



SPCRD GLOBAL  
PUBLISHING  
Sustainable Solutions

# READS Review of Economics and Development Studies

Journal homepage: <http://reads.spcrd.org>

ISSN (Print): 2519-9692

ISSN (Online): 2519-9706

## South Asian University and Educational Integration: Potentials and Outcomes for Peace Promotion between Pakistan and India

<sup>a</sup> Muhammad Tasleem Ashraf, <sup>b</sup> Abdul Basit Khan, <sup>c</sup> Ali Shan Shah

<sup>a</sup> Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Political Science & IR Government College University Faisalabad

Email: ranatasleemashraf@gmail.com

<sup>b</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science & IR Government College University Faisalabad

Email: basitniazi@yahoo.com

<sup>c</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science & IR Government College University Faisalabad

Email: alishanshah@gucf.edu.pk

### ARTICLE DETAILS

#### History:

Accepted 10 March 2020

Available Online 31 March 2020

#### Keywords:

The South Asian University,  
Pakistan India, Educational  
Integration, Student's  
interaction, Regional Peace

#### JEL Classification:

N15, A23, A29, H75, I20

DOI: 10.47067/reads.v6i1.181

### ABSTRACT

*Through education conflicts, poverty, socio-economic injustice, distrust and constant threats to peace can be eradicated. Education is a powerful tool which can bring positive change, prosperity and justice. Conflict resolution and promotion of peace within the societies and with other nations of world can also bring through education. Role of educational institutions are always been considered most important and powerful to bring different cultures and nations closer. Mutual conflicted issues has created uncertainty and distrust in both countries. The wars of 1965, 1971 and recently Kargil conflict in 1999, cross border terrorism and blame game has pushed the relations into uncertain conditions of distrust. The South Asian University is window of integration where both countries students got the chance to get education under one roof. Objectives of establishing South Asian University for closer integration of SAARC countries is still a big challenge for the member nations as it can be used for the peace promotion and people to people connection. In this research paper the objectives and input of South Asian University is examine for bringing nations closer through education. The study examines the role of university to bring the students of Pakistan and India closer and for developing the atmosphere of friendship and trust in both nations. The study examines the civil society connectivity and different kinds of CBMs in both nations' students by using the platform of university and its impacts on Pak-India relations and developing the peace in the region.*

© 2020 The authors. Published by SPCRD Global Publishing. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0

Corresponding author's email address: ranatasleemashraf@gmail.com

## **1. Introduction**

Sir Syed Ahmad laid the foundation for modern education in the light of Islamic principles after the war of independence for the Muslim of sub-continent. He considered modern education as tool of progress for the Muslim of India. In 1875, he established MAO College in Aligarh. It is examined that a number of Muslim students who took active part in the movement of Pakistan, were the students of Aligarh University (Mohiuddin, 2007, p. 59).

Political, social, moral and economic development is based on education. Only those nations have made progress which have developed their educational system on the basis of collective responsibilities and for promoting friendly environment. For the sustainable socio-economic growth of the country, education play the vital role. It enhances the competences, skills in the people for positive output. Process of education enable the people to be a good citizens for efficient contribution of the society. Education teaches us about the adjustment within the society and how to live peacefully with other communities of the world. Nations develops their relations with each other by taking advice from the expertise having good education and skill in the relevant field. Education brings harmony and collective unity and responsibility to up raise the quality and worth of life. Educational institutions through their social curriculum always try to produce true leadership for the welfare of state and regional stability. Education can bring the people closer for deeper inter action with each other. While focusing on the world, it is examined that for all kind of developments in different fields are ultimately connected to education, which plays the main role in positive development among the nations. The nations which are playing the leadership role in the world are well-educated and it is noted that those nations have spent a lot on education. In the case of India and Pakistan, the educational institutions and the south Asian study centers can pave their vital role through the process of education to the both sides' learners for developing peace and security between both countries.

Without education we cannot develop a normative system of living. Educated societies transform the values of social harmony, mutual integration, and culture of peace, both nationally and internationally. Education brings the positive change in human personality and develop the sense of understanding about their individual and collective responsibilities. Character building or positive change in human behavior comes through learning. Harmonized segments of society promote the culture of peace and integration and enable the youth to encourage the culture of mutual interdependence to resolve their conflicts. The behavior of the youth can be modified through promoting the values of tolerance, justice and peace. Higher education is considered as a gateway where universities plays active role for creating role models, scholars, and thinkers to serve the humanity by creating the values of tolerance and harmony. Different disciplines of social sciences exchange ideas to address the conflicts among the societies by avoiding violence. The role of university education is changing day by day such as the educational institutions in higher education level contribute in social development besides imparting knowledge. Germans and Malaysian universities are playing the role for promoting ethnic awareness. Institutions are developing the values of inter-ethnic integration among the undergraduates (Alvi, Amjad, Shahzad, & Usman, 2015, p. 39).

Regionalism is gaining strength and importance due to its significance day by day. It has drawn fruitful results on the regional stability. Regionalism has providing the suitable environment for mutual economic dealings and it is also supporting for the friendly ties of the nations with each other. Different tools or measures are utilized by the nations for mutual trust building or for creating friendly environment. Education is most powerful tool to understand the different cultures and to bring the nations on a common table to address the bilateral or multilateral issues with one another. The main objective of research is to examine the role of the South Asian University for bringing students of south

Asian nations together to establish regional stability and creating interaction with one another. Historical analysis has elaborated that mutual concerns created deep gaps in social connectivity or linkages of the citizens of India and Pakistan. The objective of the study is to examine how an educational institution with the support of curriculum and environment can play its role for social and educational integration between Indian, Pakistani youth studying in SAU. What's are the measures taken by south Asian university for creation of mutual interaction and friendly atmosphere between the students in the case of Pakistan and India. One objective of the research is to introduce the SAU as common educational platform for south Asian students and unique opportunity to meet different cultures of the region with mutual integration. Study is also important because through the promotion of the curriculum based on the importance and promotion regional peace and stability, the factors of distrust and hate can be eliminated. The study will be significant for the students of international relations to understand the role of common educational institution for the promotion of regional peace, bringing youth closer for mutual understanding and to improve the relations with each other.

Hypothesis of the study are;

H1: Educational integration is tool for interaction and CBMs.

H2: Regional Peace in South Asia can be promoted through education.

H2: Through SAU regional stability and peace can be promoted both sides by eliminating distrust and hate.

## **2. Methodology**

For the collection of the evidence both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used. Official web side of university, annual reports published by the university and both sides' foreign offices, policy briefing, books, research articles, research reports, national newspapers and magazines are used to collect and analyze the data. The research will be descriptive. Both primary and secondary source of information are used to collect the data according to the statement of the problem.

## **3. Poor Literacy Rate in South Asia**

India and Pakistan is facing challenges as both nation in the SAARC cluster have poor literacy rate. The system of education in both sides is filled with discrimination. The factors of caste, creed, gender imbalance and class oriented features are dominated because of illiteracy. In the year of 2000, a framework of action was developed in Dakar conference. In was decided that every nation of the world has to spend at least six percent of GDP for education. It was noted during the period of 2002 to 2004 that expenditure on education in public sector of India was 3.3 percent and Pakistan spent 2.0 percent. High literacy rate is required for regional integration. Discriminated educational system in India has built the gaps in people and issues of caste, creed and gender inequality lift behind the worth of peace and socio-economic propensity, on the other hand Pakistan is spending lowest on education in the region which is question mark over the comment of Dakar frame work of action (Islam, Nag, Lama, & Khanal, 2010, pp. 100-102).

## **4. Historical background of educational integration between Pakistan and India**

Regional leadership generated the idea to formulate organization to develop cooperation among the regional countries. Regionalism in south Asia was redesigned for uplifting worth of life. In December 1985 South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established. The head of the states of seven countries including Pakistan and India acknowledged the worth of regional cooperation and people to people interaction to fill the gaps. It was decided to develop public opinion and Integrated Program of Action (IPA) was lunched. Exploring educational integration for regional cooperation was one among nine parameters of program (Wignaraja & Hussian, 1989, p. 348).

Third Summit of SAARC was held in November 1987. The lunch of SAARC Audio Visual Exchange (SAVE) was examined as key success by the South Asian nations. In the field of digital content SAVE program is the earliest initiative in South Asia which has connected the regional states for information sharing. Before this in second annual gathering of SAARC head of the States stressed to encourage the role of scholars, academia and professionals for closer integration. SAVE program has multiple features such as improving literacy, joint production and youth collaboration among regional entities. Objectives of SAVE program itself indicate the promotion of integration through mutual talk's events and exchange information (Arinto & Akhtar, 2010, p. 122).

In December 1988 it was recognized that poverty, hunger and illiteracy is big challenge for the regional prosperity and stability. Without improving literacy rate it is not possible to uplift the life standards of the people of south Asia. Members of SAARC states agreed to include Education as part of IPA. The Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Pakistani counter partner Benazir Bhutto established an agreement to remove of hated material and misrepresentations from both sides history books. It was also decided to remove images which indicate the concept of enemy and create hate for each other (Ahmed & Das, 1998, p. 18).

This is significant measure taken by the leadership of both countries that finally they realized and reached on an agreement that in the curriculum of history there is some material that create distrust and misunderstanding between youth of both Nations and that conflicted readings and images should be removed from the text books. This step was taken in the sitting of SAARC Summit and counted a step towards friendship.

In December 1991 Colombo declaration issued by the South Asian regional States. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan and Narasimha Rao the Prime Minister of India participated. In this Summit leaders stressed on Science and technology education and measures for its promotion through workshops, conferences, seminars. Leaders welcomed arrangement for network of research and development centers. In this Summit leaders noted with satisfaction that in March 1992 SAARC Visa scheme will become operational for the heads of national academic institutions of all member states(Dixit, 2002, pp. 272-273).

Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC) was proposed in the SAARC ministers in May 1997. The proposal was accepted to establish in Pakistan. This center was formulated with the objectives to contribute for the education activities. Center organized many workshop, lectures, seminars and training programs on different topics and issues related to South Asia. Pakistani and Indian Scholars, learners, trainers and participants got the golden opportunity to meet each other and develop common understanding on different issues related to the humanity.

In July 1998, distance education based Open Universities of the SAARC countries arranged a meeting of vice-chancellors. They agreed to establish the Distance Learning platform to up lift the quality of life and to create integration through education in the people of the region. The vice chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, (AIOU) Bangladesh Open University, Indira Gandhi Open University and Open University of Sri Lanka were presented in the meeting .A SAARC Consortium of Open and Distance Learning (SACODiL) was recognized in that sitting.(Saez, 2011, p. 87).

## **5. Idea for establishing South Asian University**

In November 2005 during thirteen Summit of SAARC held in Dhaka, leaders of the state

calculated the successes of member countries towards primary education. Leaders stressed on the area of science, technology and higher education and also advised the member's state without education we cannot meet the challenges of twenty-first century.

Prime minister of India Manmohan Singh during the thirteen Summit in Dhaka communicated the idea to establish a South Asian University (SAU) which must provide the education and learning facilities with complete professional excellence. Singh also aimed that University will be a sources of inter connectivity among the people of South Asian region. Mamohan Singh during his speech on 12th November 2005 outlined the Vision of SAU in these words,

“The people of our subcontinent are at the cutting edge of scientific and technological research and in the front ranks of the knowledge society across the world. Wherever enabling environment and world-class facilities are made to our talented people, they excel. Let this become a forum where our academicians, scholars, researchers and gifted students can work together in the service of human advancement.”(Hawkins, Mok, & Neubaver, 2012, p. 60)

## **6. Establishment of South Asian University**

Fourteen Summit of SAARC was held in April 2007 in New Delhi, India. During the Summit Important, innovative and dynamic measures were discussed in the shape of inter-governmental agreements. These agreements were signed to create South Asian University and Food Bank. Prime Minister of Islamic Republic Pakistan Shaukat Aziz and Prime Minister of Republic India were also present on the precious moment and signed the agreement on 4th April 2007 for the creation of South Asian University of world standerd educational institution. Leaders agreed to structure A Course-Plotting committee to draw up the bye laws, curriculum, structural frame work, governance and financial matters of the University as well (Gupta & Shukla, 2009, p. 459).

Inter-governmental Meetings of Steering Committee were established in different times between the officials of member states for South Asian University. All these meeting were arranged to find out the draft for structure, rules, business plan and about the regulation of University. In the last seventh meeting of the steering committee members confirmed the modalities for South Asian University (Cooperation, 2015).

## **7. SAU Vision and Objectives itself Promote the Peace Promotion**

To Promote of Regional peace and security, to grow the education of science and technology, to establish good citizenship, to improve quality of life and to create the regional consciousness is also the subject of the South Asian University. University is also a forum to for providing to scholars, researchers, academician and gifted students to work together. Pakistan and India has the disappointing linkages in the department of higher education and research projects. In the case of Pakistan and India this area has been closed before the establishment of South Asian University. Students as well the faculty arrangements in SAU is a part of confidence building measures (Shama, 2008, pp. 96-98).

In the case of Pakistan and India according to Stephen T. Cohen the formation of South Asian University has provided the opportunity to the students of both countries to join classes in India . Before this both countries universities students find it stiff and almost impossible to attend educational courses in each other countries. It was the first example of educational integration in Pak-India. Vision for educational integration came true as South Asian University provided a door to bring the students of both nations closer (Cohen, 2013, p. 31).

Pakistan and especially India both governments play a key role for the creation of this university. Establishment of the University is innovative exercise which opened the doors for the students of Pakistan to get their higher education in India under the umbrella of SAARC. It is a clear indication and useful measure for the development of mutual trust and good relations between Pakistan and India through education. This process of education is everlasting and will go on, interaction of the Indian, Pakistani students will produce the future leadership and more cooperation areas as well.

### **8. First Academic Session of SAU**

SAU started its process of education in August 2010 with the fifty pioneer students that were enrolled in the opening session of the University courses from SAARC member countries. The students were enrolled in program of Masters in Economics and Masters in Computer Application. In opening academic session of the SAU the majority students were granted admission from India, two students from Pakistan took admission in SAU and opened the window of trust building through educational process, two from Bhutan five from Bangladesh and one from Sri Lanka. SAU develop its courses in July 2011 and has been providing students Postgraduate degree in International Relations, Sociology, Computer Science, Biotechnology and Law. It is considered that university will give the opportunity to 700 teachers in eleven faculties with attractive salary benefits and 7000 students from the South Asian region were entertained in its own Campus when it will be operational in full strength. About 80 percent teachers were appointed from the SAARC States and 20 percent may appointed from other than SAARC countries (Saurabh & Upreti, 2012, p. 264).

Theme of SAARC is to connect nations with each other for cooperation and regional integration. New Delhi Declaration in which SAU established was a milestone and reflection of the collective wisdom and the vision of intra-connected South Asia. The vision of the South Asian University itself elaborate the regional consciousness and efforts to improve the quality of life. Both important countries Pakistan and India took active part and played a productive role for reaching on an agreement to establish an institution for education. South Asian University is landmark for cooperation and significant tool for confidence house in SAARC nations especially between India and Pakistan. The teaching faculty that is appointed from member states is symbol of regional integration and a constructive measure to bring people closer through the education phenomena.

SAARC member states contributed financial support but a care full analysis shows that government of India took active part and going to produce 50 percent funds for the South Asian University expenditures. This contribution of India indicate the cooperation towards the joint adventure of SAARC countries. The creation of University also raised some sensitive questions one of them was about the visa policy and living, travelling settlement of the staff and students especially in Indian. These questions were addressed when Indian and Pakistan diplomatic dealings were in crunches because of November 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai. These tense conditions created the communication gap between two countries. Pakistan made some objections against the distinction treatment with staff members and students in the University and asked to revisit in visa regime. The interior ministry of Indian Government considered these complaints and made some changes in visa policy. Staff and students of Pakistan enable to enjoy same status as others foreigners had in Indian universities (Saez, The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) An Emerging Collaboration Architecture, 2011, p. 88).

New university setting will give a lot of scope for innovation. It will provide the active and vibrant student community that contribute truly the application of SAARC charter and infect the

University is the future of regional integration especially in the case of Pakistan and India.

### **9. South Asian University and Pak-India Educational Integration**

In the Second session of the SAU six academic programs were offered to the students of SAARC countries. Total 23 seats were offered to Pakistan and 7 students joined the university after qualifying the admission test held in Lahore (University, 2010-2011, pp. 14-16). South Asian University is developing its educational programs, plans and courses to improve higher education and to produce the real leadership for the region. The higher education especially in social sciences play a major role understand and bring the people together (University, Annual Report, 2012-2013, pp. 3-4)

### **10. Celebration of Pak-India Independence days and different Festivals**

Independence Day celebration in South Asian University is most important event for confidence building and people to people interaction. Students from Pakistan and India jointly celebrate the Independence Day. Another important steps taken by the SAU is Writing Clinic. It was established to improve the academic vocabulary, diction and language writing skills. This service was provided to all students free of cost by the SAU administration. This Writing Clinic is another example of student's integration. Introduction of South Asia is non-credit course which is compulsory to all master level students of SAU the main outline of this course is to introduce the learner's common issues, history of region and challenges of South Asia. Students have to pass this course for obtaining the degree from SAU (University, Annual Report, 2012-2013, pp. 19-23).

All these activities in South Asian University created linkages of students of SAARC member countries through the process of education. The celebration of Independence Day of Pakistan and India on the same stage and place is a clear indication of trust building and harmony among the students of both countries. In future this University can make a bridge of friendship between India and Pakistan. The research work, lectures, workshops, and training programs of the University academia can also bring the people closer. South Asian University annual Calendar narrated the interaction of the Pak-Indian students in different events which are examined as measures for filling the gaps in the both sides' youth through higher education.. (University, Annual Report, 2014-2015)

### **11. Conclusion**

In case of Pakistan and India it is examined that both states are facing the common problems such as poverty, socio-economic disparity, injustice and both sides are spending huge economic resources on the arms for self-protection or survival. Both nations have mutual conflicts which are always been observed as constant threat to peace of the region. Through educational integration in both countries, regional peace and prosperity can be achieved and it would be also beneficial for the international peace and prosperity. Conflict resolution and promotion of peace is only possible in the educated environment. South Asian University has created friendly atmosphere in the students of SAARC nations. It has developed the opportunities among the people of different cultures for integration especially in the case of Pakistan and India. For defusing the distrust, hate among the youth of Pakistan and India SAU has given the opportunities to celebrate festivals. These kind of confidence building measures develop the approach of collective peace by avoiding conflicts. The South Asian University is window of integration where both countries students got the chance to get education under one roof. The core purpose of universities are to produce educated, skilled and professional leaderships in the every filed of life which must play their role for collective social justice, prosperity and peace in region of South Asia. For creating friendly environment between Pakistan and India, giving the better possibilities of integration in education can bring positive role for regional peace and stability Education is process of positive change in human mind and behavior and this process create the ability

to solve the problems of the individuals and the societies of the world. In wider meaning education comprises every impact in the socio-economic and political life of the individuals, the form of government, environment, the problems and their solution, the values and political system of the state is also designed through the educational innovation. Education has a profound relation with the progress of the states in all field of life and play vital role for integration and propensity of the people. All celebrations arranged by the SAU showed that integration between the Pakistani and Indians students has developed sense of owning the diversities and promoting the equality and worth of all human beings and their faiths and beliefs. SAU is playing an important role to being the students of Indo-Pak closer for role model in future. University is giving learning of mutual interdependency and promoting a culture of peace and acceptance to each other especially in the case of India and Pakistan.

## **12. Recommendations**

- Hate material and images should be removed from the text books that related with the historical information of both countries. Measures should be adopted with complete consensus of both sides to remove the things that have no concerned with reality.
- There should be a coordination between the Ministries of higher education of both counties for joint programs on common issues and interests of South Asian region. In this regard research programs, workshops, seminars, lectures, debates, training program, competition program should be organized to overcome the common issues.
- Both India and Pakistan should take common measures to increase literacy rate which is very low in both countries. Both countries should make a comprehensive action plan to eliminate illiteracy and should design courses that open the ways of common integration through process of education. This action plan must be supported by all government departments, civil society and media of both nations should also play their positive role as well.
- Open and Distance learning courses and programs should be planed between India, Pakistan. These courses should cover the matters of common interest in South Asian region.
- Both side's governments and public universities should honor the certificates and degrees that were awarded by their own countries educational institutions such as degrees of SAU is valued and is acceptable in eight SAARC Nations.
- Both countries should encourage their research scholars, educational experts, and academia to visit and exchange their experiences, knowledge and skills with each other. These events should be arranged at all levels. Both sides' governments should make the visa policy easy and friendly through one window operation for scholars and experts.
- Competition programs should be designed in students, scholars and between the people of civil society which are contributing and working in different fields of lives.
- Indo-Pak scholars should be provided all kinds of support and facilitations to visit higher educational institutions and access to information in both countries. Efforts and contributions should be admired, encouraged, appreciated and rewarded in this regard also.
- Council for ministers for Education should met regularly after one year. This council should introduce the common vision for integration through education and also create new subjects, courses of common interests which should be taught through distance education in Pakistan, India and as well as in the campus of SAU.
- On regular basis students and teachers delegates should visit one another country to gain higher education. India, Pakistan should arranged teachers training programs based on integration and harmony under the umbrella of SAU.
- India and Pakistan should provide higher education by sitting up their regional campuses of high rank universities in one another country.

- Regional campuses of SAU should be established in every Member State of SAARC. New regional Centre for the promotion of integrated education in South Asia should be established as part of SAARC.
- India, Pakistan's study Centers which are working in South Asia for South Asian studies, their researches, studies and finding should be considered, valued while making the policies of integration in South Asia.

## **References**

- Ahmed, S., & Das, S. (1998). *Movements of People, Ideas, Trade and Technology: Towards Peaceful Co-existence of India and Pakistan*. Albuquerque NM: Sandia National Laboratories.
- Alvi, D. F., Amjad, A., Shahzad, K., & Usman, A. D. (2015). *Strengthening National Integration Among Youth*. *Journal of Contemporary Studies*, 31-41.
- Arinto, P. B., & Akhtar, S. (2010). *Digital Review of Pacific Asia 2009-2010*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Cohen, S. P. (2013). *Shooting for a Century: The India Pakistan Comundrum*. Washington DC: Brooking Institue Press.
- Cooperation, S. A. (2015, January 25). SAARC. Retrieved from saarc-sec.org: WWW.Saarc-sec.org/areaofcooperatio/detail.php? activity\_id=17
- Dixit, N. J. (2002). *India, Pakistan in War and Peace*. London: Routledge.
- Gupta, K. R., & Shukla, V. (2009). *Foreign Policy of India*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publisher & Dist.
- Hawkins, J. N., Mok, K. H., & Neubaver, D. (2012). *Higher Education Regionalization in Asia Pacific : Implication for Governance, Citizenship and University*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Islam, M., Nag, C., Lama, M. P., & Khanal, D. R. (2010). *Economic Integration in South Asia: Issues and Pathways*. New Delhi: Pearson Education.
- Mohiuddin, Y. N. (2007). *Pakistan A Global Studies Handbook*. California: ABC-CLIO.Inc.
- Saez, L. (2011). *The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) An Emerging Collaboration Architecture*. New York: Routledge.
- Saurabh, & Upreti, B. C. (2012). *Strengthening SAARC: Exploring Vistas for Expanded cooperation*. London: Pentagon Press.
- Shama, K. A. (2008). *The Internationalization of Higher Education: An Aspect of India's Foreign Relations*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
- University, S. A. (2010-2011). *Annual Report*. New Delhi: South Asian University.
- University, S. A. (2012-2013). *Annual Report*. New Delhi: South Asian University.
- University, S. A. (2012-2013). *Annual Report*. New Delhi: South Asian University.
- University, S. A. (2013-2014). *Annual Report*. New Delhi: South Asian University.
- University, S. A. (2014-2015). *Annual Report*. New Delhi: South Asian University.
- Wignaraja, P., & Hussian, A. (1989). *The Challenge in South Asia: Development, Democracy and Regional Cooperation*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.