

BOOK I

CH. 5

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CONTEMPORARY SOUTH ASIA

INTRODUCTION - ~~South~~ South Asia in the entire globe region is an area which is a house to many international internal strife (violent arguments) and global conflicts. There have been many disputes related to border, water, resource sharing, etc. At the same time, people of South Asia recognise the need to cooperate with each other, so that the region can develop and prosper.

What is South Asia?

The South Asian region includes the regions of Bangladesh, India, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The great Himalayas in the North, Indian ocean, Bay of Bengal and Arabian sea make it a distinctive social, linguistic and cultural sub continent.

Aspiration for democracy -

Democracy has been the most popular form of government in this region. But only India and Sri Lanka have been able to sustain democratic government since their independence. Other states have seen many ups and downs, and strived hard to establish democracy. Despite the mixed record of the democratic experience the people in all these countries share the aspiration of democracy.

People of this region support the institution of representative democracy, and prefer democracy over any other form of govt.

THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP AND DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN

1. After the independence in 1947, Pakistan framed its first constitution, General Ayub Khan got himself elected and took over the administration of the country.
2. People were not satisfied with him so, another general of the military, General Yahya Khan, took over. During his rule, Pakistan faced crisis and after the war with India, in 1971, East Pakistan broke away and emerged as Bangladesh.
3. An elected leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, came to power from 1971 to 1977. This govt. was removed by General Zia-Ul-Haq, another military dictator in 1977.
4. There was a movement for democracy in Pakistan so, in 1988, an elected democratic govt. was established under the leadership of Benazir Bhutto (Daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto).
5. There was a strong competition b/w her party, The Pakistan People's Party and Muslim League. She remained PM till 1996 and was assassinated on 27 Dec 2007 while campaigning for elections.
6. There was a military ^{coups} group in 1999 and General Pervez Musharraf removed P.M. Nawaz Sharif. In 2001, he got himself elected as president.
7. Nawaz Sharif first became PM of Pakistan in 1990-93 and again became PM of Pakistan and his second term started in 1997-1999.
8. In 2008, Musharraf resigned and there was a coalition govt. in Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif came back in 2013, and is continuing his 3rd term as PM of Pakistan.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR PAKISTAN'S FAILURE IN BUILDING STABLE DEMOCRACY

1. The social dominance of military, clergy, and landowning aristocracy has led to the frequent overthrow of elected govt. and establishment of military govt.
2. Pakistan's conflict with India has made the pro military groups more powerful.
3. These groups have always generated this idea that the security of Pakistan can only be preserved by them. All the political parties are selfish minded.
4. They have justified the army's stay in power.
5. The lack of international support for democratic rule in Pakistan has always encouraged military rule to dominate.
6. The US with other Western state has always favoured military rule in Pakistan. They believe that the threat of Global Islamic terrorism can be countered by stability in military rule in Pakistan.
7. Even when Pakistan has a courageous and a strong human rights movement and free press which supports democracy in Pakistan.

Conclusion : The current PM of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif claims that he is a strong supporter of democracy and it will change Pakistan for the better.

1st constitution - Gen. Ayub Khan. → General Yahya Khan → 1971-77
Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. → 1977 Zia-Ul-Haq → 1988 Benazir Bhutto. →
1996-1999 Nawaz Sharif → 1999 Gen. Musharraf (2007) →
2008- Coalition → 2013- Nawaz Sharif (2018) →
Imran Khan.

BANGLADESH

BANGLADESH AND DEMOCRACY - SUPPORT FOR FREEDOM

1. Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan from 1947-1971.
2. The people of Eastern part of Pakistan resented the domination of western Pakistan and imposition of Urdu language.
3. These Bengali people began protests against the unfair treatment to the Bengali culture and language.
4. They wanted a fair administration in administration treatment and political policies.
5. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman led the popular struggle against west Pakistani domination, and demanded autonomy for the eastern region.
6. In the 1970 election, his party Awami League, won all the seats in East Pakistan. The West Pakistani leadership refused to convene the assembly.
7. Sheikh Mujib was arrested. Under the military rule of General Yahya Khan, the Pakistani army suppressed the mass movement. Thousands were killed.
8. This led to a large migration into India, creating a huge refugee problem for India. The govt. of India supported the movement of the East Pakistanis. Independence, which resulted in a war b/w India and Pakistan in 1971.
9. The war resulted in a defeat of Pakistan, liberation and creation of ~~Pakistan~~ Bangladesh.

THE INDEPENDENT NATION - BANGLADESH (1971)

1. Bangladesh drafted its Constitution declaring faith in Secularism, democracy, and socialism.
 2. In 1975, Sheikh Mujib got the Constitution amended to shift from parliamentary to presidential form of govt.
 3. He abolished all the parties. This led to conflicts.
 4. There was a military uprising in 1975 by Ziaur Rahman.
 5. Sheikh was assassinated. The new military ruler formed his own Bangladesh National Party and won the election in 1979.
 6. He was also assassinated and another military general H.M. Ershad came to power.
 7. Now, Bangladesh people started protesting in favour of democracy. Ershad was forced to allow political activities. He was elected president for 5 years. Mass protests forced him to step down in 1990.
 8. Elections were held in 1991.
- At present, Democratic Republic has been working and Sheikh Hasine is the current PM of Bangladesh.

NEPAL

MONARCHY AND DEMOCRACY IN NEPAL

1. Nepal was a Hindu kingdom in the past and kept on changing from constitutional monarchy to absolute monarchy from time to time.
2. The people of Nepal have demanded for a more responsive and representative democratic govt.
3. For a long time, the king with the help of army, retained absolute control and limited the expansion of democracy.

4. However, in response to the pro democracy movement, King accepted the demand for a new democratic constitution in 1990's.
5. But the democratic regimes proved to be shortlived and unstable, in 1990's, the Maoists rebels led an aggression against the ~~monarchy~~ monarchy.
6. Now, there was power conflict b/w King, Maoists and democrats. In 2002, the King dismissed the elected govt. and reestablished monarchy.
7. The people of Nepal were not ready to accept this. There was a pro democracy movement in April 2003, led by seven party alliance, social activists and Maoists.
8. All the rights from monarchy were taken. The 240 year old monarchy was finally abolished and democracy was restored in Nepal in 2007, under the govt. of CP Koirala.
9. In 2008, Nepal was declared a republic and this is ^{how} ~~the~~ democracy won and at present Khadga Prasad Oli is the elected PM of Nepal.

SRI LANKA

ETHNIC CONFLICT AND DEMOCRACY IN SRI LANKA

1. Although Sri Lanka retained democracy since its independence in 1948, but even it has faced many challenges due to ethnic conflicts in the country.
2. For a long time, politics was dominated by the majority community, Sinhala in Sri Lanka. They were hostile to the Tamils who migrated from India.

3. Tamils were deprived of all kinds of rights, as Sinhalese claimed that Sri Lanka belonged to them only. This led to militant Tamil nationalism.
4. From 1983 onwards, the militant organisation (LTTE) Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has been fighting an armed struggle and demanding Tamil Eelam, a separate country for the Tamils (controls north eastern parts)
5. Tamils are of Indian origin so there is a pressure on Indian govt. to help the Tamils. In 1987, an accord was signed b/w Sri Lanka and India by which an Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was sent to Sri Lanka to improve relations b/w the Sri Lankan govt. and the Tamils.
6. But IPKF ended fighting Tamils it had to withdraw in 1989.
7. The Sri Lanka crisis (civil war in 2009) continues to be violent. Some Scandinavian countries like Norway, Iceland have been trying to negotiate b/w the two groups but ethnic conflicts are still going on.
8. In spite of their internal conflicts, Sri Lanka has attained economic growth, and high levels of human development. And above all, it has maintained a stable democratic system.

RELATIONS OF INDIA WITH DIFFERENT SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES

1. INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Pakistan was created out of India in 1947 and since then, Pakistan has been trying to defend its identity by adopting a hostile attitude towards India.

(i) Kashmir dispute -

* The Pakistani govt. claimed that Kashmir belonged to it. War b/w India and Pakistan in 1947-48 was fought and 1965 failed to settle this matter.

* The 1947-48 war resulted in the division of province into Pak occupied Kashmir (POK) and the Indian province of Kashmir divided by the line of control (LoC)

* In ~~1965~~¹⁹⁷¹, India won the war against Pak but the Kashmir issue remained unsettled.

* India's conflict with Pak is also on other issues like control of Siachen glaciers, and arms control, etc. Both countries tried to acquire nuclear weapons also in 1990's.

* Both the govt. continued to be suspicious of each other. The Indian govt. has blamed the Pak govt. for supporting militant activities against India.

(ii) The spy agency of Pak - is also alleged to be involved in various anti India campaigns.

* The govt. of Pak also blames Indian govt. and its security agencies for creating trouble in the province of Sindh.

3. INDIA AND NEPAL

- (i) India and Nepal enjoy a very special relationship.
- (ii) When India became independent, both states signed a treaty of peace and friendship in 1950.
- (iii) Both states agreed on mutual security, open access to each other's borders and allowing Nepali citizens to work in India.
- (iv) During 1960's and 70's, some strains developed in Indo-Nepalese relations, when India supported the democratic movement in Nepal.
- (v) There have been some trade related issues as well.
- (vi) Indian govt. has also shown displeasure at the warm relationship b/w China and Nepal, and at the Nepal govt., inaction against anti-Indian element.
- (vii) Many leaders of Nepal think that India interferes in its internal affairs.
- (viii) Nevertheless, Indo-Nepalese relations are stable and peaceful. Despite the differences, trade, scientific cooperation, electricity generation and interlocking water management grids hold the two countries together.

4. INDIA AND SRI LANKA

- (i) India has a peaceful relationship with Sri Lanka.
- (ii) At times, India had to intervene in the matters of Sri Lanka, due to ethnic conflicts related to Indian Tamils.
- (iii) But after the military intervention in 1987, the Indian govt. now prefers a policy of disengagement in Sri Lanka's internal affairs.

India signed a free trade agreement with Sri Lanka. During natural disaster like tsunami, India has provided help to Sri Lanka which has brought the two countries together.

5. INDIA AND BHUTAN

Peaceful and cordial relationship

No major conflicts

Bhutan helped India to weed out guerrillas and militants from north eastern states.

India is involved in big hydroelectric projects in Bhutan.

It remains as the biggest source of development aid for Bhutan.

6. INDIA AND MALDIVES

(i) warm and cordial relation.

(ii) During the attack of Tamil Sri Lankans on Maldives, the Indian air force helped to stop the invasion.

(iii) India has contributed towards the island nation's economic development, tourism and fisheries.

CONCLUSION - India has friendly relations with all its neighbours, but due to the size and location of India, its neighbours fear cobdricity in the region. It is considered as the Big South Asian giant.

PEACE AND CO-OPERATION IN SOUTH ASIA

1. In spite of several conflicts, South Asian states recognise the need for mutual cooperation and friendship.
2. In this regard, a major initiative has come in the form of a regional forum called SAARC formed in 1985. The SAARC states have signed the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA).
3. SAFTA promises a free trade zone for the South Asian region.
4. SAFTA was signed in 2004 and came into effect in Jan 2008. It aims for a new era of peace and cooperation b/w South Asian states by allowing free trade across the border.
5. SAFTA aimed at decreasing trade tariffs by 20% by 2010.
6. Although Indo-Pak relations seem to be a story of conflict, there have been many efforts in order to reduce tension and build peace.
7. Leaders have met at different summits in order to understand each other better and find a solution to major conflicts.
8. A number of bus routes have been opened up between the 2 countries.
9. Indo-China relations have also been improved significantly in the past year.
10. American involvement in S. Asia has rapidly increased after cold war. And it has signed relations with both India and Pak.

