

**GS Advanced Program 2023****Generic Booklet**Test Name/Code/No. : 69.2018

Name		
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Mobile No.	Date	

Allotted Time : 60 Minutes**Instructions to Candidates -**

- There are 7 Questions in this Question paper.
- All Questions are Compulsory.
- For all updates, please visit the noticeboard –
<https://noticeboard.forumias.com/gsap-2023/>

Important -

- Answers must be attempted in the QCA Booklet only.
- To upload the Answer Copies please visit to “My Course” section on –
<https://academy.forumias.com/>
- Only those copies will be evaluated which will be submitted before the next class.

Q. No.	Grade/Score
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Overall Grade/Score	

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FORUMIAS

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Q.1)

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) first took shape in 1985 as a multi-lateral forum for multiple issues, major being economic integration.

Despite 37 years of efforts, it remains among least economically integrated regions.

Reasons for weak economic integration

- Legacy of conflict among members ever since.
- All members are poorly performing on economic progress except India.
- Instability politically in many member states.
- Apprehensions to India's dominance due to size, power, capacity and economic might.
- India - Pakistan rivalry disrupts the process of cooperation.

Though, it has huge potential due to geographical proximity and interlinked destiny of members; considerable work for economic cooperation is yet to be done.

BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) is often proposed as a replacement to SAARC but it cannot be so for following reasons :-

- 1) SAARC is an organically grown setup, arising out of geography, cultural and ethnic ties. It is ought to stay with common future.
- 2) BIMSTEC itself is a bridge between SAARC and ASEAN countries, thus not replacing it.
- 3) BIMSTEC is focused on economic cooperation whereas SAARC is to have multi-sectoral and dimensional co-operation.
- 4) Shared common security can be a feature of SAARC, not similar in BIMSTEC.

Thus, despite challenges in realising the goals of SAARC; it is there to stay, not being replaced by BIMSTEC. Focus must be on regularising exchange between SAARC nations through frequent meeting to create impact.

Overall Grading (✓)

Poor			Average			Good		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Q.2)

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India, historically had been relying and connecting more with the West and Middle - East Nations. With the end of Cold-War era, India saw a shift towards East with its 'Look East Policy'.

Natural choice of looking east

Multiple events and happenings led to change in India's shift in policy.

- (i) Important for North Eastern states development.
- (ii) Fall of USSR led to fall of India's one reliable partner in trade and economy. Thus, there was a need to look for alternatives.
- (iii) Rejection of uni-polar world - After 1991, the world had become ~~not~~ uni-polar with USA hegemony. It was important to counter it and not overly relying on it.
- (iv) Diversification - Choosing a diversified portfolio of economic partners was necessary. With economic reforms, India was also interested in boosting its exports alongside increasing imports.
- (v) New strategic partnerships was the need of the hour for India to ease the process of economic integration of newly opened markets with the world.

Over the years, the economic cooperation with East Asian nations has further evolved into economic, technical and security cooperation.

Groupings like BIMSTEC has really helped India in boosting connectivity, to boost trade and security.

In recent years, it has also helped strategically to counter China's rising influence in the region, thus enhancing security potential.

In 2014, PM Modi called for a greater cooperation, raising the 'look East' to 'Act East' policy. This will surely help us improve ties and engagement further with South East Asia.

Overall Grading (✓)

Poor			Average			Good		
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Q.3)

India, since its independence, has been heavily relying on the West with respect to its foreign trade, energy security, defense security, etc.

India's energy security

India has been a net importer of crude oil as fuel. The major suppliers have been Iran, Saudi Arabia among others.

This encapsulates into 'Look West' policy' of India with respect to energy security. The major focus being on the middle east nations.

But the co-operation was majorly limited to energy needs of India from Middle East. It also shaped India's foreign policy to great extent. For instance, India's resistance to Israel had energy security as one of the concerns.

Evolution in the 21st Century

In the 21st century, India changed ~~to~~ its stand from look West policy, focusing only on energy to having greater cooperation with other centers of power in the East, Middle East and the West including West Asia.

The new order in relations with West Asia

- (i) Moved away from shadow of West in dealing with West Asian countries.
For instance, India kept importing oil from Iran despite heavy sanctions on Iran from USA.
- (ii) Greater leap in connectivity by having cooperation for various trade corridors like INSTC (International North-South Transit Corridor).
- (iii) Cooperation across domains, not limited to energy. India is partnering with Israel on multiple fronts including technology, defense, research, etc.
- (iv) Multi-lateral grouping like I2U2 (India Israel USA-UAE) is strengthening multi-lateral cooperation. It has an implication on security of the nation.

Therefore, India today is not limited to securing energy from West Asia but eyes it with focus on other domains as well. If availed well, the opportunities in West Asia has potential to boost India's trade, defense and economy.

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Q.4)

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India, today, focuses on its neighbours more than any other allies. The need to keep a cordial and cooperative relationship with neighbour for mutual growth and development is evident.

It is important for India to rely on soft power towards neighbours as asymmetric size and power of India already is a cause of concern for them.

Instruments of soft power:

- 1) Economic
 - Providing unilateral benefits
 - Soft and easy capital for development
 - Access to Indian markets
 - Assistance in economic upliftment

- 2) Cultural - ethnic
 - Evoking people - people connect
 - Using shared ethnic ties and culture
 - Relaxed policies for neighbours

- 3) Aiding development
 - Providing technical know how
 - Training and resource sharing on developmental work
 - Sharing technology

4) Enhancing connectivity [Trade over land
Trade over sea

The above soft power measures will alleviate the apprehensions of neighbours.

Greater economic integration

leads to Better political cooperation

India thus focusing on economic integration can counter external influences in the neighbouring nations. Following measures particularly will lead to the same:-

- (i) Focus on rule based regional and maritime order.
- (ii) Access to mutually shared natural resources
- (iii) Para-diplomacy with states having ties with neighbours.
- (iv) Work on cultural heritage -

India must work on these to counter the external threats which will help in maintaining security in the region.

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Q.5)

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In the aftermath of withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan, the Taliban has reemerged and established control in the country.

Though India had not legitimized the Taliban I.O in 1996, the world order today, makes Afghanistan an important partner of India. But India needs to protect its interests without legitimizing Taliban regime, it being a terror driven organisation.

Steps towards engagement:

The major focus should be on engagement on economic, infrastructure and welfare aspects. This will give an opening for further course.

- 1) Community engagement - India must focus on continuing with its high impact community development projects.
- 2) Civic amenities - The regime lacking experience in administration, can be engaged with by means of providing civic amenities through transfer of products and process knowledge.

- 3) Engagement diplomatically - India can engage with the moderate factions of Taliban regime to formulate common points on which the two countries will be able to take relations ahead.
- 4) Leveraging presence of other turbulent groups like ISIS in the region poses a threat to Taliban regime. Thus, these challenges can be used to India's advantage through diplomatic maneuvering.

All the above measures must be taken by ensuring proper security for the Indian representatives and without openly legitimizing the current regime there.

The interests which make engagement essential

- 1) Race against the world - Many countries have started engaging with Taliban already. Thus, India must not miss the opportunity which might prove to be fatal later.

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2) Infrastructure interests - India needs Afghanistan as an ally to implement its North-South corridor projects. Thus, it must not sever ties with Afghanistan completely.

3) Balancing regional threats - To ensure security of India and peace in the region, it is important for India to balance the growing aspirations and footprint of other Asian giants.

Though providing legitimacy might go against India in the future, not engaging is not an option too for us. Therefore, a calibrated approach towards the issue is needed.

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Q.6)

India has always been accused of showing 'Big Brother syndrome' towards its neighbours.

Why the growth of Big Brother syndrome:

Geography

- Large size of land
- Long maritime potential
- Only nation among neighbours having boundary with almost all in the region.

Demographic & Economic

- 1.4 billion population against others having in few lakhs or few crores.
Closest Pakistan (~40 crore)
- Size of economy is huge.
Combined size of neighbours much smaller than India's \$3.2 Trillion (except China)

Security

- Constant action against Pakistan like Air strike, etc.
- Superior technology and military might

Historical mistakes

- Events ignoring the importance of small nations (Few events)

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Implications of Big Brother syndrome:

- 1) Difficulty in economic integration with people having apprehensions towards India.
- 2) Assertion of sovereignty by giving concessions to external influences, to counter India.
- 3) Anti-India sentiments among citizens in these neighbouring countries.
- 4) Loss of reputation for India despite aiding development in these nations.
- 5) Ineffectiveness of regional groupings like SAARC and BIMSTEC.
- 6) Less support for India in matters of security.

Therefore, it is important for India to break the notion of Big Brother and enable equal status and cooperation for neighbours.

Initiatives to help change the narrative:

- 1) Unilateral concessions for the neighbours will help India gain more reputation.
- 2) Enabling people to people connect will built further trust arising out of shared culture and ethnicity.
- 3) Access to Indian economy must be eased further, to boost their economic development.
- 4) Sharing of best practices, technology by not just sharing the output but by enabling research in those nations.
- 5) Integration economically and enhanced connectivity.

Through these measures of soft power, India will be able to build trust among the neighbours. This will lead to peace and development for all.

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Q.7)

The COVID-19 pandemic came with many challenges in the healthcare, which had impact on the economy as well. But the event also brought many opportunities for India.

The pandemic helped India to take a leap forward in its foreign policy by engaging with the world through new medium and routes.

India's role during the pandemic:

HEALTHCARE

India became the pharmacy of the world saving millions of lives.

(i) Vaccine factory - India provided vaccines to 130+ countries to save lives.

(ii) Healthcare infrastructure ranging from preventive to curative devices and equipments were sent to nations in need.

(iii) Yoga for better recovery of patients has been praised worldwide.

ECONOMIC & ESSENTIALS

India shared not only vaccines but also other critical resources when the supply chains were disrupted.

(i) Donations and grants to Global South helped them cope with the impact of pandemic.

(ii) Food supplies and fuel to neighbours and other distant nations.

DELEGATION & CAPACITY BUILDING

(i) Sharing of best practices on a regular basis

(ii) Sharing of COWIN platform

(iii) Regular meetings with nations

(iv) Technical training for neighbours

FIGHT AGAINST SUPPLY DISRUPTIONS

When the world was facing supply chain issues, India helped its neighbours with continued supply of all materials, not limited to food.

Nations like Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh which depend heavily on India were given preferential treatment.

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Thus, the pandemic allowed India to discover new channels of engagement with the countries, especially with the neighbours.

It has earned a lot of goodwill for India, posing India as a nation which comes up for help of world in times of need. The need now is to consolidate the goodwill earned to strengthen India's ties with neighbours. It will enable India to march faster towards becoming a developed nation with peace and prosperity for all in the region.

Overall Grading (✓)

Poor			Average			Good		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9