



## SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) and WSDS, 2025 (World Sustainable Development Summit) for Environmentally challenged Situations in the South Asian Countries and India.

Dr Sharmistha Aich

*Postdoc, PhD (Biological Anthropology), M.Sc. (Biological Anthropology),  
B.Sc. in Zoology (Hons), Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Administration (PGDEA),  
Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), Online Programs for Leadership Upliftment by Harvard X*

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### Abstract

*Climate change in SAARC countries, is a devastating effect, we face today. The most affected people affected are the weaker sections of the society. i.e. the women and the children in Aisa. This geological shift highlighted the need for decisive action to protect the environment and the future generation. According to the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS, 2025), the update indicated urgent need to reduce the temperature by 43% by 2030. The study aimed to have a comprehensive study towards Climate Change and the Environmental concerns among the South Asian Countries and its positive approach towards Technological transfer of Mitigation, Adaptation process. Secondary Data were gathered from Google and Research Gate. SAARC organization faced obstacles due to limited financial resources and geopolitical issues. The study concludes by strengthening regional governance structures, enhancing cooperation, improving data-sharing mechanisms, integrating climate concerns into national development plans for long-term objectives among South Asian countries.*

**Keywords:** Climate Change, Environmental Effects, SAARC, World Sustainable Development Summit, high temperature, erratic rainfall, droughts.

### I. Introduction

India is a key player among the member nations of SAARC, which is the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. Established in 1985, SAARC consists of eight member countries: India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (Kadam, 2024). The organization has faced challenges due to geopolitical conflicts and limited funds. Meanwhile, India has been cooperating with its eastern neighbors through BIMSTEC. SAARC was envisioned as an independent organization and is often compared to

other regional bodies like the European Union (EU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Its primary goal was to enhance the economic development of South Asian countries (Kadam, 2024).

Today, SAARC not only advocates for progress in global trade but also addresses environmental concerns, technological advancements, and geopolitical shifts. It plays multiple roles in promoting the welfare of the people in South Asia, aiming to improve their quality of life through economic, social, and cultural development. The motto of SAARC, "Deeper Integration for Peace and Prosperity," reflects its mission to foster cooperation among member states in order to achieve peace and prosperity in the region.

SAARC comprises 3% of the world's land area, 21% of the world's population and 5.21% (USD 4.47 trillion) of the Global Economy, according to the report of 2021. Origin of SAARC as Regional Cooperation in South Asia was first discussed at the Asian Relations Conference in 1947, Baguio Conference in 1950, Colombo Powers Conference in 1954. The Organization SAARC was founded by President Zia-Ur-Rehman from Bangladesh in Dhaka on 8th December 1985 who was considered the brain child of this Organization. The President signed the Charter of duties for the first time with a logo of SAARC as Seven Doves, Eyes of Buddha with two Enclosed Hands. Seven Doves and Eyes of Buddha represented Peace and Harmony whereas Enclosed Hands which reflected a promise of Friendship, Unity and Goodwill among each other of the fellow members. Currently the CEO of SAARC is Mr. Golam Sarwar from SAARC Development Fund (SDF) who is also the Secretary General of SAARC. The basic objective of SAARC is to facilitate every member Nations of SAARC, an Opportunity to live in dignity, Strength and Self Reliance (Kadam, 2024).



SAARC has following structures – Council body, which is the Apex policy making body and their council of members, represented by the Government Heads of the respective member countries. This is followed by Council of Ministers who comprised the foreign ministers who meet twice annually to discuss the concern of SAARC. These Council of Ministers function in Policy Formulation, reviewing off the progress matter of regional co-operation, identifying newer areas of co-operation, and setting up additional mechanisms as per the requirements. SAARC is thus based on the principles of sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in the internal affairs and status for mutual benefits.

### **World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS, 2025)**

According to the Summit Series report from 2001 to 2025, the latest update on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicated that out of the 169 targets, only 14% are on track, while 20% were not being monitored at all. Additionally, 14% of the targets were showing regression in critical areas such as hunger, education, employment, and the environment. The global status report highlighted the urgent need to reduce high temperature targets by 43% by 2030. However, current national commitments were only projected to achieve a 2% reduction, both in action and in data. Therefore, there is a clear need to accelerate sustainable development and climate solutions, with partnerships between other countries being essential. In response to this need, the World Sustainable Development Summit was held from March 5 to 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2025, in New Delhi under the theme “Partnerships for Accelerating Sustainable Development and Climate Solutions.” The event was organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and inaugurated by the Union Minister, Mr. Bhupender Yadav. Dignitaries attending the summit included the Prime Minister of Guyana and Brazil’s Minister of the Environment. India reaffirmed its commitment as a key player in the Global South concerning global climate action and sustainability policies. Notably, India reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 7.93% in 2020 and has collaborated with international partnerships for sustainable solutions. The country aimed to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070, with a GDP reduction target set for 2047. India thus promised to focus, creating a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) with a strong emphasis on climate sustainability (WSDS, 2025).

Under the Global South initiative and the Paris Agreement, the Minister urged developed

nations to fulfill their obligations under the Paris Agreement. He emphasized the necessity for enhanced global cooperation and the strengthening of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). There was also a special focus on providing adaptation finance to vulnerable regions in the Global South (WSDS, 2025).

### **Hypothesis of the Study**

Climate change in SAARC countries, i.e. South Asian Countries is not a problem we can ignore for tomorrow; it is a devastating effect of the environment, that we face today. The most affected people affected are the weaker sections of the society i.e. the women and the children who face extreme floods and droughts. As climate change impacts are felt globally, SAARC countries are not exempted from its effects. Originally, SAARC focused on promoting economic, social, and cultural development across its member nations. However, over time, climate change and environmental concerns emerged as significant issues requiring urgent attention. This geological shift highlighted the need for decisive action to protect the environment and the future generations in South Asian countries. The South Asian Countries experienced severe climatic challenges such as erratic rainfall patterns, increased frequency and intensity of floods, droughts, frequent cyclones, and extreme heatwaves. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these conditions have proven life-threatening. The consequences have been dire, affecting thousands of lives, livelihoods, and disrupting the biodiversity of flora and fauna. The damage caused by these drastic climatic conditions is continuously increasing, with no geographical borders, in particular to mitigate its impact. Therefore, there is an urgent need to examine the adverse effects of climate changes on South Asian nations including the researchers, scientists and educationalists to study the crucial effect of environmental concern and to priorities the challenges, find out ways and means to deal with the adverse climatic conditions for sustainable development and hence the study gains importance.

### **Aims, Objectives and Methodology of the Study**

The study aimed to have a comprehensive study towards Climate Change and the Environmental concerns among the South Asian Countries with its positive approach towards Technological transfer of Mitigation, Adaptation process. Several Secondary Data were gathered from Google and Research for the future positive outlook towards Climate Change and Adaptation, Mitigation Process. The study is concluded with the various



National and International Reports for the said Organization and its future prospect for the same.

## II. Observation and Discussion

SAARC has made significant contributions in many sectors such as Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) in 1993, South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) in 2004, South Development Fund (SDF) in 1998, South Energy Co-operation Program (SECP) in 2013, South Asian University (SAU), in 2010, Operationally SAARC Satellite in 2017 and many more though there were some Ups and Downs observed in members states of SAARC Countries. It was also observed that Hegemony position of some countries in terms of Economy, Geography, Military Strength influenced the Global Market, thus portrayed some countries looked smaller in front of others (Kaler, 2016). The smaller Nations thus feared from the larger Nations, hence at times affected the Unity of the Organization and its economic Growth (Khushboo, 2025). Some of the other hurdles which had become prominent were Bilateralism rather than Multilateralism ways of dealing conflicts (Nag and Bandhopadhyay, 2020) between neighboring countries, cross-border terrorism, which obstructed trade and connectivity but were sooner or later settled down.

Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement proved the progressive improvement of SAARC Countries towards Climate Change and its Mitigation and Adaptation towards the environmentally challenged situation. According to Kyoto protocol, there was an international Treaty that extended United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and committed Industrialized countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It was adopted in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997 and entered the force in 2005. The protocol aimed to mitigate climate change by setting legally binding emission reduction targets for developed countries. The Paris Agreement was a legally binding internationally treaty on climate change, adopted in 2015 by 196 parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris. Its primary goal was to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels, preferably to 1.5 degrees, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Similar trends were observed in the SAARC countries wherein the Governments had collectively pledged to deal with the issues of Climate change and Global Warming to deliberately reduce the green gas emission and hence prevent the Earth from Global Warming. This was followed up by SAARC countries deliberately acting upon mitigation, adaptation process of various programs for agriculture and various climate resilient

agricultural techniques, water resources and water management systems during droughts, erratic monsoons, floods. A follow up of the same was observed practicing in India and Bangladesh. It was also observed that various attempts were made towards shifts in Renewable Energy Resources from Non-Renewable such as Solar Energy, Wind Energy, Hydroelectric power Energy among the SAARC countries (Kadam, 2025).

The severe impacts of cyclones, floods, and droughts have prompted SAARC countries to collaborate more effectively in enhancing early warning systems for environmental disasters and improving relief resources. This cooperation aimed to coordinate regional responses to natural disasters in waterlogged countries such as Sri Lanka and the Maldives, thereby assisting in Disaster Risk Management (DRM). The financial aid for technological transfer to address climate change in India who was a leader among SAARC countries, actively engaging in both national and international financial mechanisms. This collaboration facilitated the negotiation and adaptation of various climate change projects that enhanced data sharing among SAARC nations. Significant contributions from research scholars and think tanks across multiple research institutes and organizations worked critically for a better understanding of the impacts of climate change.

It has also been observed that marginalized sections of society, particularly women and children, are more vulnerable to climate change and environmental concerns compared to their male counterparts. Therefore, it is essential for women to be included in decision-making roles within SAARC organizations. Various technological innovations in SAARC countries included the use of satellite technology for climate monitoring, GIS tools for vulnerability assessments, and mobile technology for climate evaluations and disaster management. These advancements are integral to the system. Furthermore, the digital platform for climate change and technological transfer has emerged as an accessible means for knowledge dissemination. As the need for sustainable development to combat climate change becomes increasingly clear, fostering partnerships is essential for success. Climate change and technological transfer play crucial roles among the SAARC countries, but they require active participation from government, non-government, and private sectors to enhance financial support for these efforts.

While these steps are vital for litigation and adaptation processes among SAARC countries, one significant issue that has emerged is the political and



diplomatic tensions between these neighboring nations. Additionally, countries with limited resources, such as technological and economic resources, have struggled to allocate adequate funds for environmental protection and climate change adaptation (Khusboo, 2025). Although the Paris Agreement outlined a pathway for SAARC countries regarding climate change and technological transfer, the organization faced challenges due to its limited financial resources for collaboration with developed nations in the West (Khushboo, 2025). Moreover, SAARC addressed various internal challenges that required urgent attention, such as strengthening regional governance structures, enhancing cooperation, improving data-sharing mechanisms, and integrating climate concerns into national development plans for long-term goals (Khushboo, 2025). Recently, WSDS 2025 promised to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070, with a GDP reduction target set by 2047. India focused on creating a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) with a strong emphasis on climate sustainability (WSDS, 2025).

### III. Summary and Conclusion

As the need for sustainable development to combat climate change becomes increasingly evident, fostering partnerships is essential for success. Climate change and technology transfer are crucial issues among SAARC countries, and they require active participation from the government, non-governmental, and private sectors to enhance financial support for these initiatives. While these actions are vital for litigation and adaptation processes among SAARC countries, a significant challenge has emerged due to the political and diplomatic tensions between these neighboring nations. Additionally, countries with limited technological and economic resources have struggled to allocate sufficient funds for environmental protection and climate change adaptation. Although the Paris Agreement outlines a pathway for SAARC countries regarding climate change and technology transfer, the organization faced obstacles due to its limited financial resources for collaboration with developed nations in the West (Khushboo, 2025). Furthermore, SAARC must address various internal challenges that require urgent attention. These include strengthening regional governance structures, enhancing cooperation, improving data-sharing mechanisms, and integrating climate concerns into national development plans for long-term objectives.

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