problems over starting issues like control of Siachin glacier and over acquisition of arms involved both the states acquiring nuclear weapons and missiles to deliver such arms against each other in 1990s.
3. Pakistan government has been blamed for using a strategy of low key violence by helping Kashmiri militants with arms, training,

money and protection to carry out terrorist strikes against India.

4. Pak's spy agency Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) is alleged to involve in various anti India campaigns.

5. "Military rule and democracy are the two sides of a coin in Pakistan". Examine the statement.

Answer: Military rule and democracy co-exist or are the two sides of a coin can be examined with the following facts:

1. After the implementation of first constitution in Pakistan, General Ayub Khan took the command, but was overthrown by military general Yahya Khan due to dissatisfaction of rule.
2. Again in 1971, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto formed an elected government which was later removed by General Zia-ul- Haq in 1977.
3. 1982 onwards, pro-democracy movements took place resulting an elected democratic government in 1988 under leadership of Benazir Bhutto, replaced by Nawaz Sharif.
4. Nawaz Sharif was again removed by General Pervez Musharraf in 1999 and in 2005, he got himself elected as president but was later dethroned by the court.

6. What is Indus River Water Treaty? Mention its significance also.

Answer: India and Pakistan signed Indus River Water Treaty by the mediation of the world bank in 1960 over the issue of sharing of rivers of the Indus basin. This treaty has been survived despite many military conflicts between these two countries. .

7. Why did India help Bangladesh to get independence and how?

Answer: Bangladesh was created by the support of India because:

1. West Pakistan did not allow Awami League, an East Pakistani Party to form government despite winning all the seats.
2. East Pakistanis rebelled against and were suppressed by the army of West Pakistan, resulting large scale migration into India.
3. This created huge refugee problem for India.
4. Hence, India supported the demand of East Pakistanis financially and militarily.
5. In December 1971, a war took place between India and Pakistan

and ended with the surrender of Pakistani forces by forming Bangladesh as an independent country.

8. Mention some points of agreement between India and Nepal.

Answer: India and Nepal enjoy the following agreements:

1. Allow their citizens to travel and work without visas and passport.
2. India is the largest aid giver to Nepal to provide financial and technical assistance in areas of trade, scientific cooperation, common natural resources and electricity generation.

9. Mention the features of SAFTA.

Answer: South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) was signed by SAARC members in 2004 with the following features:

1. Formation of Free Trade Zone for whole south Asia.
2. To sustain mutual trade and cooperation among SAARC members.

10. Mention some other conflicts in South Asia except with that of India.

Answer: 1. Nepal and Bhutan as well as Bangladesh and Myanmar have disagreement over the migration of ethnic Nepalese into Bhutan and Rohingyas into Myanmar.

2. Bangladesh and Nepal bear some differences over the future of Himalayan river water.

5MARKS

1. Despite the mixed record of democratic experience, the people of all the countries of South Asia share the aspiration of democracy.

Answer: The various countries in South Asia have experienced mixed record of democracies and the people also share an aspiration for democracy to be flourished not only in rich or developed countries but in developing and underdeveloped countries also which can be drawn from the examples of Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Maldives, because:

1. Every ordinary citizen, rich or poor and belonging to different religions view the idea of democracy positively and support the

institutions of representative democracy.

2. They prefer democracy over any other form of democracy and think that democracy is suitable for their country.

2. Describe any two major issues of conflicts between India and Pakistan leading to the war of 1971.

Answer: The 1947-48 war resulted in the division of the province into Pakistan occupied Kashmir (Pok) and the Indian province of Jammu and Kashmir divided by the Line of Control (LOC). Pakistan claims Kashmir to be its part but India presumes it to be its integral part. Hence, these conflicts led to war in 1971 and India won but the issues remain unsettled.

3. Describe any four consequences of Bangladesh war of 1971.

Answer: 1. India supported the demand of East Pakistan financially and militarily.

2. The war of 1971 made Pakistani forces to surrender in East Pakistan.

3. Bangladesh was formed as an independent country.

4. Bangladesh drafted its constitution declaring faith in secularism, democracy and socialism.

4. Explain India's changing relationship with Pakistan.

Answer: Although Indo-Pakistan relations seem to be story of endemic conflict and violence, there have been a series of efforts to manage tensions and build peace under the various agreements:

1. Agreed to undertake confidence building measures to reduce the risk of war.

2. Social activists and prominent personalities have collaborated to create an atmosphere of friendship.

3. Leaders have met at summits to create better understanding.

4. Bus routes have been opened up between these two countries.

5. Trade between the two parts of Punjab has increased substantially in the last five years.

6. Visas have been given more easily. Despite above mentioned agreements and initiatives, we cannot be sure that both the countries

are well on their way to friendship, still some areas of conflict exist there to be sorted out.

5. Highlight any two issues of cooperation as well as confrontation each between India and Bangladesh.

Or

Explain any two points of conflict between India and Bangladesh.

Answer: Co-operation:

1. Economic relations have been improved considerably in last ten years.
2. Bangladesh is the part of India's 'Look East' policy to link up South East Asia via Myanmar.
3. Both the countries have cooperated regularly on the issues of disaster management and environment.

Confrontation:

1. Bear differences over several issues including the sharing of Ganga and Brahmaputra river water.
2. India is unhappy on the issues of denial of illegal immigration, refusal to allow Indian troops and not to export natural gas to India.

6. What is meant by SAARC? How can peace and cooperation be enhanced through it?

Answer: SAARC stands for South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation for mutual trust and understanding among states of South Asia.

Role of SAARC:

1. SAARC is a regional initiative among South Asian states to evolve cooperation since 1985 onwards.
2. It consists of seven member's to encourage mutual harmony and understanding.
3. SAARC has initiated SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Agreement) to form free trade zones for whole South Asia for collective economic security.
4. SAARC has projected on economic development of its member states to reduce their dependencies on the non-regional powers.

7. Name the countries included in South Asia. How can peace and cooperation be enhanced in this region?

Answer: Countries included in South Asia are India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives. South Asian countries are diverse in every sense, still constitute one geo-political space by enhancing peace and cooperation in the following way-

1. People in all these countries share an aspiration of fair democracy.
2. South Asian members recognise the importance of cooperation and friendly relations among themselves.
3. SAARC is the regional initiative to evolve cooperation among member states.
4. SAARC members have signed South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) to free trade for the whole of south Asia.

**8. How was democracy restored in Nepal over monarchy?
Explain**

Answer: Nepal was a Hindu kingdom in the past and then a constitutional monarchy in the modern period for many years-

1. Throughout this period, the political parties and common people wanted to establish democracy, but the king retained full control with the help of army and restricted expansion of democracy.
2. The king accepted new democratic constitution in 1990 due to pro-democracy movement but again in 2007, due to triangular conflict of monarchists, democrats and maoists, king abolished the parliament.
3. A massive countrywide pro-democracy protest took place and achieved first major victory to force king to restore the house of representatives.
4. But Nepal's transition to democracy is not complete. It is moving towards the framing of constituent assembly to France and its constitution.

9. Why did India and Nepal experience differences between themselves?

Answer: India and Nepal experience differences between themselves due to the following reasons-

1. Indian government expressed displeasure at the warm relationship between Nepal and China.

2. India is unhappy on inaction of Nepal government against anti-Indian elements.
3. The Maoist movement in Nepal is a security threat to India giving rise to Naxalite groups in various states of India from Bihar in the North to Andhra Pradesh in the South.

10. Mention some features of Indo-Bhutan relationship.

Answer: India does not have any major conflict with the Bhutanese government.

1. The efforts made by Bhutanese monarch to weed out the gurillas and militants from north-eastern India that operate in the country have been helpful to India.
2. India is involved in big hydroelectric projects in Bhutan and remains the Himalayan Kingdom's biggest source of development aid.

7MARKS

1. Assess the positive and negative aspects of India's relations with Bangladesh.

Answer: Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan from 1947 to 1971. It consisted of the partitioned areas of Bengal and Assam from British India. The people of this region resented the domination of Western Pakistan and the imposition of Urdu language. Soon after the partition, they began protests against the unfair treatment meted out to the Bengali culture and language. They demanded autonomy for the eastern region. But the government dominated by the West Pakistan leadership refused their demand. The Pakistan army tried to suppress the mass movement of the Bengali people. Thousands were killed by the Pakistan army. This led a large scale migration into India, creating a huge refugee problem for India. The government of India supported the demand of the people of East Pakistan for their independence and helped them financially and militarily. This resulted in a war between India and Pakistan in December 1971 that ended in surrender of the Pakistan forces in East Pakistan and the formation of Bangladesh as an independent country.

2. How is the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) a major regional initiative by South Asian States to evolve co-operation through multilateral means? Assess.

Answer: Role of SAARC:

Role of SAARC can be identified in the following ways:

1. 'South Asia Association for Regional Co-operation' (SAARC) is a regional initiative among South Asian States to evolve cooperation since 1985 onwards.
2. It consists of seven members to encourage mutual harmony and understanding.
3. SAARC has initiated SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Agreement) to form free trade zones for whole South Asia for collective economic security.
4. SAARC has projected economic development of its member states to reduce their dependencies on the non-regional powers.

South Asian free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) was signed by SAARC members in 2004 with the following features:

1. Formation of free trade zone for whole South Asia.
2. To lower trade tariffs by 20%.
3. To sustain mutual trade and cooperation among SAARC members.

3. Like India why could democracy not take roots in Pakistan despite the fact that both the countries share a common part?

Or

Explain the factors responsible for Pak's failure in building a stable democracy.

Or

Describe any two pro-democracy factors present in Pakistan which can pave the way for establishing a lasting democratic setup over there?

Or

"Since 1947 Pakistan has been experimenting with democratic system and the military rule". In the light of above statement explain any two reasons why democratic system has not been stable there?

Answer: The following factors are responsible for Pakistan's failure in building a stable democracy:

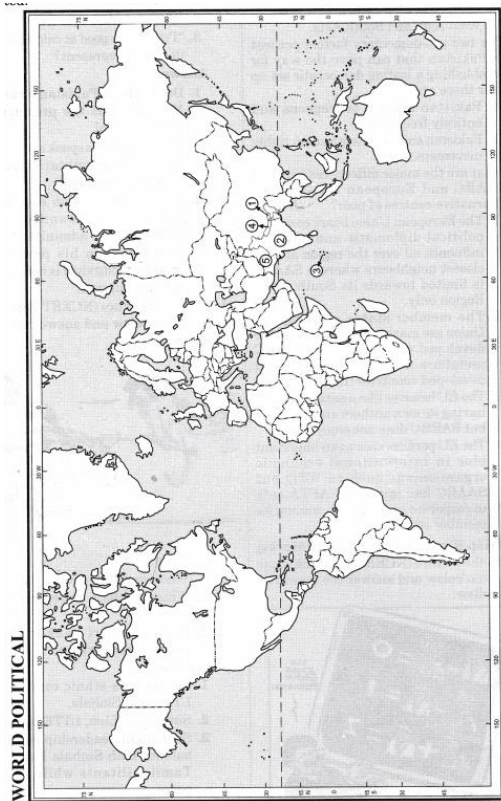
1. The lack of genuine international support for a democratic rule in Pakistan has encouraged the military to continue its dominance. The US and other countries have also supported military rule due to fulfilling their own interests.
2. Pakistan's conflict with India has made paramilitary groups more powerful which have often said that political parties and democracy in Pakistan are flawed, that Pakistan's security would be harmed by selfish minded parties and chaotic democracy, hence army stay in power is justified.
3. The social dominance of military, clergy, and owning aristocracy has led to frequent overthrow of elected governments and the establishing of military governments.
4. Global Islamic Terrorism and their apprehension that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal might fall into hands of these terrorist groups, the military regime in Pakistan was seen as the protector of western interests in West Asia and South Asia. The two pro-democracy factors present in Pakistan that can pave the way for establishing a lasting democratic set up over there are:
 1. Pakistan bears a courageous and entirely free press.
 2. Pakistan enjoys strong human rights movement.

4. What are the major differences between SAARC and European Union as an alternative centres of power?

- Answer:**
1. The European Union bears economic political-diplomatic and military influence all over the region and its closest neighbours whereas SAARC is limited towards its South Asian Region only.
 2. The member states of European Union are maximum from among the developed countries while SAARC members are from among least developed countries (LOCs)
 3. The EU behaves like a nation state by having its own anthem and currency but SAARC does not enjoy these.
 4. The EU performs as an important bloc in international economic organisations such as WTO but SAARC has initiated SAFTA only to cooperate economically among its member states.

MAPPING

1. On a political outline map of world locate and label the following and symbolise them as indicated:



Questions

- 1. A landlocked country with multi-party competition.**
- 2. Centrally located and shares borders with most South Asian Countries.**
- 3. Earlier the island had Sultan as head, now its a republic.**
- 4. A landlocked country with a monarchy.**
- 5. Country, where military has prevailed over democracy**

Answer:

- 1. Bhutan**
- 2. India**
- 3. Maldives**
- 4. Nepal**
- 5. Pakistan**