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**ENHANCING SAARC DISASTER MANAGEMENT: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY WITH ASEAN
COORDINATING CENTRE FOR HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

by

Sharad Lamichhane

March 2016

Co-Advisors:

Carolyn Halladay
Cristiana Matei

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COMPARATIVE STUDY WITH ASEAN COORDINATING CENTRE
FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE ON DISASTER
MANAGEMENT**

Sharad Lamichhane
Lieutenant Colonel, Nepalese Army
M.A., Tribhuvan University, 2010

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March 2016**

Approved by: Carolyn Halladay
Co-Advisor

Cristiana Matei
Co-Advisor

Mohammed Hafez
Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

The devastating earthquakes that ravaged Nepal in the spring of 2015 demonstrated the risk of disaster that affects all of South Asia. They also demonstrated the real limits to a regional disaster management and response. According to *The Kathmandu Post*, almost 4175 troops from 18 countries were deployed for rescue and relief operations. All South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) member states except Afghanistan and Maldives rushed to help in the Nepalese tragedy. SAARC had no plan for this response mode of transporting relief materials. The lack of a pre-coordinated plan or resource management created tensions even in the capital Kathmandu. The situation in remote areas, where the road links were damaged and helicopters were the only mode of transporting relief materials, was even worse.

The elements of a more effective structure for disaster response in the region may be at hand within SAARC. Political leaders all voice their support for regional effort to respond to or mitigate the frequent natural disasters in South Asia, but SAARC has not been able to establish strong institutions for coordinated response to higher magnitude disasters.

This thesis examines why SAARC has not been able to form or sustain a strong disaster management organization and, based in part on other regions' experiences with coordinated disaster management, which elements would contribute to a more effective regional disaster management within SAARC framework.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AADMER	Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response
ACDFIM	ASEAN Chief of Defense Forces Informal Meetings
ACDM	ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADMM	ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting
ADMM Plus	ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus
ADRC	Asian Disaster Reduction Center
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Agreements
AHA center	ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
BBIN	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal
BBIN-MVA	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal Motor Vehicle Agreement
DELSA	Disaster Emergency Logistic System for ASEAN
DVA	Digital Vulnerability Atlas
EAS	East Asia Summit
ERAT	Emergency Response and Assessment Team
EU	European Union
HuMOCC	Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Center
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
JAIF	Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund
JOCCA	Joint Operations and Coordination Center of ASEAN
MCDA	Military and Civil Defence Assets
MNMCC	Multinational Military Operations and Coordination Center
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NDMO	National Disaster Management Organization
NIDM	National Institute of Disaster Management

OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSOCC	UNDAC Team's On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
REOC	Regional Emergency Operation Centre
SADKN	South Asian Disaster Knowledge Network
SAFTA	SAARC Free Trade Areas
SARRND	SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disaster
SASEC	South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation
SCZMC	SAARC Coastal Zone Management Centre
SDMC	SAARC Disaster Management Centre
SDMRAF	SAARC Disaster Management Rapid Action Force
SEDMC	SAARC Environmental and Disaster Management Centre
SMRC	SAARC Meteorological Centre
UNOCHA	The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNHRD	United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot
UN-WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

I. INTRODUCTION

Eight variously poor and developing countries—Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives—are located in South Asia. Although the region is blessed with enormous natural resources and geographical diversity, which has availed South Asia with immense potential for prosperity, South Asia experiences heavy floods almost every year. Landslides, avalanches, glacial lake outbursts, droughts, cyclones, tsunamis also are all frequently occurring. In addition to these various kinds of natural disasters, the region is prone to political instability and weak governance, which has created opportunities for man-made disasters.

Migration across porous borders due to internal conflict or natural calamities has the potential to threaten the entire region's security, making it essential for these interconnected countries to work together to alleviate the risk to regional order and stability.¹ Hence, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has recognized the requirement to combine efforts with its active role to reduce the effects of disasters through awareness and preparedness for rescue and relief. To this end, SAARC has established a SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC) and various warning centers.

SAARC has been suffering from indecision and problems in the implementation of programs, including disaster management measures. Since the formation of the SDMC in 2006, South Asia has posted few achievements in regional disaster management as compared with ASEAN. In 2014, SAARC leaders decided to merge the scattered regional centers working on disaster response under the single umbrella of SAARC Environment and Disaster Management Center (SEDMC); but no further decisions have been finalized as to where, how, and with which resources the SEDMC should operate. In this state of dilemma and deadlock, any attempts to highlight the previous weaknesses and viable suggestions to enhance the SEDMC are very significant.

¹ Mahim Karim, "The Future of South Asian Security Prospects for a Nontraditional Regional Security Architecture," *The National Bureau of Asian Research NRB Project Report* (April 2013): 04, http://www.nbr.org/downloads/pdfs/PSA/NTS_projectreport_April2013.pdf.

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

The devastating earthquakes that ravaged Nepal in the spring of 2015 demonstrated the risk of disaster that affects all of South Asia. They also demonstrated the real limits to a regional disaster management and response. Almost 4175 troops from 18 countries were deployed for rescue and relief operations.² India was the first neighbor to join the Nepalese disaster response. All SAARC member states except Afghanistan and Maldives rushed to help in the Nepalese tragedy. The United States, United Kingdom, China, Japan, Germany, and South Korea were among the other nations supporting rescue, relief, and rehabilitation of victims. SAARC had no plan for this response once the support arrived in Kathmandu, however. The lack of a pre-coordinated plan or resource management created tensions even in the capital.³ The situation in the remote areas was even worse, where the road links were damaged and helicopters were the only mode of transporting relief materials.

The elements of a more effective structure for disaster response in the region may be at hand within SAARC. SAARC charter identifies the first of the group's objectives as the promotion "of the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life."⁴ Effective disaster relief and management clearly fall into this category of activity. SAARC has concentrated more on the development of the social and economic sectors, however. In addition, intrastate and interstate problems in the region have slowed progress further. Political leaders all voice their support for regional effort to respond to or mitigate the frequent natural disasters in South Asia, but SAARC has not been able to establish strong institutions for coordinated response to higher magnitude disasters.

² "No More Foreign Troops, Says Nepal Army," *Kathmandu Post*, May 12, 2015, <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/printedition/news/2015-05-11/no-more-foreign-troops-says-na.html>.

³ "Nepal Earthquake: Tensions Rise Over Slow Pace of Aid," *The Guardian*, Updated April 29, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2015/apr/29/nepal-earthquake-humanitarian-crisis-engulfing-8-million-people-rolling-report>.

⁴ "South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, SAARC Charter," Accessed Sept 05, 2015, <http://saarc-sec.org/saarc-charter/5/>.

This thesis examines why SAARC has not been able to form or sustain a strong disaster management organization and, based in part on other regions' experiences with coordinated disaster management, which elements would contribute to a more effective regional disaster management within SAARC framework. How can a robust and capable disaster management organization, as part of SAARC, enhance regional security and cooperation?

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Regionalism may be the dominant diplomatic trend in the early 21st century,⁵ but it is a movement that has been long in the making. Regional cooperation as it is known today started after World War II in Western Europe with plans to achieve stability and prosperity after the destruction of war.⁶ In the case of Western Europe, the precursor organizations to the European Union served first to bind France and Germany together in cooperation rather than competition—a striking goal and a more striking achievement, granted how each state had declared the other its “hereditary enemy” and vowed to fight the other into submission in the preceding century and a half.⁷

As the regional solution gained prominence, SAARC was established in 1985 to address the common aspirations for the social and economic well-being of South Asia.⁸ SAARC secretariat is located in Kathmandu; other bodies are housed elsewhere in the region. Cooperation does not always come easily to the states of the South Asian region, but SAARC structure of committees and centers has established solid bases for—and records of—members working together. The SDMC, founded in 2006 and based on the campus of National Institute of Disaster Management in New Delhi, was one such

⁵ Kishore Mahbubani, “Multilateral Diplomacy,” Ch. 13 in Andrew F. Cooper, Jorge Heine, and Ramesh Thakur, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 252.

⁶ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum. “Regional Cooperation: A Tool for Addressing Regional and Global Challenges.” In *International Task Force on Global Public Goods, Meeting Global Challenges: International Cooperation in the National Interest, Final Report, Stockholm, 2006*, 182, <http://www.cris.unu.edu/uploads/media/GlobalTaskForce.pdf>.

⁷ Dietrich Orlow, *A History of Modern Germany: 1871 to Present*, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 75.

⁸ South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, SAARC Charter.

cooperative entity.⁹ On paper, it has been superseded by the SEDMC, but no action has followed from the November 2014 SAARC summit in Kathmandu.

Regional cooperation in connection with natural disaster response has an urgent logic in an area like South Asia that sees fairly regular calamities that transcend national boundaries—particularly during the flood season. The SDMC coordinated with national disaster centers for policy advice and capacity building, strategic learning, research, training, system development and exchange of information with the purpose to reduce the impact of disaster and disaster management.¹⁰ Important precedents informed the establishment of the SDMC. For one, SAARC embraced the 2005 Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), touted as “a 10-year plan to make the world safer from natural hazards.”¹¹ Even before that, SAARC established an early warning system for tsunamis after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, which may well be the deadliest “killer wave” in history.¹²

Just before the tsunami, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) established the ASEAN Committee of Disaster Management (ACDM) in 2003. The ACDM formulated its Comprehensive Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) from 2005 and its Framework for Work Program for 2010–2015. AADMER is the agreed framework, in line with the HFA, for all ASEAN nations for cooperation, coordination, and technical assistance for disaster management in the region; the work program sought to operationalize the vision set by ASEAN nations to make disaster-resilient and safe communities by 2015.

The ACDM established the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management(AHA center) in Jakarta in 2011 to coordinate emergency operations. AHA center coordinates with member states on management issues of standby arrangements and sharing early warning information. Most importantly,

⁹ “SAARC Disaster Management Centre,” Accessed Sept 05, 2015, <http://saarc-sdmc.nic.in/index.asp>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ UNISDR, “Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA),” Accessed Sept 05, 2015, <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/hfa>.

¹² “The Deadliest Tsunami in History?” *National Geographic News*, January 7, 2005, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/12/1227_041226_tsunami.html.

it has facilitated a common vision among the member states of disaster management with strong political backing. In its turn, this shared institution has encouraged members to develop professionalism with various exercises in different countries, stockpile relief goods, and maintain consistent and adequate budget and staffing.¹³

The SDMC followed in the footsteps of AHA center. The SDMC came up with many functional agreements. Notably it became the regional forum for weaker states to address their most urgent issues through the trans-boundary approach. It was the focal point for international donors to work on disaster-related issues in South Asia from a regional perspective.

However, the political relations in SAARC are not as harmonious as those in ASEAN, which affects all aspects of the association. South Asia has seen four wars between regional giants, India and Pakistan. These animosities are often reflected in sundry border skirmishes as well as in obstacles at various state-level meetings of SAARC. In South Asia, India shares a common border with all countries except Afghanistan, and the economic dependencies of most countries lie with India. With such strategic and economic might, Indian hegemony in the region can—and often does—up-end the notional equality among SAARC member states in practice.

Initially, SAARC came up with SAARC Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management in 2006, which paved the way to establish the office of SDMC in New Delhi. In line with AADMER, SAARC has also approved SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disaster (SARRND) in 2011.¹⁴ However, many member states have yet to ratify this agreement. Therefore, implementation on the operational side is weak, as the Nepal earthquake response demonstrated.

¹³ Daniel Petz, “Strengthening Regional and National Capacity for Disaster Risk Management: The case of ASEAN,” Brookings, Washington, DC, 2014, <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2014/11/05-south-east-asia-drm-petz/strengthening-regional-and-national-capacity-for-drm--case-of-asean-november-5-2014.pdf>.

¹⁴ Stacey White, “A Critical Disconnect: the Role of SAARC in Building the DRM Capacities of South Asia,” *Brookings LSE Project on Internal Displacement*, (2015), 12. <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/05/05-south-asia-distasters-white/role-of-saarc-in-drm-south-asia-may-5-2015.pdf>

SAARC had no institutional presence in rescue and relief operation in Nepal 2015; however, many states participated and, ultimately, cooperated, coordinated and developed something like regional assets. This progression showed that most of the member states have developed quick response capabilities utilizing their military assets. These teams were able to operate in different geographical and climatic conditions. However, no strong Nepalese national plan was in place to handle and coordinate all available national, regional and international resources. Most importantly, all the regional and international militaries had no problems working together when they were well coordinated and tasked. This aspect clearly highlighted the need for strong regional controlling and coordinating institutions with additional logistical, financial and technical capabilities. These capabilities seem to be achievable with the proper concern, decisions and commitments from the political masters of the region.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review provides a summary and a critique of the literature on regionalism, how regionalism is practiced in SAARC, disaster management centers in the region and the civil-military relations aspects in those disaster centers as well as in various disaster relief operations. The major issues in this literature review are the efficacy of regional cooperation and the establishment of the disaster management organization in South Asia. The literature review will point to some important gaps in studies about why SAARC and the SEDMC so far have not been effective.

1. Regionalism and SAARC

This part of literature review addresses how regionalism is perceived in the context of SAARC and whether regionalism matters in SAARC. The answer to these questions must underlie any strong disaster management setup in the region in the broader interest of SAARC.

a. How Is Regionalism Perceived in the Context of SAARC?

The basic concept of regionalism is the formation of an organization among states with a common interest to achieve a shared goal. In international politics, a region is

defined as “a limited number of states linked by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual independence and could be differentiated according to the level and scope of exchange, formal organizations, and political interdependence.”¹⁵ After a period of stagnation or underdevelopment during the Cold War, regionalism started to grow again in various corners of the world from the 1980s on. Regional organizations are now open and active rather than closed and quiet, reflecting even more interdependence of the global political economy and the stronger links between globalization and regionalization.¹⁶ These patterns of regional organization are now expanding all over the world.

From the geographical perspective, for regionalism to flourish, the region should be distinguished as a relatively coherent territorial subsystem as compared with the global system.¹⁷ In other words, there must be something natural or inherent in a designated region; it cannot simply be fashioned out of any set of proximate states. Christopher Hemmer and Peter J. Katzenstein have pointed out collective identity as the binding factor for regionalism. For example, shared ethnic, historical, political, and cultural factors brought the United States closer to West European countries to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.¹⁸ Regionalism is now associated with policy and strategy, and is ultimately related to forming institutions in the regions.¹⁹ Without question, strong nationalism emerged in Europe after the 1990s with the formation of new states out of the former communist realm; however, the mutual interests of the nations push them toward

¹⁵ Muhammad J. Iqbal, “SAARC: Origin, Growth, Potential and Achievements.” *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 27, no. 2 (2006): 129, http://www.nihcr.edu.pk/Latest_English_Journal/SAARC_Jamshed_Iqbal.pdf.

¹⁶ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum. “Theorising the Rise of Regionness.” *New Political Economy* 5, no. 3 (2000): 457, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/713687778>.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 461.

¹⁸ Christopher Hemmer and Peter J. Katzenstein, “Why Is There no NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism,” *International organization* 56, no. 03 (2002): 575, <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=164567&fileId=S002081830244180X>.

¹⁹ Hettne and Söderbaum, “Theorising the Rise of Regionness,” 457.

forming a stronger European Union as an institution to achieve shared goals, stability, and prosperity.

The other concept is economic interdependence.²⁰ Such an arrangement can be formal or informal. For example, among Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, Japan was the core for production of goods and Taiwan and South Korea were peripheral, supplementing Japan.²¹ However, this kind of coordination was of a temporary nature and changed with the development of economic capabilities of its members, notably the rise of the so-called Four Asian Tigers' economies in their own right.

b. Does Regionalism Matter in SAARC?

From a neorealist perspective, policies adopted by weaker states are accepted until the hegemonic power feels threatened. The two Cold War superpowers were passive toward the activities of the regional organizations, but opposed them when regional activities clashed with superpower interests—as in U.S. opposition to sub-regional cooperation in Latin America and Soviet opposition to European regionalism.²²

There are also conditions of hegemony and cooperation in regional structures. India's outsized position in SAARC, for example, has made South Asian regionalism move at a glacial speed.²³ Initially, India was reluctant to form any regional organization in South Asia. Indeed, Indian scholars have very often characterized SAARC as a cabal of small, weak states ganging up to isolate India.²⁴ Pakistani failure to find space in West Asia and Sri Lanka's and Bangladesh's failure to secure membership in ASEAN left them the only option of establishing a new regional organization in South Asia. These

²⁰ Ananya Mukherjee Reed, "Regionalization in South Asia: Theory and Praxis," *Pacific Affairs* (1997): 237, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2760774.pdf?acceptTC=true>.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Andrew Hurrell, "Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in world Politics," *Review of International Studies* 21, no. 04 (1995): 341, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20097421.pdf>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Anirudha Gupta, "A Brahmanic Framework of Power in South Asia?" *Economic and Political Weekly* (1990): 714, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/4396126.pdf?acceptTC=true>.

states started lobbying their regional neighbors to form SAARC.²⁵ When India finally sensed a threat to its interests from outside with the growing Pakistan-U.S. and Pakistan-China relationships, India became at least lukewarm to the formation of SAARC.²⁶

The contemporary regional organization ASEAN has had better success than SAARC in solving intra-state conflict, resolving border disputes, and promoting better economic cooperation. ASEAN has come up with many bilateral border security arrangements to address the issues of cross-border insurgencies as well as formal and informal extradition.²⁷ Meanwhile, in SAARC, the rivalries and trust deficit between India and Pakistan have made mutual security issues more prominent than other possible areas of agreement—for example, trade, commerce, and human security.

The South Asian region is facing such challenges as poverty alleviation, minimizing the rate of unemployment, infrastructure development, and economic development. Over the last two decades, the sustained rate of economic growth has inspired India to seek a greater role in global politics. However, with weaker regional management, India's neighbor Pakistan has been trying to balance India by engaging it more in regional politics, which furthers the "indirect regional containment" policy of global actors.²⁸ In the meantime, China has penetrated widely in South Asia with its soft-power strategy. This circumstance has forced India to better engage within its region. India is now pushed to engage with its neighbors either regionally or bilaterally. The engagement of regional actors with SAARC as a forum is now more important.

The relevant literature agrees that regionalism within SAARC is currently weak. However, increased societal contacts and other transactions between the rival states will

²⁵ Kripa Sridharan, *Regional Organisations and Conflict Management: comparing ASEAN and SAARC*, Crisis States Research Centre, 2008, 14, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.460.4351&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

²⁶ Sridharan, *Regional Organisations and Conflict Management*, 14.

²⁷ Rajshree Jetly, "Conflict Management Strategies in ASEAN: Perspectives for SAARC." *The Pacific Review* 16, no. 1 (2003): 71, <http://www.tandfonline.com.libproxy.nps.edu/doi/pdf/10.1080/0951274032000043244>.

²⁸ Baldev Raj Nayar, and Thazha Varkey Paul, *India in the World Order: Searching for Major-Power Status*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2003).

bring them closer. The region inherited a sense of affinities among its culture and people from the time of the British Raj. The wish and the declaration of the states of South Asia to work together in the field of disaster management, as well as many aspects of social and economic life, has made SAARC an important and unavoidable choice.

2. Regional Disaster Management

The regional approach to regional disaster management has increased the research on region-specific disasters and boosted the regional capacity to counter them.

a. Regionalism in Disaster Management

Once any country suffers disaster, the disaster management organ of the country, the local disaster management units, NGOS, and humanitarian agencies associated with disaster step in. In the case of a mega-scale disaster, which exceeds the capability of the affected country to manage, the international organizations and military components of disaster management from friendly countries have also started to act in the disaster zone for the rescue and relief of the victims.

Various scholarly articles have noted the requirements and conditions of disaster management regionally. UN recognition of regional organizations in the maintenance of peace, security, and stability under UN Chapter VIII facilitated various regional organizations to conduct humanitarian actions and interventions at the time of crisis and disaster.²⁹ Regionalism helps regions balance between the operational requirements of hierarchy and centralization and the strategic and practical benefits of decentralization. Caruson and MacManus see the model in line with the regional approach, distributing funds and facilities in metropolitan areas by decentralizing the resources to enhance emergency management/homeland security, even in the context of the United States as practiced in Florida.³⁰ This decentralization concept does not fit properly with the

²⁹ Lilianne Fan and Hanna B. Krebs, Regional Organisations and Humanitarian Action: the case of ASEAN, *HPG Working Paper*, September 2014, 1, <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9207.pdf>.

³⁰ Kiki Caruson and Susan A. MacManus, "Disaster Vulnerabilities How Strong a Push Toward Regionalism and Intergovernmental Cooperation?" *The American Review of Public Administration* 38, no. 3 (2008), 286, <http://arp.sagepub.com/content/38/3/286.full.pdf>.

existing regional disaster centers, but, from the U.S. and UN global perspective, it enables regional actors to react faster and allows global actors to engage later with better resources and information in the field.

Severino notes that regionalism in ASEAN is not limited to economic integration only, but also incorporates environmental pollution and international terrorism.³¹ His focus is the facilitation of good governance by regional organization, which will pave the way to address other problems in the region.³² Goh further highlights the role of regional organizations like ASEAN as forums for smaller nations' to engage with global powers such as the United States, China and Japan. Such forums accommodate global powers' activities within regions while simultaneously protecting smaller nations' security and economic interests, which these states may otherwise find difficult to protect with their individual capability.³³

McEntire identifies that most international organizations have the purpose to establish peace, development, trade, public health and environmental safety; disasters disturb and derail any progress in those fields.³⁴ There are similar perceptions from most of the literature on international and regional organizations and their efforts toward peace, stability, and solving disaster-related problems.

The Humanitarian Features Programme paper on “‘New Regionalism’: Cross-Regional Collaboration and Humanitarian Futures” highlights that the risk sharing strategy is one of the important drivers of regional cooperation where humanitarian issues are increasing as a central issue for managing risk from disaster.³⁵ While operating under

³¹ Nicholas Thomas, ed. *Governance and Regionalism in Asia*, Routledge, 2009, XVIII, http://samples.sainsburysebooks.co.uk/9781134105816_sample_517167.pdf.

³² Ibid.

³³ Evelyn Goh, “Institutions and the Great Power Bargain in East Asia: ASEAN’s limited ‘brokerage’ role,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* (2011): lcr014, 23, <http://irap.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2011/06/01/irap.lcr014.full>.

³⁴ David A McEntire, *Disciplines, Disasters, and Emergency Management: The Convergence and Divergence of Concepts, Issues and Trends from the Research Literature*. Charles C Thomas Publisher, 2007, 172.

³⁵ “New Regionalism , Cross-Regional Collaboration and Humanitarian Futures,” Humanitarian Future Planning the Future, King’s College London, Accessed Sept 30, 2015, http://www.humanitarianfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/HFP_New_regionalism.pdf.

the umbrella of a regional organization, states must accept a certain level of risk to their sovereignty to develop their national capacity; thus, regionalism depends in this regard on how much of this risk the member states can tolerate.³⁶ Such regional organizations as the EU and ASEAN have enjoyed significant success in helping their member states realize their core interests.

In the case of SAARC, India pushes economic progress as the driving force for regionalism, whereas Pakistan focuses more on political issues to be solved earlier for better cooperation. Both approaches make the issue of disasters a lesser priority.³⁷ Today, there is limited turmoil in ASEAN; in contrast, India and Pakistan have fought four wars, and even peace between them is characterized by deep mistrust and hostility.³⁸ The mistrust between these two major players has prompted smaller states to bring out new issues of regional interest in discussion.³⁹ Still, India is central in the implementation and success of any issues in the region. If India loses interest in an issue, it will die down slowly or measures will become ineffective.

Disaster management has real potential to overcome interstate tensions for both the shorter and the longer terms. In spite of political and ideological differences between the United States and China, the armies of both countries are collaborating in the field of disaster management.⁴⁰ Similarly, the military leaders in Myanmar were obligated to accept international aid when the country was badly hit by Cyclone Nargis in 2008, which later opened opportunities for interactions within ASEAN in the field of disaster

³⁶ “New Regionalism , Cross-Regional Collaboration and Humanitarian Futures.”

³⁷ Sridharan, *Regional Organisations and Conflict Management*,14.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Sonatan Paul, “Role of SAARC in Strengthening the Relationship between India and Pakistan: a critical analysis,” *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2013), 124, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1406195629/fulltextPDF?accountid=12702>.

⁴⁰ “U.S., *China Conduct Disaster Management Exchange*,” The Official Homepage of the United States Army, Jan 14, 2015, http://www.army.mil/article/141137/U_S_China_Conduct_Disaster_Management_Exchange/.

management.⁴¹ This cooperation also opened interactions among leaders and bureaucrats at different levels, which ultimately developed the opportunity for first ever deployment of the ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Team (ERAT), arranged by the ASEAN Secretariat in coordination with the ACDM and the government of Myanmar.⁴²

b. Basis for Regional Disaster Management Organizations

Ferris highlights that regional organizations are more suitable for mobilization as they will share culture, customs, and problems. Therefore, many regional disaster management organizations have been developed in various regions. Ferris has suggested the importance of:

- Analysis of the actual implementation of regional strategies and frameworks on the national level.
- Examination, to the extent possible, of the impact of regional capacity-building programs on national capacity.
- Understanding the extent to which members of regional organizations provide political support to the regional body.⁴³

Ferris identified some challenges in various countries. Centrally adopted policies are not taken up properly at the local level, and the organizations and bodies to be developed are not in line with the suggested guidelines from regional organizations.⁴⁴ This work gives a broader picture of the active regional organizations, whereas the implementation role of the respective country is passive, which ultimately leads to weak management of disasters.

⁴¹Jürgen Haacke, “ASEAN and Political Change in Myanmar: Towards a Regional Initiative?” *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 30, no. 3 (2008), 370, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/contemporary_southeast_asia_a_journal_of_international_and_strategic_affairs/v030/30.3.haacke.pdf.

⁴² Haacke, “ASEAN and Political Change in Myanmar,” 370.

⁴³ Elizabeth G Ferris, “*Better Together: Regional Capacity Building for National Disaster Risk Management*” Desk review, August 06, 2014,06, <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2014/08/06-regional-organizations-disaster-management-ferris/better-togetherregional-capacity-building-for-national-disaster-risk-management-eferris-september-2014.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 7.

Kyoo-Man Ha researched four models of globalizing disaster management. He picked the UN model of professional coordination, in which the UN is a stakeholder along with civil society organizations, member states, and regional setups; the U.S. model of surveillance-oriented management, keeping the threat limited to avoid global consequences; the Korean model of copy-oriented effort to project national pride through service in disaster management; and the Indonesian model, a homogenization-based approach with a great deal of interest from the highest level of political leadership.⁴⁵ He concludes that all models are capable only of handling localized disasters, and there would be problems amalgamating all the models in the case of a single mega-disaster.⁴⁶ Out of many regional disaster management organizations, some are effective, some have advanced partially, and some are still at the early stages of development. The situation created within the SEDMC with the lack of coordination and commitments further amplifies the relevancy of research question in the context of South Asia.

Ferris and Petz have formulated a set of 17 indicators to measure the effectiveness of regional organizations on disaster management, including treaty frameworks and organization at various levels, financial setup, training, and mechanisms of cooperation and coordination such as military protocol.⁴⁷ International organizations have helped a lot to shape better regional organizations. Ferris and Petz find that all regional organizations share similar aspirations for regional cooperation but not necessarily for disaster management.⁴⁸ While comparing disaster management centers of ASEAN and SAARC, some prominent entities in ASEAN are: the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Center), the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus Experts' Working Group on Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster

⁴⁵ Kyoo-Man Ha, "Four Models on Globalizing Disaster Management in the Asia-Pacific Region: a comparative perspective," *The Pacific Review* 28, no. 2 (2015): 230–231, <http://www.tandfonline.com.libproxy.nps.edu/doi/pdf/10.1080/09512748.2014.995123>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Ferris and Daniel Petz, "*In the Neighborhood: The Growing Role of regional Organizations in Disaster Risk Management*," Brookings Institution, London School of Economics, Project on Internal Displacement, 2013, 20, http://pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/original/Brookings_2013_neighbourhood.pdf.

⁴⁸ Ferris and Petz, "*In the Neighborhood*," 25.

Relief (ADMM+EWG HA/DR), and ASEAN Regional Forum's Disaster Relief Exercise (ARFDiREx).⁴⁹ ASEAN has a ministerial working group to develop formal protocols for military forces responding to disasters, which suggests bilateral, multilateral, or international military collaboration, training exercises, and assistance.⁵⁰

There are some similarities between SAARC and ASEAN on accepted strategic plans and programs for preparedness, emergency response, and technical cooperation; however, these “treaty-based approaches are more binding approaches to cooperation but the compliance provisions remain weak.”⁵¹ SDMC created a web-based South Asia Disaster Knowledge Network (SADKN) and a Digital Vulnerability Atlas (DVA) allowing access of information for each member state.⁵² This comparison reveals a major gap between the disaster management centers of SAARC and ASEAN in terms of infrastructure development, coordination, and military cooperation. The deep-seated political dispute within SAARC has hindered the progress of institutions like the SEDMC, whereas the endeavors in ASEAN have pushed the AHA Center quite a bit further ahead

3. Civil-Military Relations in Disaster Management

Most of the literature related to disaster management is focused on the increased role of civilian and humanitarian disaster response setups. However, disaster response is also an important aspect of national security, and no government can rule out the employment of armed forces, an important element of national power. Bruneau and Matei have also identified providing support to humanitarian assistance as one of the six roles of security forces, as most national armies have the tradition of engaging in humanitarian

⁴⁹ ASEAN Disaster Management Reference Handbook, Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance, ASEAN, 2015, <https://www.cfe-dmha.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=3ZJKfisgWnk%3D&portalid=0>.

⁵⁰ Ferris and Petz. "In the Neighborhood," 14.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 69.

assistance in various disaster relief operations.⁵³ Even in the United States, the armed forces have a role in disaster management and response. In short-term rescue and response operations, the U.S. military may be tasked with:

Search and rescue; emergency medical care; emergency transport of people; mass feeding; in-kind distribution of food, clothing, and other necessary commodities; epidemiological work and disease control; decontamination (in hazardous materials or radiological circumstances); temporary sheltering; firefighting; help in restoration of electric power and other utility services; debris removal to reopen roads; and bridge repair or temporary bridge replacement, as well as offer security and property protection aid.⁵⁴

Charles Kelley argues for the use of military resources only in the case of catastrophic circumstances when extraordinary resources are needed, lest the growth of civilian authority in disaster preparedness be lessened.⁵⁵ In the case of international disaster relief operations, foreign armies normally show up after lives have been saved or lost, due to policies, procedures, and proximity. Therefore, Kelley suggests emphasizing specific capability gap areas only.⁵⁶ Joëlle Jenny highlights that most aid organizations generally abide by institutional principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence; their aid workers try to avoid close association with an international force to protect their fundamental principles.⁵⁷ Both authors stress capacity-building of humanitarian agencies for independent operations so that these organizations are not involved in any kind of prevailing or probable disputes in the field of operations. Hall and Cular write that there should be clear guidelines in the respective country's disaster

⁵³ Thomas C. Bruneau, and Florina Cristiana Matei, "Towards a New Conceptualization of Democratization and Civil-military Relations." *Democratization* 15, no. 5 (2008): 917, http://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/43284/Bruneau_New%20Concept%20of%20Civ%20mil.pdf?sequence=1.

⁵⁴ Naim Kapucu, "The Role of the Military in Disaster Response in the U.S.," *European Journal of Economic and Political Studies* 4, no. 2 (2011), 8, <http://ejeps.fatih.edu.tr/docs/articles/130.pdf>

⁵⁵ Charles Kelly, "Limitations to the Use of Military Resources for Foreign Disaster Assistance," *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal* 5, no. 1 (1996), 22, <http://www.emeraldinsight.com.libproxy.nps.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/09653569610109532>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Joëlle Jenny, "Civil-Military Cooperation in Complex Emergencies: Finding Ways to Make it Work," *European Security* 10, no. 2 (2001): 23, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09662830108407492>.

management plan to avoid sensitive questions when the national army guides and operates together with foreign armies.⁵⁸ These issues were more pressing in the case of politically sensitive areas with continuing insurgencies such as in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

The UN Interagency Standing Committee and UN humanitarian agencies have agreed, in the Oslo Guidelines of January 1994, on the use of foreign military and civil defense assets in disaster relief under civilian control—with military components subordinate and coordinating through UN Civil-Military Coordination Center.⁵⁹ These guidelines also encourage UN member states to avoid more dependency on military resources. In view of the changed security environment in Afghanistan and Iraq after 2003, UNOCHA and its partners realized the increased complexity in humanitarian affairs and updated the Oslo Guidelines in 2006; the updated guidelines are known as Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) guidelines.⁶⁰ Even though both documents identify humanitarian agencies as having the primary role, there are incidents of differences between military and humanitarian agencies in appreciating the security situation or following either the Oslo Guidelines or MCDA guidelines—as in the 2010 flood crisis in Pakistan.⁶¹ As of September 2014, UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination has conducted 236 emergency missions in 102 countries, mostly with civilian institutions and capacity.⁶²

⁵⁸ Rosalie Arcala Hall and Anita Cular, “Civil-Military Relations in Disaster Rescue and Relief Activities: Response to the Mudslide in Southern Leyte, Philippines,” *Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies* 38, no. 2 (2010), 84, [http://www.ajol.info/index.php/smsajms/article/viewFile/70504/59108%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull](http://www.ajol.info/index.php/smsajms/article/viewFile/70504/59108%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull%3Ftopics%3Dfull).

⁵⁹ Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief, Oslo Guidelines, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, November 01, 2007, [https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Oslo%20Guidelines%20ENGLISH%20\(November%202007\).pdf](https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Oslo%20Guidelines%20ENGLISH%20(November%202007).pdf).

⁶⁰ Ajay Madiwale and Kudrat Virk, “Civil–Military Relations in Natural Disasters: A Case Study of the 2010 Pakistan floods,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 93, no. 884 (2011), 1088, <https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/review/2011/irrc-884-madiwale-virk.pdf>.

⁶¹ Madiwale and Virk, “Civil–Military Relations in Natural Disasters,” 1089.

⁶² “What is UNDAC?” Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Accessed Sept 26, 2015, <http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/coordination-tools/undac/overview>.

Malešič notes that assistance in disaster relief has become a diplomatic measure; the capability of an individual state/organization for disaster relief operations has become a tool of soft power.⁶³ Chacho explains that “crisis management, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR), nonproliferation, and globally sanctioned operations” are major interest areas of all nations where the use of soft power is very critical to develop mutual relation at better condition.⁶⁴ Solomon noted that soft power has advantages up to certain limits at which progress is paralyzed, unless hard power then pushes to achieve the interest.⁶⁵ In spite of the limitations in the Oslo Guidelines on the use of military capability in disaster operations, capable countries are developing this ability so as to extend their influence whenever possible.

Problems of coordination and communication persist. Because of the lack of civil-military coordination between the U.S. military and its allies with the various international organizations in Zaire, Rwanda, and elsewhere in the region in 1994 after genocide and refugee flow, the mission failed to exploit the various capabilities of the NGOs deployed in the field and the military assistance was not effective with limited logistic supplies.⁶⁶ Bennett et al. discuss findings from three separate country reports from Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives during the disaster relief operation after the 2004 tsunami, and identify that in the immediate response period, the role of national and international militaries was more crucial than other organizations and the procedures of the Oslo Guidelines were not practiced.⁶⁷ There were questions on the distribution pattern, national approaches, activities, funding mechanisms, military-military

⁶³ Marjan Malešič, “The Impact of Military Engagement in Disaster Management On Civil–Military Relations.” *Current Sociology* (2015): 0011392115577839, <http://csi.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/04/02/0011392115577839.full.pdf+html>.

⁶⁴ Tania M. Chacho, *Potential Partners in the Pacific? Soft Power and the SINO-NATO Relationship*, Military Academy West Point NY, 2011, 2, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a562157.pdf>,

⁶⁵ Ty Solomon, “The affective Underpinnings of Soft Power,” *European Journal of International Relations* 20, no. 3 (2014): 721, <http://ejt.sagepub.com/content/20/3/720.full.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Daniel Byman, “Uncertain Partners: NGOs and the Military,” *Survival* 43, no. 2 (2001): 97, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/713660351>.

⁶⁷ Jon Bennett, William Bertrand, Clare Harkin, Stanley Samarasinghe, and Hemantha Wickramatillake. *Coordination of International Humanitarian Assistance in Tsunami-Affected Countries*. London: Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, 2006, 12.

cooperation and civil-military cooperation, so the paper by Bennett et al. finally recommends civil–military coordination improvement through more extensive promotion of guidelines, principles, and procedures among all actors in the field of disaster management.⁶⁸

Militaries of different countries rapidly deployed sufficient, unique, expensive capabilities and assets in the rescue of April 2015 earthquake victims in Nepal.⁶⁹ The experience marked a test of civil-military relations in Nepal. The Nepal Army was criticized as there was no clear sense of the comparative capabilities of the different forces and the civilian government entities and their international partners could not determine what the armed forces were doing in this realm, which led to confusion and missed opportunities for collaboration and exchange.⁷⁰ As there were no clear guidelines on how to mobilize its resources and foreign armies, the army was strongly influential in promoting its interests and in asserting its views on how things should be run.⁷¹ This experience tracks with the analysis and experience of ASEAN. *ASEAN Disaster Response, Training and Logistic Centre Enhancing Regional Governance in Disaster Management* identifies the capacity lag within humanitarian agencies operating in disaster response in Southeast Asia and highlights the need for greater civil-military coordination under Disaster Response, Logistics, and Training Centre (DRTLTC) to facilitate Training, Logistics and Financing aspects during peacetime and disaster relief operations.⁷²

⁶⁸ Bertrand, Bennett, Harkin, Samarasinghe and Wickramatillake, *Coordination of International Humanitarian Assistance*, 45–47.

⁶⁹ “Mess due to Absence of Central Mechanism,” *The Kathmandu Post*, May 02, 2015, [Http://Kathmandupost.Ekantipur.Com/Printedition/News/2015-05-01/Mess-Due-To-Absence-Of-Central-Mechanism.Html](http://Kathmandupost.Ekantipur.Com/Printedition/News/2015-05-01/Mess-Due-To-Absence-Of-Central-Mechanism.Html).

⁷⁰ White, “A Critical Disconnect,” 23.

⁷¹ “What the Earthquake Revealed about the State of Civil-Military Relations in Nepal,” *The Record*, Accessed Sept 30, 2015, <http://recordnepal.com/perspective/who-will-guard-guards-themselves#sthash.16tmpCcU.dpuf>.

⁷² Allen Yuhung Lai, Jingwei Alex He, Teck Boon Tan, and Kai Hong Phua, “A Proposed ASEAN Disaster Response, Training and logistic Centre Enhancing Regional Governance in Disaster Management,” *Transition Studies Review* 16, no. 2 (2009), 308, http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Allen_Lai/publication/227129466_A_Proposed_ASEAN_Disaster_Response_Training_and_Logistic_Centre_Enhancing_Regional_Governance_in_Disaster_Management/links/0912f5059879f5784a000000.pdf.

In sum, the reviewed literature clearly highlights the following conditions: (1) there is an increased trends toward the use of military and civil defense assets in the field of disaster management; (2) however, major literatures focus on the use of civilian resources as a better option and are critical about the use of military assets; (3) there is a gap in existing practices in civil-military co-operation (CIMIC) because humanitarian agencies are more focused on their principles whereas militaries are widening their role on the basis of MCDA Guidelines; (4) even though there is friction, both humanitarian agencies and militaries are bound to work together because of resource constraints within their institutional set ups; and (5) therefore, better CIMIC is needed in this situation, especially in developing counties and regions. The use of military and civil defense assets in disaster relief operations is derived from the UNOCHA Oslo Agreement, which requires civilian priority. However, resource constraints make developing countries too quick to use military and civil defense assets even where the civilian capacity exists. The procedures and practices have helped to create better coordination in the case of ASEAN; in the case of SAARC, the military protocol for the use of foreign military and resources is not endorsed regionally. The aspect of civil-military coordination in the field of disaster management within the regional organization is of high importance and has important implications for the research question, necessitating critical focus.

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

In this study, I present two hypothetical outcomes. The first hypothesis imagines that India and Pakistan set aside their political rivalries and unite to strengthen the SEDMC in the way that the ASEAN countries are developing their disaster center. The SEDMC should be able to manage India and Pakistan in such a way that the role of either country can be filled by capable SEDMC elements. The other members of SAARC must be very cautious and active to fill the gap for India while Pakistan is seeking assistance and vice-versa. However, working around this gap will not develop regional harmony. It will be very difficult to strike a balance for the weaker states while both countries vie for the lead in any political decisions.

The second hypothesis argues that the SEDMC should have at least two regional offices. The region should be divided into two sub-regions in which one or the other of South Asia's two largest powers is dominant. This approach has already started in the economic sector as cooperation among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal; these four countries have already held preliminary talks to remove hurdles to trade and spur economic growth.⁷³ At least one regional disaster management center—likely the existing one focusing on India and the eastern members—and the other regional office might be developed to look after Pakistan, Afghanistan and the rest. These sub-regional centers should have the basic capability of rescue and relief for all kinds of disasters with additional specialization in certain region-specific disaster response capabilities such as responding to drought, tsunami, avalanches, deep water rescue or rescue from earthquake/landslide debris, which are necessary in the later phases of disaster management.

The second hypothesis will probably be more workable but other member states should always strive to develop better political integration for durable peace in the region. Disaster management now has become a global interest and international organizations are now working with regional organizations. Individual countries cannot develop their national capability sufficiently and acceptably for the region.

E. THESIS OVERVIEW AND DRAFT CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis will be organized into five chapters. The first chapter, the introduction, states the question what are the basic terminologies, principles of disaster management and disaster patterns in South Asia. The second chapter discusses the regionalism in SAARC, and presents a comparison with ASEAN. Chapter III discusses the regional disaster management/disaster response structures, policies, and practices in ASEAN and SAARC. Chapter IV discusses the use of the armed forces in disaster management and

⁷³ “India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan Join Hands for Cooperation in Key Areas,” *The Economic Times*, June 01, 2015, http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/47505124.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst.

the significance of civil-military cooperation. Chapter V, the concluding chapter, includes the summary analysis, findings and recommendations on disaster management.

II. REGIONALISM

Strong regional organizations form the basis for global organizations and vice-versa. Regional organizations interconnect global organizations and individual states, as well as bringing together the states in a region. Where a given state might feel itself and its interests lost in the crowd of the major global organizations, a regional organization may offer more opportunities to speak up, to participate, or to pursue interests that loom largest. The goals of regional organizations mostly coincide with the goals of global organizations, perhaps with a particular regional inflection.

However, some goals are regional by nature. For example, SAARC and ASEAN concern themselves with the issues that are most pressing in their respective regions. Most of the literature portrays ASEAN as an economic forum; however, when the organization was first stood up it was established to develop the security alliance among states in a region characterized by interstate tensions.⁷⁴ The broad comity that characterizes ASEAN today—which both grows from and reaffirms the organization’s consensus-based internal culture, the storied “ASEAN way”—seems self-evident only after several decades of successful cooperation.⁷⁵ The increasing economic cooperation within ASEAN, which was slated to culminate in economic integration in 2000, started quite a bit later—after the termination of the Cold War.⁷⁶

However, the economical, political, cultural, social, and geographical circumstances within SAARC are significantly different those in ASEAN. SAARC is much younger than ASEAN. The geographical and cultural proximity of the member states is closer in SAARC, but there remain huge differences between India and rest of the member states in terms of political structure and economic power. As a consequence, SAARC is India-centric. Additionally, SAARC’s second-leading power, Pakistan,

⁷⁴ Shaun Narine, *Explaining ASEAN: Regionalism in Southeast Asia*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers (2002), 01.

⁷⁵ See, “The ASEAN Way,” in David Capie and Paul Evans, *The Asia-Pacific Security Lexicon* (Updated 2nd Edition), (Singapore: ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, 2007), 9–22.

⁷⁶ Narine, *Explaining ASEAN*, 01.

remains locked in a bitter military rivalry with India. As such, the institutions of SAARC remain underdeveloped, and the pace of the growth of SAARC is very slow. This situation has left SAARC incapable of addressing many burning issues such as trade, transit, disaster management, transfer of energy and issues on terrorism and security in the South Asian region.

A. ASEAN

ASEAN was established on August 8, 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of “The ASEAN Declaration” by the foreign ministers of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The aim was—and is—to establish “cooperation in the economic, social, cultural, technical, educational, and other fields, and the promotion of regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter.”⁷⁷ It was established amid real turmoil in the region and the world. Singapore had been established just two years earlier, and there were territorial disputes between Malaysia and Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, and Singapore and Malaysia. There also was war in Vietnam. At the same time, the region had vast differences in economy, language, religion, and culture.

However, by overcoming all those differences and bad relations, ASEAN moved forward in the direction of mutual benefit with common consent. ASEAN has now expanded to 10 members with the inclusion of Brunei Darussalam on 7 January 1984, Vietnam on 28 July 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia on 30 April 1999.⁷⁸ Additionally, there were some prominent regional factors that furthered strengthening of the regional cohesion in ASEAN, discussed below.

⁷⁷ History, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Accessed Nov 17, 2015, <http://www.asean.org/asean/about-asean/history>.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

1. Keeping the Balance in the Role of Powers

ASEAN has been able to promote and maintain balance among the powers in the region as well as the interests of external powers. During the Cold War, its members remained largely non-aligned in theory and in practice. After the Cold War, ASEAN facilitated the inclusion of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam as members. The United States, China, Russia, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Australia and other regional powers also found special space in various forum of ASEAN. This development helped to present ASEAN as neutral organization with a clear focus on achieving regional goals.

2. Economic Prosperity

As ASEAN has gotten going in earnest and especially after the Cold War, economic motivations have become the major driving factor for the new members to join the ASEAN initiatives.⁷⁹ ASEAN has implemented various economic plans that have increased the region's overall GDP from US\$645 billion in 2002 to US\$1504 billion in 2008–2009.⁸⁰ A growing consumer market and the expansion of production network is the new driving force that has broadened ASEAN.⁸¹

3. Non-interference in Internal Affairs

The founding members of ASEAN had deep concerns about interference in the internal issues of the member states from regional members or states outside the region. The leaders during the group's formation wanted the member states to recognize their common responsibility to shape their own destiny, avoiding external intervention and solving their own problems.⁸² They were very aware of the danger of Balkanization in Southeast Asia if they started to interfere in one another's internal issues.⁸³

⁷⁹ Kusuma Snitwongse, "Thirty Years of ASEAN: Achievements through Political Cooperation," *The Pacific Review* 11, no. 2 (1998): 193, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09512749808719252>.

⁸⁰ D. M Tran, "ASEAN's Potential and role: A Review," *ASEAN matters* (2011), 10.

⁸¹ "Growing Consumer Markets to be ASEAN's Driving Force," *The Malaysian Insider*, May 26, 2015, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/business/article/growing-consumer-markets-to-be-aseans-driving-force#sthash.OHXeDKII.dpuf>.

⁸² History, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

4. Culture of Consultation and Consent

Over time, ASEAN has developed various forums for the formal and informal interactions of the representatives of the member states so as to keep everybody in the picture of the region and to develop better rapport among each other. There are still many territorial disputes among many ASEAN nations; however, they are committed to solve these by peaceful means of dialogue through consultation and consent.⁸⁴ They normalized diplomatic relations among Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Philippines by keeping aside their territorial disputes to move ahead with the ASEAN.

To achieve its aim and purpose, ASEAN Member States adopted the *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)* in 1976 with the following fundamental principles:

1. Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations;
2. The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion;
3. Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another;
4. Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner;
5. Renunciation of the threat or use of force
6. Effective cooperation among themselves.⁸⁵

Establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994 was a good step to create a better environment to intensify diplomatic interactions to address regional problems. Additionally, the heads of states in ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) in 2003 identified three sectors of community as pillars of cooperation to achieve ASEAN's vision for 2020: ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC).⁸⁶

⁸⁴ History, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

⁸⁵ Overview, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

⁸⁶ Secretariat, ASEAN, "ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint," *Jakarta, ASEAN* (2009), <http://www.asean.org/archive/5187-18.pdf>.

APSC focuses on the issues related to political development by sharing and shaping norms for prevention, resolution of conflict and post-conflict peace building mechanisms.⁸⁷ AEC opened dialogue in formulating free trade of goods, services, capital and economic development in the region. In the initial stage of ASEAN, leaders focused on establishing pocket-based industries requiring large investment in individual countries. These efforts were intended to address the demands of the whole region by improving economic sustainability. ASEAN governments agreed to establish fertilizer plants in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, as well as a diesel plant in Singapore in 1976.⁸⁸

ASCC faced even greater challenges with the task of uniting Vietnam to Myanmar and Cambodia to Indonesia. ASEAN also has had the challenge to uplift the socio-economic condition of new members Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. These new members have benefited by the ASEAN Free Trade Agreements (AFTA). They have also found a position from which they can project themselves internationally.

Major setbacks for ASEAN are its continuing inability to control human trafficking, drug trafficking, and human right violations in the region; the uneven pace of democratization also has presented real challenges. There is no hegemon in the region, which allows the several member states to make decisions about their own interests. However, it often takes quite a long time to develop consent when merging issues among the member states. The charter of ASEAN does not forbid any voting process, and yet ASEAN has not adopted any formal voting mechanism for major decision-making processes, a weakness that might create a situation when the global or regional hegemon could force ASEAN states to follow a decision imposed on them.⁸⁹ There are more authoritarian regimes among ASEAN member states; democratic norms, values and

⁸⁷ Secretariat, "ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint," 9–11.

⁸⁸ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, *Indonesia in ASEAN: Foreign Policy and Regionalism*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994, 76, <https://books.google.com/books?id=e2JShE3UvooC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Indonesia+in+ASEAN:+Foreign+Policy+and+Regionalism&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjguofZoPDJAhUL3mMKHWtnDcIQ6AEIHTAA#v=onepage&q=Indonesia%20in%20ASEAN%3A%20Foreign%20Policy%20and%20Regionalism&f=false>.

⁸⁹ Experts suggest ASEAN Take a Vote to Make Decisions, *Jakarta Globe*, Accessed Dec 18, 2015, <http://jakartaglobe.beritasatu.com/archive/experts-suggest-asean-take-a-vote-to-make-decisions/>.

transnational issues (environment, refugees, migration and human rights) are less discussed in ASEAN forums.⁹⁰ Democratization within the region and regional forums will help to strengthen ASEAN in identifying and solving overlooked regional issues in more efficient way.

B. SAARC

The leaders of the seven South Asian countries—Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan—established SAARC in 1985 as a regional political and economic organization of the South Asia with the aspiration of regional peace, economic prosperity, and social empowerment for the people in the region. The fourteenth SAARC Summit in Dhaka in November 2005 approved the inclusion of Afghanistan as its eighth member.⁹¹ All member states except Afghanistan share a common border with India. The countries of the region were economically, culturally, and sociologically linked because of the British rule of the region for almost 200 years. The rationale of forming SAARC was to create a regional community for common interest, value, actions and inter-governmental cooperation.⁹²

Many of the same factors that commended the creation of a regional organization in South Asia also conspire to keep the states of the region at odds. Geographically, transiting through India is the most convenient mode of communication in the region, and Pakistan is the avenue to connect South Asia to Central Asia. The strategic locations of these two countries and their well-entrenched “sibling rivalry” limits development in and around the region. The landlocked countries of Nepal and Bhutan have no option other than transiting through India to connect with other countries of the region and the rest of the world. Such dependencies make India an even stronger player in SAARC forums; India often raises problems related most to its own interests, which prompts other states

⁹⁰ Amitav Acharya, “Democratisation and the Prospects for Participatory Regionalism in Southeast Asia,” *Third World Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2003): 377–378, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3993518.pdf?acceptTC=true>.

⁹¹ “Afghanistan Inducted as 8th Member: 14th SAARC Summit Begins,” *Dawn*, Apr 04, 2007, <http://www.dawn.com/news/240651/afghanistan-inducted-as-8th-member-14th-saarc-summit-begins>.

⁹² Ross Masood Husain, “New Directions for SAARC: A View from Pakistan,” *South Asian Survey* 10, no. 1 (2003): 57, <http://sas.sagepub.com/content/10/1/57.full.pdf>.

to comply or cooperate on paper only. When there are follow-up meetings, oftentimes the previous agreements are not ratified. Issues like the SAARC Convention on Combating Terrorism in 1987 and the SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disasters in 2011 are not ratified from its full members. Similarly, the agreements on SAARC Free Trade Areas(SAFTA) aims to reduce the custom duties to zero within the region by 2016; however the failure thus far of India and Pakistan to ratify the measure has halted the full implementation of the SAFTA.⁹³ Bhutan also has not ratified International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,⁹⁴ which has hindered SAARC in addressing these issues in the region for greater political, social, economic and cultural integration.

1. Endeavors by SAARC

In spite of weak regionalism and slow progress, SAARC has been able to bring consensus among the member states on such serious, if less contentious, issues as poverty alleviation, trade and transit, energy security, food security, science and technology, and disaster management.

a. Poverty Alleviation

Poverty is the main problem of the region with 31.7 percent of South Asia (around 433 million) living in abject poverty.⁹⁵ The very first SAARC Declaration in Bangladesh in 1985 highlighted the challenges posed by poverty accompanied by

⁹³James M Roberts and Huma Sattar, "Pakistan's Economic Disarray and How to Fix It," The Heritage Foundation, June 30, 2015, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2015/06/pakistans-economic-disarray-and-how-to-fix-it>.

⁹⁴ Kishore Singh, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, on his mission to Bhutan, United Nations, A/HRC/29/30/Add.1, Accessed Dec 20, 2015, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwinoZjppzPDJAhUSzWMKHaCqDJgQFggcMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ohchr.org%2FEN%2FHRBodies%2FHRC%2FRegularSessions%2FSession29%2FDocuments%2FA_HRC_29_30_Add_1_en.doc&usq=AFQjCNEzZ0mM7F8t4sSHtiYufCPgFzOArg&sig2=zmaunqH-ikFIN1zqQ60CIg&bvm=bv.110151844,d.cGc.

⁹⁵ Anil K Singh, Poverty in South Asia: A Perspective from the Human Rights, *South Asian Network for Social & Agricultural Development (SANSAD)*, Accessed February 20, 2016, http://www.sansad.org.in/Poverty_in_South_Asia.pdf.

underdevelopment, a low level of production, and unemployment.⁹⁶ However, it took time for SAARC member states to identify programs to address the issues. Lack of capacity to solve the issue alone made them to decide to work together with the other organizations working in the region in poverty alleviation. Additionally, in 2006, the Dhaka Summit set SAARC Development Goals with poverty alleviation as an important target in the region. At the Islamabad summit in 2004, leaders decided to establish Poverty Alleviation Funds with the contributions of its member states. The major reasons for the inability to effectively implement programs were a resource crunch, a lack of inter-sectoral coordination, and ineffective performance on adopted activities.⁹⁷ SAARC has not been able to solve these issues properly; however, awareness and identification of areas on which to focus have helped to align national and regional resources in alleviating poverty.

b. Trade and Transit

SAARC identified the importance of economic activities in the region and tried to facilitate economic activities with the agreements on South Asian Preferential Trade Areas (SAPTA) and later the agreement on South Asian Free Trade Areas. SAPTA was an initial endeavor to enlarge trade among members on preferential goods by facilitating and lifting trade barriers. The process of implementing SAPTA experienced many tariff and non-tariff barriers. High tariff imposition on imports is the major step taken by weaker members to insulate their industries from competition with the export-oriented state of India. Therefore, SAFTA has categorized the members as middle-income countries (India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) and least developed countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, and Nepal) providing a longer time frame for the least-developed

⁹⁶ Dhaka Declaration, SAARC Summit, South Asian Association for regional Cooperation, Accessed Sept 15, 2015, <http://www.saarc-sec.org/userfiles/01-Dhaka-1stSummit1985.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Mahendra P. Lama, SAARC Programs and Activities Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation, eds. *Promoting Economic Cooperation in South Asia: Beyond SAFTA*. SAGE Publications India, 2010. Accessed Dec 20, 2015, https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=QNOGAwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Promoting+Economic+Cooperation+in+South+Asia:+Beyond+SAFTA&ots=yaFVwyFPcE&sig=EmjhzoEA3j_-c5Mv7Kci0m3eQcw#v=onepage&q=Mahendra&f=false.

countries to abolish their trade barriers.⁹⁸ Low economic growth of SAARC countries other than India leaves them desirous of better economic development with their existing immense natural and human resources. Slow economic growth has also created many hubs in the region where population is concentrated. However, the lack of connections and communication among these hubs has restricted further growth. The continuing security problem between India-Pakistan and border crossing hassles in Nepal-India-Bangladesh is retarding the pace of trade.

c. Energy Security

Energy security means the availability of energy at all times at a sufficient rate and affordable cost.⁹⁹ The supply of energy should therefore meet the requirements of the market at all time with a source/reserve through secured supply chain. South Asia depends on coal (47 percent), petroleum (33 percent), natural gas (12 percent), hydropower (7 percent) and nuclear power (1 percent).¹⁰⁰The region has considerable deposits of coal and natural gas; however, the region must import petro-chemicals from outside the region. The region has high potential for hydro-power and programs are in the works for nuclear power generation. However, the region has to focus more on renewable sources of energy from hydro-power, solar, wind and bio-gas. Establishment and management of the power grid is another problem in the region. Bilateral generation and transmissions of electricity exists between Nepal-India, India-Bangladesh and India-Bhutan.¹⁰¹

In the Kathmandu SAARC Declaration in 2014, with a high priority placed on meeting the growing demand of electricity in the region, leaders decided to identify

⁹⁸ Ram Upendra Das, *Regional Economic Integration in South Asia: Prospects and Challenges*, RIS Discussion Papers, 2009, http://ris.org.in/images/RIS_images/pdf/dp157_pap.pdf.

⁹⁹ Dennis Rumley and Sanjay Chaturvedi, eds. *Energy Security and the Indian Ocean Region*. Routledge (2015), 190.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹⁰¹ Anoop Singh, Rabindra Nepal, Michael Toman, and Tooraj Jamasb, "Cross-Border Electricity Cooperation in South Asia," (2015), http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2015/06/23/090224b082f7a40e/1_0/Rendered/PDF/Cross0border0e0ration0in0South0Asia.pdf.

regional and sub-regional areas of power generation, transmission and power trade including hydropower, natural gas, solar, wind and bio-fuel.¹⁰² Subsequently, a related commission has been formed to set priorities for the feasibility and procedures to fulfill the increasing need of the region. There are possibilities of more power purchase agreements; however chances of any immediate huge agreement are very slim due to insufficiency of power in all countries and trust deficit among the member states.

d. Food Security

According to the World Bank, the 1.5 billion people of South Asia will rise to 2.2 billion in 2050, causing a major shortfall in the food supply.¹⁰³ Scarcity of food would create instability very quickly, as the region already knows from times of disaster, flood, and famine. The governments in the region have taken this issue very seriously since the establishment of SAARC. SAARC has established SAARC Food Banks in every member state since 2007.¹⁰⁴ In each, there is an organizational hub in the center and with spokes of national focal points to coordinate and manage stock and supply of food in the region. Still, at the summit in Kathmandu in 2014, the leaders remained concerned about food security and the enhancement of agricultural production.

e. Science and Technology

Science and technological input to any field will enhance the capability of SAARC. Technological development is the aspiration of the world and the South Asia region also aspires to achieve this. It is difficult for small countries to invest large amounts of money in research and development. The joint research center, with wide areas promoted by SAARC, is a beneficial project for all. The first ministerial meeting on science and technology in 2005

¹⁰² Kathmandu Declaration, Eighteenth SAARC Summit, Accessed Nov 15, 2015, <http://www.saarc-sec.org/userfiles/Summit%20Declarations/Kathmandu-18thSummit26-27Nov2013.pdf>.

¹⁰³ Research on the Situation of Seed in Selected SAARC Countries, Empowering Small Scale women and Men Farmers in Asia, Accessed Nov 15, 2015, 42, <http://asianfarmers.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Saarc-Research-Report-FINAL.pdf>.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

agreed to make important strides in the areas of science, technology and higher education, to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century and decided to give priority attention to encourage regional cooperation in these areas to derive benefits from the synergy of collective, well-planned and focused initiatives undertaken by Member States.¹⁰⁵

However, very little has been achieved in the field except an early warning system for disaster management.

f. Disaster Management

Disaster, the most difficult concern of the region, has worried SAARC forum since its establishment. But it took almost twenty years for SAARC to establish an official regional disaster center. Growing concern over climate change further highlighted SAARC region as one ecological belt sharing the same types of river systems, monsoons, climatic conditions and coastal regions. The effects of disasters were also the same in nature throughout the region. SAARC established the SAARC Centre for Disaster Management and Preparedness (SDMC) in New Delhi, the SAARC Coastal Zone Management Centre (SCZMC) in Male and the SAARC Meteorological Centre (SMRC) in Dhaka. The formation of new organizations increased the numbers of intergovernmental coordination meetings. The agreement on rapid response was passed in 2011; however, the leaders failed to set up a dedicated SAARC disaster management rapid action force (SDMRAF) at the 2014 SAARC Summit in Kathmandu.¹⁰⁶

Without a coordinated operating force to be deployed on the ground, SDMC became the regional focal point based in Delhi coordinating only with national focal points. The SDMC was a good initiative in the region to address the critical issue of disaster management. From its establishment, the SDMC developed various Road Maps on different aspects of disaster management by involving various experts and representatives from member states and such NGOs working in this field as: Community Based Disaster Risk Management in South Asia, Application of Science and Technology for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Coastal and Marine Risk Mitigation Plan,

¹⁰⁵ Area of Cooperation, Science and Technology, SAARC Homepage, Accessed Nov 15, 2015, http://saarc-sec.org/areaofcooperation/cat-detail.php?cat_id=46.

¹⁰⁶ SAARC Disaster Management Framework, SAARC Disaster Management Center.

Integration of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in South Asia, Mainstreaming Disaster Reduction in Development in South Asia, Earthquake Risk Management in South Asia, Landslide Risk Management in South Asia, Urban Risk Management in South Asia, Drought Risk Management in South Asia, Flood Risk Management in South Asia.¹⁰⁷ Even though the SDMC did not excel as anticipated, it moved far ahead to shape the formation of a better regional disaster management apparatus. Many weaker aspects can be improved, which will ultimately promote the transformation of an effective disaster management center in the region. Members of SAARC should start working heartily on socio-economic and humanitarian issues; increased interactions will ultimately help identify and develop various fields of cooperation.

C. SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION WITHIN SAARC

In South Asia, there are some geographical similarities in seismology, river systems, Himalayan ranges and political proximity, which make some countries more similar to each other. The East Indian provinces, Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh share these similarities. As the progress in SAARC is moving at a very slow pace, these countries are trying to make progress in the sub-regional level. Bangladesh has mutual interests with Bhutan and Nepal on the issue of natural disasters as it shares some major river system with them. India, on the other hand, is cooperating bilaterally with those countries, excluding Bangladesh, on the use of those river systems. Land-locked countries Nepal and Bhutan are desperately trying to develop access to the sea through Bangladesh to minimize overdependence on India.

Four countries—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN)—signed the Motor Vehicle Agreement (BBIN-MVA) for the Regulation of Passenger, Personal and Cargo Vehicular Traffic on June 15, 2015.¹⁰⁸ India has already developed its bilateral ties with these three countries on rail, road, power and transit. ADB has pushed to develop the

¹⁰⁷ SDMC Roadmap, SAARC Disaster Management Center.

¹⁰⁸ Anasua Chaudhury, Basu Ray, Pratinashree Basu, and Mihir Bhonsale, “ORF Occasional Paper# 69,” (2015), http://esocialsciences.org/Articles/ShowPDF/A201597165948_41.pdf.

South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) program in 1996 and was further endorsed from the 1997 SAARC Summit in Malé.¹⁰⁹ Sri Lanka and Maldives also moved forward to join this cooperation, which could at least convince donors to invest in the region. SASEC has invested US\$63.74 million in the sub-region in transport, trade facilitation, energy, and ICT.¹¹⁰

Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh want to develop their connectivity through the implementation of BBIN-MVA. This implementation will create more areas for investment in connectivity and furthers cooperation on other needy areas. Once economic and political issues are settled and the agreements start to function, there will be the possibility to develop other capabilities in high priority areas like flood control, landslides and other environmental hazards.

D. CONCLUSION

Regionalism in the present world has become the forum for the expression of common sense and collective efforts for nations to fulfill their desires. In the process of regional integration and cooperation, the burning aspirations of regions become vital, and organizations have to be serious for such goals to be achieved. The success of regionalism means the achievement of common goals. An individual country's decision to join the club of regional neighbors at times might prejudice the individual interests and sovereignty of the nation-state. Regular interactions and an environment that fosters trust are required among the participating states to dilute their suspicion against their neighbors.

As compared to the states in Europe, the countries in the South and Southeast Asia are newly born; and they are more sensitive about issues of sovereignty.¹¹¹ ASEAN has been able to develop regional cooperation while keeping their sovereignty a priority through applying the principle of non-interference in domestic issues and regular meeting

¹⁰⁹ Chaudhury, Ray, Basu, and Bhonsale, "ORF Occasional Paper# 69," (2015), 06.

¹¹⁰ 2001–2015 SASEC Project Portfolio Summary, *SASEC*, Accessed Feb 01, 2016, <http://sasec.asia/index.php?page=projects>.

¹¹¹ Acharya, "Democratisation and the Prospects for Participatory Regionalism," 379.

among state leadership; whereas in SAARC, rivalry between states has often made them suspicious of one another.

Economic cooperation in the South Asian region is also very slow. The main reason for suspicion on the part of smaller nations is their perception of India as economic leviathan that might dominate their internal markets with a glut of cheap Indian products.¹¹² India, meanwhile, is separately developing bilateral economic relations with all its neighbors. There is diverging negotiating perception between India and others where India focuses on regional economic integration but smaller countries are more worried about their economic self-sufficiency.¹¹³ ASEAN has the same kinds of ASEAN Free Trade Agreements (AFTA) as SAFTA in SAARC. But ASEAN has developed the ARF to discuss contending political and economic issues. India and Pakistan from SAARC are also members of the ARF.

To address political issues through the regional framework, the conflicting parties must negotiate with their national interest for broader achievement. There are numerous political problems within SAARC and ASEAN. ASEAN solved some political issues immediately after its formation and those that are larger or thornier are kept aside while the states have moved ahead with economic cooperation. Political progress serves as the basis of all other cooperation by creating pressure on other burning issues for facilitation and integration.¹¹⁴ Smaller states in SAARC wanted their grievances to be solved through this forum. Most of the member states have some political problems with India: India and Pakistan have Kashmir and their water-sharing issue; India and Nepal have water-sharing and transit issues; India and Bangladesh have water-sharing issues.

India does not show any positive will to solve these issues, which has left the other states to act against India. From the Indian perspective, the smaller states are unable

¹¹² Douglas C. Makeig, "War, No-War, and the India-Pakistan Negotiating Process," *Pacific affairs* (1987): 284, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2758135>.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 285.

¹¹⁴ Anastassia Obydenkova, "Comparative Regionalism: Eurasian Cooperation and European Integration. The Case for Neofunctionalism?" *Journal of Eurasian studies* 2, no. 2 (2011), 91, http://ac.els-cdn.com/S187936651100008X/1-s2.0-S187936651100008X-main.pdf?_tid=799cc450-b37b-11e5-b07e-00000aacb361&acdnat=1451978040_a1e39b758af6b9eca6b343632fc01db7.

to come up with “coherent and sustained constructive approach” and often prefer a “strategy of pinpricks, irritations, harassments, denial of mutual benefits, sabotage and even confrontation (as in case of Pakistan)” while dealing with India.¹¹⁵

From the Pakistani perspective, due to the “historical animosity, hawkish mindset and non-conciliatory approach of India,” many pressing issues like terrorism and water sharing are unresolved, paralyzing regional coordination.¹¹⁶ Even if decisions are made, the states may not wholeheartedly follow those decisions and may try to address the issue with different approach. Such incidents are weakening the coordination and regionalism within SAARC.

As compared with the contemporary ASEAN, the problem of regional integration and regional coordination has made SAARC weaker than other such organizations. Regional integration and coordination is positively correlated with equal level of industrialization and economic diversification.¹¹⁷ Most South Asian elites view their neighbors warily. Other states consider India to be a strong economy and military but also fear its military aggression; Pakistan, meanwhile, is viewed as authoritarian, politically unstable, and oriented outside SAARC.¹¹⁸ Meanwhile, the other smaller countries are not interacting well with each other because of India’s proximity and because they are not in a position to make much difference in isolation.¹¹⁹ The vast difference in the level of industrialization and economic capability, further coupled with political distrust among the nations, has made SAARC a weak regional organization.

¹¹⁵ S. D. Muni, “Problem Areas in India’s Neighborhood Policy,” *South Asian Survey* 10, no. 2 (2003): 186, <http://sas.sagepub.com/content/10/2/185.full.pdf>.

¹¹⁶ Rahila Asfa and Mughees Ahmed, “Prospects of Regionalism: Comparative Analysis of SAARC and ASEAN,” *Asia Pacific-Annual Research Journal of Far East & South East Asia* 33 (2015), <http://sujo.usindh.edu.pk/index.php/ASIA-PACIFIC/article/view/914/857>.

¹¹⁷ Ernst B. Haas, “International Integration: The European and the Universal Process,” *International Organization* 15, no. 03 (1961), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2705338.pdf?acceptTC=true>.

¹¹⁸ Keeping in view with economic reliance of Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka over India and the border problems of these countries and Pakistan with India. In the mean time, India is continuously blaming Pakistan for not being able to control non-state armed elements causing trouble in India.

¹¹⁹ Kishore C. Dash, *Regionalism in South Asia: Negotiating Cooperation, Institutional Structures*, Vol. 8, Routledge (2008), 183.

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III. THE REGIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT/DISASTER RESPONSE STRUCTURES, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES IN ASEAN AND SAARC

When natural disasters strike, affected countries activate their respective national disaster management organizations (NDMO). SAARC was comparatively late to realize a regional approach to disaster management and disaster response. Still, the growing success of regional organizations like ASEAN has pushed SAARC to move ahead on forming consensus on the various aspects to structure a robust disaster management center. Other regional organizations like ASEAN have been able to identify and enjoy the combined effects of globalization, market facilitation, and freedom of movement, culture, and religion amid a framework of regional cooperation; meanwhile, states in South Asia are very sensitive to traditional issues like sovereignty, domestic market protection, and their hard-won cultures of self-reliance. Moreover, the nations of South Asia have focused more on using their military and civil defense assets in their disaster management strategies. This preference makes the states of the region even less inclined to operate together with neighboring states' militaries in times of crisis.

There are differences in organization, working procedures, resource mobilization, coordination systems, and the primary focus of regional disaster management centers in ASEAN and SAARC. However, geographical proximity, the interlinked effects of natural disasters, similar historical legacies, similarity in economic capabilities, and regional interactions mean these regions are inextricably connected. ASEAN started to develop its regional approach earlier, and SAARC is trying to follow ASEAN's footsteps in many sectors; this purposeful modeling makes comparison between these two organizations vital on identifying reasons of success and causes of failure in different sectors.

A. COMPARISON BETWEEN ASEAN AND SAARC DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTERS

The recognition of the necessity of a strong disaster management commitment in the region started after the region was hit by an earthquake and tsunami in 2004. This disaster affected ASEAN directly. The same event also alarmed SAARC because of the

immense losses in the coastal regions of India and Sri Lanka, particularly because of the tidal wave that the quake loosed on the region. As a consequence, both ASEAN and SAARC developed new policy, guidelines, and structures for disaster management and disaster response; however, the homogeneity within the institution took ASEAN to a higher level of functionality and, arguably, effectiveness than SAARC.

1. Policy Adoption

Before the regional endeavor to disaster response was developed, there were national policies and guidelines in the region to deal with disasters. Realizing that disasters hampered the region's aspirations for prosperity and development, leaders initiated discussion of the issue from the initial years of ASEAN and SAARC. Disasters do not recognize borders and their causes and effects are transnational; this further pushed leaders to form policies to deal with these phenomena. More significantly, unbearable casualties from the earthquake and Indian Tsunami of 2004 left no choice for the leaders of both SAARC and ASEAN to adopt all policies and plans to deal with any upcoming disaster in the region.

a. ASEAN

The policy guidelines on disaster management in ASEAN date back from ASEAN Declaration for Mutual Assistance for Natural Disasters in 1976. Furthermore, APSC and ASSC also formulated policies on various aspects related to disaster management. APSC focused politically on developing policies on political guidelines to establish the structure of the AHA center and its bodies, civil-military coordination, and standby agreements, and coordinated a working interface among all bodies in ASEAN structure.¹²⁰ The ASSC contributed socio-economically to establish various structures in ASEAN, formulate SOPs to conduct a wide range of operations, educate and establish knowledge networks, monitor activities of organizations within ASEAN and member states, thereby developing the overall capacity within ASEAN and member states. These

¹²⁰ "Potential Policies and Areas of Cooperation on Disaster Management and Emergency Response between ASEAN and Canada," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Thailand*, July 2013, 01, <http://www.mfa.go.th/asean/contents/files/asean-mediacycenter-20130715-161750-794058.pdf>.

policies were further strengthened by AADMER, various declarations and agreements after periodic ministerial meetings and ASEAN summits. Various programs furthered AADMER policies on operations, maintained structures and attained targets with various activities. The AHA center identified various critical capabilities to develop manpower, resources, and logistics. It has conducted various trainings concerning manpower development, rapid response team and logistic capability, coordinated NDMOs for their capability development, and maintained the capability required according to the standby agreement.

b. SAARC

The greater hope for the regional approach to disaster management in SAARC is the commitment from all the member states on regional effort to minimize the loss and relieve the victims as soon as possible. Even though the implementation is slow in South Asia, members have not rejected any serious attempts and proposal to address issues like poverty alleviation, food security, or disaster management. Basic policy guidelines for SAARC to adopt initiatives on disaster management are from the Hyogo Framework for action 2005–2015 and the priorities laid out according to it. The priorities are also in SAARC comprehensive framework on Disaster Management, 2005. To achieve these priorities, the SDMC was formed to coordinate existing set ups and to address the further development of capabilities. However, the desired expansion and capacity building has not occurred due to lack of consensus and furtherance of agreements and policies.

The SDMC was established with the mission to provide policy advice and to facilitate member states to build disaster response capability through “strategic learning, research, training, system development, expertise promotion and exchange of information for effective disaster risk reduction for planning and coordinating a rapid response mechanism” to deal with the disasters in the region.¹²¹To these ends, the SDMC formulated programs and policies through its comprehensive framework with priorities to develop and implement risk reduction strategy; establish regional and national response

¹²¹ SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC), *Prevention Web*, Accessed Jan 20, 2016, <http://www.preventionweb.net/organizations/3329>.

mechanisms and a regional information sharing network; develop disaster management trainings, education, research; and develop awareness programs that apply information and communications technology (ICT) and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.¹²²

The SDMC also developed the SARRND agreement in 2011. This agreement focuses on rapid response to reduce loss of life and property in the region with the joint effort from national and regional cooperation in accordance with laid principles of employment.¹²³ It represents standby agreement of disaster relief and emergency response, use and mobilization of resources and coordination of disaster relief and emergency response operations. Thus, SAARC is bound by major global agreements and policies on disaster management, as well as the SAARC Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management, SARRND and occasional agreements in SAARC forum. SAARC, however, has to formulate policies creating roadmaps for the implementation of these agreements.

2. Organizational Structures

Policies, agreements and guidance are executed through organizations. Organizational structure in regional disaster management is required to establish a focal point to coordinate all activities, to link policy and operation, to link with global, regional and national structures operating in this field, to coordinate various operations to be conducted, to develop political consensus on various issues on disaster, to coordinate various NGOs working on disaster, and so on.¹²⁴ The agreements of AADMER for ASEAN and the SAARC Comprehensive Agreement on Disaster Management necessitated the organizational structures in ASEAN and SAARC to achieve objectives and goals set through these agreements.

¹²² SAARC Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management, South Asian Disaster Knowledge Network, Accessed Jan 20, 2016, www.saarc-sadkn.org/saarc_frame.aspx.

¹²³ NDRRM-South Asian Disaster Knowledge Network, 2, Accessed Jan 20, 2016, saarc-sadkn.org/ndrrm.aspx.

¹²⁴ “Model for a National Disaster Management Structure, Preparedness Plan, and Supporting Legislation, Disaster Management Training Program,” Prepared by Inter Works, July 1998, http://www.preventionweb.net/files/5142_US01MH840-Ft.pdf.

a. ASEAN

ASEAN has developed a thorough organizational web for many regional functions. Its chairman, normally assigned after the periodic summit, is responsible for running ASEAN through the institutions of the APSC, AEC, and ACSC. ASEAN disaster management and humanitarian assistance fall under the ASCC on the organizational chart.¹²⁵ The ASEAN charter, focusing on “enhancing regional resilience by promoting greater political, security, economic and socio cultural” co-operation, serves the formation and operationalization of regional disaster management mechanism within the region.¹²⁶ Such forums as the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM), ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) and ASEAN Chief of Defense Forces Informal Meetings (ACDFIM) are active in suggesting, guiding, and controlling ASEAN on prominent issues related to disasters. In case of natural disaster or pandemic, the ASEAN secretariat is responsible for coordinating all the branches of ASEAN to facilitate rescue, relief and further operations.¹²⁷

The AADMER is the foundation of all efforts being implemented within ASEAN. This agreement further necessitated the AHA center, which is the coordinating body of ASEAN for all the NDMOs of member states. It provides the key agreement and central guidelines for the actors to operate within the region and abroad as well as for the agencies within and abroad to work on disaster management. AHA Center has even been able to form a consortium, including a group of 34 NGOs, to work as a team as the ASEAN Disaster Reduction and Response Network.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ ASEAN Disaster Management Reference Handbooks, Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance, 2015, 16, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ASEAN%20Disaster%20Management%20Reference%20Handbooks.pdf>.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 18.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 22.

¹²⁸ Sukma Rizal and Yoshihide Soeya, eds., *Navigating Change: ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership in East Asia and in Global Governance*, Japan Center for International Exchange, Tokyo (2015), 134, <http://jcie.org/researchpdfs/ASEAN-Japan/NavChange/8.pdf>.

The AHA center further coordinates and conducts various activities to enhance the region's disaster management capabilities in organizational development, resource development, skill development, coordination, supervision and empowerment. It also conducts exercises and seminars to educate and share lessons with various NDMO representatives as well as with global and other regional actors on disaster-related issues. It has even developed the ICT system to coordinate and share information and data with NDMOs and other actors.¹²⁹ It has also developed its structure with automated tool resources and logistics to address the disaster at the earliest time possible.

The AHA center is capable to operate with limited logistics, Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT) and prearranged standby forces. An ERAT quick assessment team is first mobilized in liaison and coordination with the NDMOs of an affected country. The assessment team is to assess the situation on the ground and, if it finds that need persists, they are the first to request the further deployment of military and civilian assets from member states as per the ASEAN standby agreement; this deployment of assets is ultimately conducted by the AHA center in coordination with the host country.¹³⁰ ERAT establishes the Joint Operations and Coordination Center of ASEAN (JOCCA) to converge and coordinate the resources from member states and works with the UN's Onsite Operations and Coordination Center (OSOCC) to deal with assets approaching through the UN.¹³¹

b. SAARC

Compared to the AHA center, SAARC has not developed a wide structure to cover many aspects of disaster response. The SAARC Secretary General is authorized to control and co-ordinate the activities of the SDMC; however, the SAARC secretariat is located in Kathmandu, while the SDMC is stationed 800 miles away in New Delhi. The head of the SDMC is simultaneously the head of India's National Institute of Disaster

¹²⁹ Angela Pennisi di Floristella, "Dealing with Natural Disasters: Risk Society and ASEAN: a New Approach to Disaster Management." *The Pacific Review*(2015), 15, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09512748.2015.1013498>.

¹³⁰ ASEAN Disaster Management Reference Handbook, 29.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

Management (NIDM), located in the same compound. This arrangement makes the SDMC more reliant on the Indian disaster management body—and Indian domestic considerations. India remains primarily focused on developing its own national capacity rather than on regional development. Thus, the dual-hatted SDMC chief, with all staff from NIDM, is more likely to pursue Indian interests and block involvement of the United States and China in the regional programs.¹³² The placement of SDMC inside the perimeter of NIDM to utilize the existing Indian capability, done in order to save operating costs,¹³³ was the wrong decision for a capable regional disaster management center.

The relevance of any regional organization hinges on whether it can play a decisive role in a time of crisis, either in the region or in any of the member countries facing an issue that exceeds national capacities. Rescue and relief after the 2015 earthquake in Nepal was the appropriate time for SDMC to exhibit its relevance by coordinating all member states and generating resources to furnish the relief effort. India and Pakistan have never welcomed one another's assistance at any level of disaster in their country; however they looked wholeheartedly supportive in disaster rescue efforts in Nepal in 2015. The SDMC had the opportunity to exhibit a pivotal role in the case of a neutral third country like Nepal by facilitating and coordinating all or at least the regional actors involved, thereby proving its relevance.

At the same time, the SDMC is fixated on the growth and success of ASEAN and has attempted to imitate ASEAN in important regards, including the disaster management and response framework. As ASEAN moved forward with its agreement on a Rapid Response mechanism, the SDMC has also developed its own. The SAARC Comprehensive Framework for Disaster Management was short and did not cover many aspects of regional cooperation except the formation of the SDMC. The 2011 SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disaster (SARRND) covered larger areas of regional cooperation. However, the SDMC has not been able to coax its members to

¹³² White, *A Critical Disconnect: The Role of SAARC in Building the DRM*, 7.

¹³³ Ibid.

fulfill the requirements imposed on NDMOs for further progress on implementation. AADMER is more detailed than the SARRND in areas like its standby agreement, the use of military assets, and the role of AHA center. SAARC measures are hung up, pending the ratification of the agreement,¹³⁴ because of the capacity gap in Afghanistan and the inability of the SDMC enforcing NDMO adoption of the preconditions.¹³⁵

The SDMC consolidated its resources by integrating all the warning centers related to disasters and environmental hazards under one umbrella which is not an issue in the case of AHA Center. SAARC ministerial meeting in Kathmandu in November 2014 decided to merge the SAARC Forestry Centre in Bhutan, the SAARC Disaster Management Centre in New Delhi, the SAARC Coastal Zone Management Centre in Maldives, and the SAARC Meteorological Centre in Dhaka into the SAARC Environmental and Disaster Management Centre (SEDMC).¹³⁶ However, SAARC leaders have not identified where the SEDMC will be located, nor have they formulated the coordination mechanisms of all centers. The SEDMC is not operational now; while the SDMC is in a transition phase and not operational effective January 1, 2016.¹³⁷ SAARC is presently in the position of not having any functional regional disaster management center.

The SEDMC organizational structure vertically links up to the SAARC secretariat and it works in coordination with the national disaster management organizations of member states. South Asian Disaster Knowledge Network (SADKN) under the SEDMC has prepared various plans as “Roadmaps” and has been trying to implement those plans and programs through agreements being prepared signed and ratified by the member states. A major milestone for SEDMC is the ratification of SARRND, signed in 2011. The existing structure leaves SEDMC as information collecting, collating and distributing

¹³⁴ White, *A Critical Disconnect: The Role of SAARC in Building the DRM*, 12.

¹³⁵ Nihar R Nayak, *The Nepal Earthquake: Could SAARC have been Effective?*, The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, June 02, 2015,

¹³⁶ Anil Giri, “SAARC to trim Regional centers “ *Kathmandu post*, Nov 23, 2014, <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2014-11-23/saarc-to-trim-regional-centres.html>

¹³⁷ SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC), Accessed Dec 19, 2015, <http://saarc-sdmc.nic.in/>

center only. The SADKN's efforts are useful for future policy formulation, guidelines for NDMOs and operation in most part of the region.

SAARC has yet to develop organizations like disaster management training institutes and disaster management logistic systems as developed in ASEAN. SAARC has identified the requirement of a Regional Emergency Operation Centre (REOC) under the requirement of SARRND. Delegates from SAARC were also sent to visit the AHA center to understand the mechanisms of such a center to be established in the future.¹³⁸ The SEDMC lacks fundamental organizational structure as compared with AHA center. Structures in ASEAN were established according to the flow chart of AADMER and follow up agreements, whereas, SAARC has yet to conclude how they are going to develop, coordinate, mobilize and operate these resources, either generated from military or civilian resources at the time of crisis.

3. Coordination and Cooperation

Coordination and cooperation is the key to success in achieving desired goals. Disaster management involves activities from multiple sectors. One stake is supplementary to another and no single organization can bear the risk of facing all probable eventualities and losses caused by disaster. Coordination and cooperation is primarily needed among various global and regional actors, national governments, NDMOs and regional military organizations to formulate and implement policies, plans and operations. In addition to this, coordination and cooperation with global, other regional partners and NGOs is also necessary to develop capabilities and expertise to prepare a regional set up to operate in the environment with multiple actors.

a. ASEAN

The coordination and cooperation in ASEAN is comparatively better than SAARC, with increased capability and an encouraging political environment. It has more extensive coordination with regional and global actors in disaster management. The type

¹³⁸ "ASEAN Shares Experience to SAARC in Setting up Regional Disaster Response Mechanisms," *ASEAN Secretariat News*, Jan 27, 2015, <http://www.asean.org/asean-shares-experience-to-saarc-in-setting-up-regional-disaster-response-mechanisms/>.

and frequency of higher-level ASEAN ministerial meetings are greater in ASEAN than in SAARC, which enables quick decisions. Key groups and meeting in ASEAN for coordination and cooperation are ACDM, ARF, East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN's Defence Minister's Meetings (ADMM), ASEAN's Defence Minister's Meetings Plus (ADMM-Plus) and ASEAN's Chief of Defence force's informal meetings (ACDFIM).¹³⁹

ASEAN has strengthened its regional capability with trained personnel, logistic preparation, developing multilateral partners and fund generation. ASEAN coordination is now more focused on full implementation of a framework, guidelines and work programs for acquisition, control, and mobilization of their ERAT and standby force. The AHA center is also conducting exercises with USPACOM and interactions with EU, Chinese, Canadian, Australian, Japanese and South Korean disaster management authorities on professional, technical and logistic areas.

b. SAARC

Coordination and cooperation is measured through the smooth functioning of technical cooperation, various protocols to deploy military and civil defense assets, joint exercises, technical trainings, research coordination and so on.¹⁴⁰ Coordination and cooperation in SAARC disaster management efforts are maintained through limited organizational arrangements. The SEDMC coordinates with the NDMOs of member states to update any details regarding disaster and vice-versa. The SEDMC also coordinates with NDMOs in the process of formulating any policy and agreements at regional level and provides assistance to NDMOs while preparing their national legislations concerning disaster management according to global/regional policies, agreements and road maps. The SEDMC pushes member states to pursue the goals targeted to build their national capabilities in research and information. It has also

¹³⁹ ASEAN Disaster Management Reference Handbook, 22.

¹⁴⁰ ROAP, UN OCHA. "Disaster Response in Asia and the Pacific: A Guide to International Tools and Services." *UN OCHAROAP, Bangkok*. Accessed September 28, 2015 http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Disaster%20Response%20in%20Asia%20Pacific_A%20Guide%20to%20Intl%20Tools%20Services.pdf ().

periodically trained personnel from member states to develop structure in their countries, known as Training of Trainers.

The Kathmandu SAARC Summit 2014 reiterated the need to have a Council of Ministers (Foreign Minister Level) meeting at least once a year, Standing Committee (Foreign Secretary level) meeting once a year, and Programming Committee (Joint Secretary level) meeting twice a year.¹⁴¹ However, the frequencies of meetings are very high in the case of ASEAN with various forums like APSC, AEC and ASCC creating more opportunities to facilitate and normalize the issues in various fields of cooperation. SAARC's weak coordination and cooperation has caused slow progress. It developed the framework in 2005, the SDMC in 2006 and stagnated until 2011 before introducing the SARRND, which is yet to be operational.

Major players in the region were not serious about developing the regional capability; rather they focused on their own national capabilities. In this period, India has tremendously built up its national capability—now to include its National Disaster Response force of 11 paramilitary battalions; Pakistan focused on developing its National Disaster Response Authority with an increased role for the Pakistan Armed Forces. Strengthened military disaster response capability of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh were also projected in the rescue relief operations in Nepal. In the meantime, no exercises among the national setups have prepared them for joint operations.

4. Financing Disaster Management

The amount of money spent to harden infrastructure before disaster is very much less than the amount spent after disaster.¹⁴² Due to the lack of funding in the developing world, reconstruction authorities are forced to rebuild with the negotiated budget, posing a threat to the whole area in the event of the next disaster, which keeps them in a vicious

¹⁴¹ “18th SAARC Summit Concluded with wide-Ranging Declaration: Indian and Pakistani Prime Minister Met,” *New Spotlight*, 8, no. 11 (November 2014).
<http://www.spotlightnepal.com/News/Article/SAARC-Summit-Concluded>.

¹⁴² Suvit Yodmani, *Disaster Risk Management and Vulnerability Reduction: Protecting the Poor*, The Center (2001), 02, <http://dr.upeace.org/english/documents/References/Topic%205-Risk%20Management%20and%20Adaptation%20to%20Climate%20Change/Yodmani%202000%20Disaster%20Risk%20Management.pdf>.

circle of disasters.¹⁴³ Therefore, the donors are now pushing more to adopt disaster risk management approaches in the development process together with good governance, accountability and the empowerment of the local community.¹⁴⁴

The UN Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction has recommended its members to fund for disaster risk reduction by allocating 10 percent of their humanitarian aid, 1 percent of development assistance, and 30 percent of their climate change adoption assistance.¹⁴⁵ Additionally, many international financial institutions like the World Bank and regional development banks have aid and loan programs on disaster related issues.¹⁴⁶ These organizations are also trying to reach out to cover those areas, regions, and countries. The developing world, along with their capacity building, should be able to develop their institutions and the mechanisms connecting with them and grab these opportunities.

a. ASEAN

There is a dedicated ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief Fund, which could be utilized by the ASEAN Secretariat under the guidance of a conference of the parties of ASEAN. This fund is created from voluntary contributions from the member states and contributions from other countries.¹⁴⁷ The AHA center normally has a budget of US\$5.8 million annually; member states contribute US\$30,000 for running the office and the rest is generated through grants from the United States, UK, EU, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and others.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ P. M. White, Pelling, K. Sen, D. Seddon, S. Russell, and R. Few. “*Disaster Risk Reduction: A Development Concern*,” London: DFID (2005), 28, http://www.preventionweb.net/files/1070_drrscopingstudy.pdf.

¹⁴⁴ Yodmani, *Disaster Risk Management and Vulnerability Reduction*, 02.

¹⁴⁵ “International Cooperation in Support of a Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction” Issue Brief, UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, March 14–18, 2015, Japan.

¹⁴⁶ Information Note from the Secretariat (UNISDR) on Cooperation and Partnerships, *UNISDR* Geneva, January 23, 2015, <http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/Note-from-the-secretariat-on-cooperation-and-partnership1.pdf>.

¹⁴⁷ ASEAN Disaster Management Reference Handbook, 60.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 28–29.

Additionally, ASEAN has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with many countries about various cooperative agreements. According to the MoU with China, ASEAN has received US\$8.1 million to develop their capacity on disaster management.¹⁴⁹ According to AADMER, ASEAN also has ASEAN Strategy on Disaster Risk Financing and Insurance and ASEAN Disaster Risk Insurance Program as flagship programs to enhance resilience, targeted for implementation by 2020.¹⁵⁰

b. SAARC

A paucity of finances and resources are the retarding factors in the progress of SAARC disaster management programs. SAARC is not effective in pursuing the donors to receive significant assistance. SAARC does not have dedicated disaster relief fund in place. After the massive earthquake in Nepal in 2015, the UN estimated the requirement of US\$423 million for the sustenance of survivors for three months.¹⁵¹

The major reason for ineffectiveness of the disaster response operation aftermath the Nepal earthquake was the lack of funds to purchase necessary items, which forced the operation to rely more on improvisation. Nepal later conducted an international donors' conference on June 25, 2015, to generate money for relief and reconstruction.¹⁵² If there were a dedicated disaster relief fund within SAARC, disaster situations would become easier to handle. In spite of limited funds, the SDMC conducted some research projects and seminars with assistance from UNISDR, ADRC, World Bank and others with approval from SAARC governing body.¹⁵³

There is some encouraging progress on the part of member states that they are now investing more in their NDMOs. The regional giant, India, has allocated US\$9.1

¹⁴⁹ ASEAN Disaster Management Reference Handbook, 81.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁵¹ Nayak, "The Nepal Earthquake: could SAARC have been effective?"

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ O.P. Mishra, SAARC Regional Progress Report on the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2011–2013), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, May 01, 2013, [http://www.preventionweb.net/files/32602_RegionalHFAprogress-SAARC\(2011–2013\).pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/32602_RegionalHFAprogress-SAARC(2011–2013).pdf).

billion (INR 612 billion) disaster relief fund for its states for the period of 2015–2020.¹⁵⁴ Other members have not been able to increase the disaster management budget very significantly; however they are seriously engaging with multiple countries and donors to develop their national capacities in disaster management. Indian investment has created better capability on this issue, which might be useful to other countries if there is regional harmony without any political impingement.

ASEAN is more hardened in terms of finance and budget. It has system of managing its institutions by internal funding and conducting bigger projects with the funding and support from outside ASEAN. SAARC is still struggling to form its organizational structure and legislations. ASEAN's way of generating funds could be a guide for SAARC in the future. The Indian position in SAARC could also be useful as it has capability to contribute more to the regional cause; such opportunity is lacking in case of ASEAN. India has offered the SEDMC and other structures in SAARC to make use of its civilian remote sensing capability get the real time assessment of zones of interest, especially in reference to disaster related issues.¹⁵⁵ For such facilities, ASEAN is seeking support from outside the region. There are committed funds dedicated for disaster related issues in international and regional institutions. Better agreements, plans and programs of regional organization could help to attract those assistances in the region. Obviously, there is a scarcity of funds for SEDMC and its programs; however, the problems mostly lie in the political side of the organization. Political insubordination has made SAARC weaker in generating funds itself and drawing attention from donors.

¹⁵⁴ “Investment towards Disaster Management,” Government of India Ministry of Home Affairs, August 04, 2015, <http://mha1.nic.in/par2013/par2015-pdfs/ls-040815/2466.pdf>.

¹⁵⁵ Ramanand N. Garge, Huong Ha, and Susie Khoo. “Disaster Risk Management and the Role of the Armed Forces: Critical Analysis of Reactive Disaster Management in India.” In *Strategic Disaster Risk Management in Asia*, Springer India, 2015, http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-81-322-2373-3_5.

5. Logistic Preparedness

Poor logistic supply may increase the number of casualties and worsen the situation in disaster affected areas. Hence, logistic preparedness is also an important part of disaster risk reduction. The worst logistic preparation and supply may create an even worse law and order situation. This will further endanger the safety of relief workers, which may create more difficult conditions within which the civilian disaster relief agency must operate. Therefore, there should be firm parallel logistic stock, storage system and supply chain maintained together with other disaster relief operations.

a. ASEAN

ASEAN established the Disaster Emergency Logistic System for ASEAN (DELSA) at the Royal Malaysia Air Force Base in Subang, Malaysia on Dec 07, 2012, with assistance from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) to manage the logistics warehouse co-managed by AHA center and the United Nations World Food Programme (UN-WFP) through the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD).¹⁵⁶ AHA center practiced the limited mobilization of DELSA in the Philippines on November 2013 along with ERAT, but Typhoon Haiyan was too big to handle with the capability of ASEAN only.¹⁵⁷

b. SAARC

SAARC has not prepared any logistic plans and logistic supply set up within its disaster management structure. Some roadmaps briefly talk about logistic chains in those kinds of disasters. Major logistic problems experienced in earthquake relief operation in Nepal 2015 were:¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ “On 7 December 2012, The Disaster Emergency Logistic System For ASEAN (DELSA) Project Was Launched In Royal Malaysia Air Force Base In Subang, Malaysia,” *Disaster Emergency Logistics System For Asean*, Accessed Jan 29, 2016, [Http://Www.Ahacentre.Org/Disaster-Emergency-Logistics-System-For-Asean](http://www.ahacentre.org/disaster-emergency-logistics-system-for-asean).

¹⁵⁷ Lilianne Fan and Hanna B. Krebs, *Regional Organisations and humanitarian Action: The Case of ASEAN*, HPG (2014), <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9207.pdf>.

¹⁵⁸ “Lessons Learned for Nepal Earthquake Response,” *ACAPS*, April 27, 2015, http://acaps.org/img/documents/l-acaps_lessons_learned_nepal_earthquake_27_april_2015.pdf.

- Congestion of international airport with the influx of various planes with supplies and relief teams.
- Weak capability to handle influx of cargo.
- Requirement of more helicopters due to disruption in land communication.
- Limitations on the use of airport due to continuous aftershocks.
- Lack of stores and open spaces for shelter, debris and waste.
- Lack of coherence and integrated approaches in the atmosphere of influx of supporting nations, NGOs and groups willing to participate in the operation.

These logistical limitations had caused large set backs on operations. Most of the limitations were related to capabilities lacked by the Nepalese NDMO; however if there was some regional logistic mechanism, that could help to fill the gap of Nepalese limitations. ASEAN has developed a limited capability for acquisition, storage, and distribution of disaster relief assets generated within, and from foreign partners and NGOs; in contrast, the SEDMC has to develop the system from the beginning.

B. CONCLUSION

Disaster management tasks are related to social, economic, political, and humanitarian factors among various actors with unequal capabilities. Additionally, the disaster-affected areas may have different capabilities and accessibility to cope with damages. Therefore, the controlling authority of the operation should have accurate assessment of damage and judicious allotment of resources. Disaster response capabilities cannot be developed overnight. Various agreements and declarations are not enough to concentrate all the available resources in the theater of operations. Better planning, procedures, regular interactions, practices and exercises help to identify critical capabilities and mutual support areas for better cooperation.

The concept of disaster management gained prominence almost at the same time in ASEAN and SAARC. ASEAN formed the committee to discuss on the matter of disaster management in 2003, passed AADMER in 2005 and established AHA center in 2011. SAARC was faster in the formation of a disaster management center earlier in

2006, according to SAARC Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management of 2005. However, AADMER was more descriptive than the SAARC Framework. Therefore, there was a need for the SARRND, which was passed only in 2011. The SARRND requires ratification and other infrastructure and progress from SAARC has stagnated. It was decided to form SEDMC from SDMC in November 2014, but nothing happened in the whole year of 2015, and four regional centers have been nonoperational as of January 2016. But the members have not shown any urgency to make SEDMC operational. The fundamental structures to establish in the SEDMC are REOC, the SAARC Disaster Management Rapid Action Force (SDMRAF), a training center, an early mobilization team like ERAT in ASEAN, if SAARC follows the model of ASEAN. Most of the progress made in ASEAN was after 2011 after the establishment of AHA center. These targets are achievable for SAARC from regional resources and global assistance. The issue of regional approaches to disaster management is not taken seriously in SAARC. There have been some recent lessons for countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives whose national capacities are not sufficient to cope with larger disasters. New member Afghanistan is burdened with internal problems and unable to focus on this aspect.

The decision-making process in ASEAN is unaffected by any hegemon within the region. Their decisions are consensus based and are normally unanimously accepted. However, there is strong U.S. influence on political issues and Chinese hegemonic influence on economic issues.¹⁵⁹ These two hegemons are successfully achieving their interests in the region primarily through bilateral agreements and otherwise through multilateral agreements. The practice of consensus-based decision making, absence of supranational structure and non-interference in internal affairs are the unique characteristics of ASEAN. The same kinds of characteristics are also reflected in SAARC. However, the hegemonic nature of India and non-compliance with proposals

¹⁵⁹ Philomena Murray and Edward Moxon Browne, "The European Union as a Template for Regional Integration? The Case of ASEAN and its Committee of Permanent Representatives," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no. 3 (2013), 534, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=93e4bf17-1127-4b2a-b850-7d9f63cbbe14%40sessionmgr4002&vid=1&hid=4204>.

related to Indian interests has either stopped further progress in the decision making or slowed the implementation of agreed upon decisions. The geostrategic locations of Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh bring them politically, sociologically, culturally and economically closer to India. The hegemonic model of regionalism may flourish in that sub-region provided the others should feel their larger interests are taken care of by India, while they may sacrifice on smaller issues.

There is a need for strong regional center to enforce capacity building of NDMOs, their local capacity development and implementation of disaster risk reduction plans on their development activities. Therefore, SAARC has a long list of tasks to complete for a capable disaster management center with strong policies, NDMOs and integrated local bodies to develop resilience for upcoming disasters.

IV. THE USE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN SAARC AND ASEAN: EFFECTS ON CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION

Civil-military cooperation is defined by NATO as the “co-ordination and co-operation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil actors, including national population and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organizations and agencies.”¹⁶⁰ To develop better civil-military cooperation, U.S. forces focus on Civil-Military Operations, which are considered “activities that establish, maintain, influence or exploit relations between military forces and civilian agencies in order to facilitate military operations to consolidate and achieve operational U.S. objectives ... which may be with local, regional national government, or may occur in the absence of other military operations.”¹⁶¹

The United Nations uses “Civil-Military Coordination” to mean

The essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency, and when appropriate, pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from co-existence to cooperation. Coordination is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training.¹⁶²

There are numerous actors operating on various disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, and peace building missions on the ground including the government civilian agencies of the host government, NGOs, national military and foreign militaries. These groups have different cultures, values, principles, organizations, and structures,

¹⁶⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, “AJP-9 NATO Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) Doctrine (Unclassified publication),” (2003), 1, <http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/ajp-9.pdf>.

¹⁶¹ Robert R. Scott, Jeffrey D. Maclay and David Sokolow, NATO and Allied Civil-Military Co-Operation Doctrine, Operations, & Organization Of Forces, NATO and Allied Civil Affairs, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Accessed February 22, 2017, http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/090128_nato_civil_military_doctrine_and_ops.pdf.

¹⁶² “Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support UN Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies” dated March 2003.

which obviously make it difficult to make them work together.¹⁶³ Military cooperation with the civilian authority means assistance and subordination to the civilian effort, applying traditional military capabilities while addressing humanitarian needs.

South Asia has experienced major disasters in the last decades. These disasters have most of the time exceeded government's civilian capabilities and required assistance from militaries. National, regional and foreign military assets along with international humanitarian agencies were deployed in responding to some mega-disasters like the Pakistan floods in 2005 and 2010, the Pakistan earthquake in 2005, the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in 2004, and the Nepal earthquake in 2015. Experiences on those disaster relief operations have highlighted many aspects of civil-military cooperation. This chapter discusses the civil-military problems in disaster management with a global overview, the role of the military in ASEAN and SAARC and challenges to effective civil-military cooperation in SAARC to identify the progress to achieve for better civil-military cooperation while responding future disasters.

A. THE CIVIL-MILITARY PROBLEM IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Various international organizations and the government have developed their doctrines and guidelines to facilitate the civil-military cooperation. Militaries possess the capabilities to provide security, lift and supply of logistics, disciplined teams and the ability to perform the task; the civilian agencies have the capability to work together with the locals directly, more knowledge of the ground, technical expertise and long term commitment to the problem through their institutions.¹⁶⁴ These mismatched capabilities are particularly troublesome in humanitarian and disaster relief operations.

At the national level, the military and its assets have been used in national disasters for a long time; however, the role of armed forces in international disaster management started later. Superpowers during the Cold War were focusing on

¹⁶³ Volker Franke, "The Peacebuilding Dilemma: Civil-Military Cooperation in Stability Operations," *International Journal of Peace Studies* (2006), 5, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.477.2215&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

developing their conventional military capabilities. Interests and the focus of states shifted from territorial security to human security after the Cold War. Capability in disaster relief operation became a tool to influence countries in trouble through accepted military employment which encouraged capable states to develop their military assets to be employed in disaster relief operations.

The United Nations Oslo Guidelines of 1992 paved the institutional way to use civilian assets of the governments, NGO assets and military assets as required in disaster relief and humanitarian operations. Worsening security situations in such disaster-affected areas as in Iraq, Afghanistan, Indonesia, and Africa forced the evolution of wider Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) Guidelines in 2006, with priority given to the security of the area and agencies involved in the disaster operations.¹⁶⁵ Nations who had deployed unprecedented military assets in response to natural disasters in 2004–2005 in insurgency affected countries like Pakistan, Indonesia and Sri Lanka required expanded and accepted guidelines for the legitimacy of their military and civil defense assets contribution.¹⁶⁶ MCDA guidelines in 2006 expanded mobilization and deployment of foreign military assets under “bilateral or under regional or alliance agreements as other deployed forces or as part of a United Nations operation as UN MCDA” facilitating the affected state’s call for international assistance to deal with the disaster beyond their national capability.¹⁶⁷ The affected state bears all the responsibility to coordinate, control and facilitate all relief actions of MCDA, to operate with bilateral cooperation, regional cooperation or from international relief programs.¹⁶⁸ The MCDA Guidelines 2006

¹⁶⁵ David Fisher, “Law of International Disaster Response: Overview and Ramifications for Military Actors.” *Int’l L. Stud. Ser. U.S. Naval War Col.* 83 (2007): 300, <https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/66e27820-fd69-4127-b688-cd46010d18e0/Vol--83---The-Law-of-International-Disaster-Respon.aspx>.

¹⁶⁶ “*The Effectiveness of Foreign Military Assets in Natural Disaster Response*,” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2008, 10, <http://books.sipri.org/files/misc/FMA/SIPRI08FMAmain.pdf>.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

provide more authority to the affected government to utilize its own, regional and international MCDA along with national and international humanitarian agencies; however, it is also the responsibility of the state to facilitate the environment for better coordination among all the actors employed in disaster relief operations.

The operating procedures, command, and information flow of security organizations differ with various other civilian organizations in the field. The overall effort may be at times uncoordinated, under-resourced, or sometimes unnecessarily over-resourced. Either way, operations are complicated and often less than efficient, with recriminations on all sides. Even though an array of NGOs and the U.S. Humanitarian Assistance Team was deployed in the Rwanda crisis in 1994, the operation was not very effective overall, due to a lack of coordination among the parties in the field.¹⁶⁹ As such, all the organizations involved missed out on chances to improve their own operations, whether by information provided to the U.S. Humanitarian Assistance Team from the NGOs already deployed there, or creation by the U.S. forces of an environment in which the NGOs could operate.

Similarly, in the Indian Tsunami of 2004, the Pakistan Earthquake of 2005, or the Sichuan Earthquake of 2008, massive numbers of external and internal actors—civilian and military—intervened in the disaster relief operation; however, the major challenge during those operations was to coordinate and synergize capabilities involved on the ground.¹⁷⁰ Research from Promoting Better Emergency Risk Communication states that “inter-organizational rivalry and tension generally do not disappear during high-risk

¹⁶⁹ John Borton, “An Account of Co-ordination Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance during the International Response to the 1994 Crisis in Rwanda.” *Disasters* 20, no. 4 (1996), 305, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.libproxy.nps.edu/doi/10.1111/j.1467-7717.1996.tb01046.x/epdf>.

¹⁷⁰ Noboru Yamaguchi, Tetsuo Kotani, Teruhiko Fukushima, Nozomu Yoshitomi, David Fouse, Jessica Ear, Jeffrey Hornung, Paul Barnes, and Mark Gower, *Enhancing Trilateral Disaster Preparedness and Relief Cooperation between Japan, U.S. and Australia: Approaches from Various Civil-Military Perspectives*, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies Honolulu HI, 2013, 07, <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA585861>.

events, but they may even be enhanced.”¹⁷¹ The basic code of conduct and practices of the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, and NGOs governed the operations of civilian actors; at the same time, the military actors followed different operating procedures and tried to involve other civilians in their set of operations. Interoperability is the key issue; various groups should identify the operating procedure of their co-groups. Lack of such coordination has at times created differences among the parties involved on assessment of “identification of the relief need, sourcing of HA/DR supply with sustained sub-chain, method of estimating priorities in support of the ground requirement and tasking and operating scarce aviation and maritime based assets.”¹⁷²

The level of cooperation depends also on the level of the highest coordinating institutions involved in the field. If such experienced institutions as the UN or NATO or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) are in the lead, their expertise helps to shape the overall operation and bring about better environments for cooperation. To avoid confusion during disaster relief operations, they have preplanned guidelines, and have previously exercised with most of the partners to understand each other’s role, capabilities, and limitations.

Strong organizations operating globally like the UN, ICRC, NATO, EU, and the U.S. Army have guidelines for disaster relief operations. The UN guiding principles are more of a civilian nature focusing on the use of civilian structures of humanitarian assistance. The UN guidelines emphasize that the request for military assets should be made even by the humanitarian actors operating in the field; so that, it can request only critical assets from its military counterpart.¹⁷³ However, in many cases of mega-scale disasters, the situation drifts beyond the capability of the humanitarian agency of that state and the national army holds the control of the rescue/relief operation from the

¹⁷¹ “State of the Art: Communication Coordination during High Risk Events,” *Promoting Better Emergency Risk Communication*, Warning Project, Accessed Feb 22, 2016, <http://www.warningproject.org/blog/state-of-the-art-communication-coordination-during-high-risk-events/>.

¹⁷² Yamaguchi, Kotani, Fukushima, Yoshitomi, Fouse, Ear, Hornung, Barnes, and Gower. *Enhancing Trilateral Disaster Preparedness and Relief Cooperation*, 57.

¹⁷³ Civil-Military Guidelines and Reference for Complex Emergency, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, New York, 2008, V, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/47da82a72.pdf>.

beginning. Moreover, national armies are in a pivotal role in most developing countries. In those situations, inadequate guidelines and practices do not match with the situation on the ground, which often creates poor civil-military cooperation in the field.

The OSCE focus more on agreed upon humanitarian principles (humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence) and agreed upon guidelines with an enhanced central role of the UN while assisting on disaster relief operations in developing countries outside the EU.¹⁷⁴ NATO Policy on Disaster Management 2008 follows the MCDA Guidelines or the Oslo Guidelines, as appropriate, while using its military assets in response to humanitarian situations with the humanitarian “principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality”.¹⁷⁵ Major actors in the international disaster relief operations such as the UN, the EU and the NATO all have taken the MCDA, the Oslo Guidelines and the universal principles of humanitarian assistance as their basis for their disaster relief guidelines. Finally, it is the capacity and policy of the stricken country to decide how it will call and accommodate international assistances while managing disaster.

Military engagements in most humanitarian assistance operations arouse controversies after the completion of the mission. After all, such operations do not comport with the usual military engagements. This circumstance leads to a certain amount of civil-military consternation as well. Conventional theories of civil-military relations do not explain how the military deployed in the field should subordinate to the civilian actor—even though the notion of civilian supremacy demands the overall control of humanitarian operations by the national or international civilian authority. In most disaster relief operations, active civilian government agencies controlling the operations in various sectors are missing; still, the theater of operation comprises a large sphere of civilian bodies operating in the zone.¹⁷⁶The uncertainties of disasters, the amount of

¹⁷⁴ “Towards a Stronger European Disaster Response: The Role of Civil Protection and Humanitarian Assistance, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council,” COM(2010) 600 final, *European Commission*, Brussels, October 26, 2010, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52010DC0600>.

¹⁷⁵ “Responding to Environmental Challenges with a View to Promoting Cooperation and Security in the OSCE area,” 22nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, Vienna, January 27–28, 2014, <http://www.osce.org/eea/110808?download=true>.

¹⁷⁶ Malešič, “The Impact of Military Engagement in Disaster Management,” 982.

required resources, and the variety of security situations in disaster zones mean that armed forces personnel will remain part of the response. Therefore, better civil-military cooperation is needed for successful disaster management.

B. THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN ASEAN AND SAARC

After persistent pressure from the UN and donors, the developing world has started focusing on managing disasters. For all the good intentions in and of these states, however, the reality remains that developing nations operate with limited resources. Thus, they are bound to task their institutions in multiple roles—decisions often based on which organizations *can* fulfill the necessary task, rather than which ones *should*, at least theoretically, take the lead. Most developing countries find their military and civil defense mechanisms readily available—and interchangeable—for disaster relief operations. Leaders in the developing world also see how developed states routinely use their armies in foreign disaster relief, so there seems to be solid precedent for this role.

1. ASEAN

ASEAN has identified its military capabilities as crucial assets in an overall disaster management plan. It has adopted The Use of ASEAN Military Assets and Capacities in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, which outlines how the member states should be using their civilian and military assets in disaster management.¹⁷⁷ The culture of frequent meetings among the defense ministers of the region together with the experts on various aspects and types of disasters further helped in formulating SOPs to ease military cooperation and coordination.¹⁷⁸ On March 16, 2015, the defense ministers' meeting passed the proposal to create the ASEAN Militaries Ready Group to deploy as early as first responder with prescribed relief and humanitarian assistance at the request of the affected member state as authorized by the decision of

¹⁷⁷ ASEAN Disaster Management Reference Handbook: 2015, Reliefweb, Accessed Dec 12, 2015, 41, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ASEAN%20Disaster%20Management%20Reference%20Handbooks.pdf>.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

ASEAN governing body.¹⁷⁹ It is an important milestone, which has taken the cooperation within ASEAN to another level.

ASEAN has even conducted various exercises among militaries of the United States, China, Japan, India, Japan and Australia together and individually with actors from various humanitarian agencies to enhance capabilities in disaster relief operations. Additionally, ASEAN has developed trilateral civil-military HA/DR cooperation with the United States, Japan and Australia to develop the comprehensive capability in the region with the help of those resource-developed countries.¹⁸⁰ Similarly, ASEAN has the same kind of cooperation with China to establish military to military cooperation. Thus, ASEAN has opened all the avenues of support within, nearby and outside the region with a developed procedure to request and employ foreign civilian and military assets in a time of crisis and disasters.

To highlight more about the role and employment of the military in a national and regional disaster relief role, Indonesia, an influential member of ASEAN, is a good example as it is the most disaster-prone country¹⁸¹ with the largest military in the region. Indonesia has deployed its national army in most cases of national disasters. The Republic of Indonesia law in 2004 and 2007 identifies its national army as a directing element in national disaster response management and specifies that it assists “in responding to the impact of natural disasters, IDPs management and humanitarian assistance distribution.”¹⁸² The role of the military on this issue is so vital that any country willing to assist Indonesia in disaster relief operations should request to do so

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 42–43.

¹⁸⁰ ASEAN Disaster Management Reference Handbook: 2015, 82.

¹⁸¹ “The United Nation’s (UN) 2014 World Risk Report named Indonesia the 38th most ‘at risk’ country for disaster. This is far behind neighboring Philippines’ 2nd most ‘at risk’ status. Other Asian nations with higher overall risk levels include Bangladesh, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Japan, and Vietnam. The World Bank estimates that Indonesia will incur fiscal losses of about USD \$500 million in any given year due to disasters. The probable maximum loss in a 10 year return period jumps to USD \$800 million, and in a hundred year return period the probable maximum loss is USD \$1.6 billion.” See Indonesia Disaster Management Reference Handbook: 2015, 24.

¹⁸² Indonesia Disaster Management Reference Handbook: 2015, Reliefweb, Accessed Dec 12, 2015, 63, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/disaster-mgmt-ref-hdbk-2015-indonesia.pdf>.

through the channel of MoD, National Army or Indonesian Police describing with the specific assistance being provided.¹⁸³ These legal parameters have placed the military as the pivot of national efforts on disaster management.

2. The SAARC Region

In comparison with other regional organizations, SEDMC is very weak in policy formulation, consultation, coordination and implementation of procedures for regional efforts in disaster relief operations. The latest policy formulation of SEDMC is the SAARC Agreement on the Rapid Response of Natural Disasters signed in November 2011; however its ratification is pending, so it is not yet operational. Moreover, the agreement required further deliberations with supplementary agreements like Regional Standby Agreements for Civilian and Military Assets and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations.¹⁸⁴ However, the member states are developing their own capabilities of civilian and military assets in coordination with regional and global partners deployed in respective countries. Most of the South Asian countries have identified their militaries as an important component of their disaster response mechanism and tasked them to be prepared in case of natural disasters.

Practices within India and Pakistan are typical examples in the SAARC region for the utilization of national resources to deal with disasters. Both the countries have nominal civilian structures and major responsibilities are assigned to their armed forces and their defense services. Indian armed forces are often called to assist civilian authorities.¹⁸⁵ The armed forces of India are supposed to be called up last to complement human resource and equipment gaps of civil administration and to leave first; but, in most of the cases, they have to enter first and leave last because of ill equipped civilian disaster

¹⁸³ Ibid., 71.

¹⁸⁴ NDRMM, *South Asian Disaster Knowledge Network*, Accessed Dec 12, 2015, <http://saarc-sadkn.org/ndrrm.aspx>.

¹⁸⁵ P.K. Gautam and H. Shivananda, "Reassessing India's Disaster Management Preparedness and the Role of the Indian Armed Forces," *J Def Stud* 6, no. 1 (2012), 102, http://idsa.in/system/files/jds_6_1_Shivanandah.Gautam.pdf.

relief capability.¹⁸⁶ This circumstance has forced the Indian armed forces to prepare for unprecedented tasks and has legitimized them to solicit more resources from the government for better preparedness.

Pakistan has national disaster management structures with national, provincial and district disaster management authorities. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has envisaged the role of the army in relief, recovery, management of displaced personnel, and to provide security whenever necessary.¹⁸⁷ The Pakistan Army also has parallel disaster management organizations within the military with army, corps and divisions allocated to operate parallel with civilian national, provincial and district disaster management authorities.¹⁸⁸ Because of poor civilian disaster management structures, the Pakistan military and its assets were extensively employed in recent mega-disasters after the 2005 and 2010 floods and the 2005 earthquake.¹⁸⁹

C. CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION IN SAARC

The task of the military to support civilian authority means there is a need to have good civil-military cooperation, both at the national level and the international level, to complete the allotted task. The norms of civil-military relations are easy to observe and may function properly if the deployment of agencies follows the sequence of initial employment of civilian agencies and later militaries to supplement them; however, problems arise because the national and foreign militaries are extensively deployed from the beginning.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 104.

¹⁸⁷ Raza Ali and Sirajul Haq Kandhro, "National Disaster Management Authority in Pakistan: Role of Pakistan Army in Disaster Management," *Journal of Social and Administrative Sciences* 2, no. 1 (2015): 13, http://www.castecep.com/Canadian%20Asian%20Open%20Geography%20&%20Natural%20Disasters%20Journal/CAOGNDJ_Vol.%201,%20No.%201,%20January%202015/NATIONAL%20DISASTER.pdf.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ramanand N. Garge, Huong Ha, and Susie Khoo, "Disaster Risk Management and the Role of the Armed Forces: Critical Analysis of Reactive Disaster Management in India," In *Strategic Disaster Risk Management in Asia*, Springer India, 2015, 59.

The latest case for disaster management in SAARC region was the relief operation in the Nepal earthquake in April 2015. Out of the 18 countries that participated with their military assets in Nepalese earthquake disaster relief, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan were from South Asia.¹⁹¹ The Nepal Army planned, coordinated and conducted the operation through the Multinational Military Operations and Coordination Center (MNMCC) in coordination with the UNDAC Team's On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC).¹⁹² The OSOCC further established The Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Center (HuMOCC) co-located with MNMCC to promote the interface among humanitarian agencies, national and foreign militaries.¹⁹³ Many complained about the weak civil-military coordination in the initial stage of the operation due to the absence of well-planned procedures within the Nepal Army and the region.¹⁹⁴ This criticism has highlighted the requirement of better national capacity to accommodate all forms of foreign assistance and practices beforehand.

1. Lack of Mutual Understanding

Mutual understanding to supplement one another's capability gap is very important to achieve good civil-military cooperation. The international humanitarian community did not cooperate with the Pakistani national military during the Pakistan flood response in 2010 as the Pakistan Army was controlling the overall operation and the humanitarian community felt it was losing sight of the central role in the operation.¹⁹⁵ Similar kinds of misunderstandings were also experienced in the Pakistan earthquake

¹⁹¹ "Nepal Earthquake 2015 Nepalese Army Experience and Lessons Learnt," Briefing Jointly organized by MOHA, UNDP, NASC, Accessed February 18, 2016, <http://dms.nasc.org.np/sites/default/files/documents/Col.NareshSubba.pdf>.

¹⁹² Ronaldo Reario, THE HuM OCC Typhoon Haiyan, Cyclone Pam and Nepal Earthquake, *Liaison*, Volume VII (Fall 2015), 11, [https://www.pksoi.org/document_repository/Misc/Liaison-2015-volVII-2_Fall-issue_\(1-Sep-2015\)-CDR-1407.pdf](https://www.pksoi.org/document_repository/Misc/Liaison-2015-volVII-2_Fall-issue_(1-Sep-2015)-CDR-1407.pdf).

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁹⁴ Vincenzo Bollettino, The Use and Coordination of Civil-Military and Defense Assets in Nepal, *Liaison*, Volume VII (Fall 2015), 18, [https://www.pksoi.org/document_repository/Misc/Liaison-2015-volVII-2_Fall-issue_\(1-Sep-2015\)-CDR-1407.pdf](https://www.pksoi.org/document_repository/Misc/Liaison-2015-volVII-2_Fall-issue_(1-Sep-2015)-CDR-1407.pdf).

¹⁹⁵ Victoria Metcalfe, Simone Haysom, and Stuart Gordon, "Trends and Challenges in Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination: A Review of the Literature," *London: The Humanitarian Policy Group* (2012), 17, <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7679.pdf>.

response in 2005.¹⁹⁶ These kinds of misunderstandings could be minimized by an organized coordinating system in which all parties know beforehand how to coordinate with one another to get the job done.

The UNOCHA in Nepal had formed an Inter-Agency Standing Committee to increase the interagency cooperation among UNOCHA Nepal and other major NGOs working on disaster management, to standardize the working procedures, division of tasks and resources among the parties involved and to establish liaison with the military and the civil defense partners to work together with them in various clusters.¹⁹⁷ This committee was very supportive in the Koshi Flood Relief Operation in 2008 in Nepal in dividing the task and resources of various agencies to supplement the government effort to rescue and relieve the flood victims.¹⁹⁸

2. Bureaucratic Hurdles

Bureaucratic hurdles badly affect the effectiveness of disaster relief operations, especially in security clearance and customs clearance of personnel, relief items, and equipment. During the time of crisis, there is a high flow of goods and personnel through customs. The UN office had urged the Nepalese government to ease the customs clearing problem through the airport as the goods were stranded and the people were desperately in need during the disaster relief operation in Nepal after the 2015 earthquake.¹⁹⁹ This was the early point in the debate between the international community and the government to pursue their way of conducting customs, causing a problem in cooperation.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ “International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) in Nepal: A Study on Strengthening Legal Preparedness for International Disaster Response,” *Nepal Red Cross Society*, 16, Accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/93552/1213100-Nepal%20Red%20Cross-IDRL%20Report-EN-LR04.pdf>.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 16.

¹⁹⁹ “Nepal quake: Airport Customs Holding Up Aid Relief – UN,” *BBC News*, 3 May 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32564891>.

There are cases of inter-agency rivalry within the state or among the NGOs and international organizations seeking roles and resources. Different organizations possess wide ranges of expertise and experiences but resources are always scarce in a crisis environment. Resupplies are made available through quick supply chains developed by the central coordinating authority in the field. If these resources are not distributed properly with the capable authority to handle, there are chances of misuse or underuse of that capability, role and resources. Facing a paucity of important resources, other civilian and international agencies also blamed the Nepalese government and Nepal Army for not providing them access, resources and priority in using air assets for them.²⁰⁰ There was also rivalry among government agencies in Nepal about who should control the available resources on ground.²⁰¹

Additionally, there are different set of working procedures between military and civilian bureaucrats. Their differences in preparing and presenting papers also at times delay the supply of goods and services to the needy. Chinese trucks with relief personnel and goods were stopped for long time by the Pakistani traffic police on their way to flood relief operations in 2010 as their permission was not transmitted to lower-level personnel who were controlling the area.²⁰²

These hurdles are more common with the shipments following the logistic chain, causing delay and weakening cooperation in overall operation. Everyone should genuinely perform their duties and the bureaucratic liaison has to be done in advance for proper “implementation of Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance” (IDLR Guidelines) accepted by most countries in 2007.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Thomas Bell, “The Disaster in Nepal after the Earthquake,” *Al Jazeera*, May 13, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/05/earthquake-nepal-rescue-aid-150513093712374.html>.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² “The Impact of Regulatory Problems and the Gains from Legal Preparedness in Recent Response Operations, Expert Meeting,” *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*, March 10, 2015, 13, http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/195860/IDRL%20Impact%20Study%20Draft%20for%20Expert%20Meeting_270215.pdf.

²⁰³ “The Impact of Regulatory Problems,” 02.

3. Lack of Trust

The success of a disaster management operation requires a strong trust among the contributing parties with the network. Long term relations are the key to develop trust. Disaster management operations are normally conducted by partners with little or no previous common trainings, rules and common working experiences.²⁰⁴ The issue of trust is even more sensitive in the environment where militaries of different countries are operating together. Transparency and sharing of valuable information among the parties involved in the operation can help build trust among the parties in the operation.

While preparing Digital Vulnerability Atlas (DVA) of South Asia by SADKN, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka did not provide some geographical information to SADKN because of a trust deficit on perceived sensitive security areas.²⁰⁵ South Asia was left with an incomplete DVA and SADKN had to work on the same project again after data were made available.

There is weak trust among the parties in South Asia due to the India-Pakistan rivalry and unresolved issues on river management. Floods due to unguarded shared rivers such as the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna are always concerns for the people at lower riparian zones, and higher riparian states are blamed for unsolved issues of river control. India is criticized in the Pakistani/Bengali media for not cooperating to control rivers to limit floods in Pakistan²⁰⁶ and Bangladesh.²⁰⁷ Similarly Nepal is blamed in India for floods in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, India.²⁰⁸ These unresolved issues not only endanger the lives of the people, but also are contentious issues between states, creating the situation of distrust within the region.

²⁰⁴ Peter Tatham, and Gyöngyi Kovács, "Developing and Maintaining Trust in Hastily Formed Relief Networks," *Relief Supply Chain Management for Disasters: Humanitarian Aid and* (2012): 173.

²⁰⁵ White, *A Critical Disconnect: The Role of SAARC in Building the DRM*, 13.

²⁰⁶ Latha Jishnu, "Climate of Distrust," *Dawn*, Nov 1, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1141669> .

²⁰⁷ Mohammad Abul Kawser and Md Abdus Samad, "Political History of Farakka Barrage and its Effects on Environment in Bangladesh." *Bandung: Journal of the Global South* 2, no. 1 (2015): 11, <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40728-015-0027-5>.

²⁰⁸ "Negligence Caused 2008 Kosi Floods in Bihar: Report," *Zee News*, August 2, 2014, http://zeenews.india.com/news/bihar/negligence-caused-2008-kosi-floods-in-bihar-report_951911.html.

4. Lack of Common Working Procedures

Militaries and civilians have lots of differences in their working procedures. Civilians and NGOs are more versed with the latest equipment and technologies and their decision-making process is fast with better initiatives for the team on the ground, whereas the military follows the chain of command and their decision are more imposed. Militaries are more rigid about sharing of information. The Pakistani government authority expressed their frustration over civilian agencies operating in clusters in Pakistan flood relief in 2005 for not providing information to the militaries operating in that area.²⁰⁹ NGOs felt uncomfortable with the participation of military representatives in their cluster meeting.²¹⁰

Cristiana Matei on her work on Intelligence Reform in the United States after 9/11 has highlighted language and cultural issues as a challenge to developing cooperation and coordination among the agencies working in multiple agency environments.²¹¹ This phenomenon is also common in the environment of disaster management with multiple actors. Various civilian agencies use different terminologies and even militaries of different countries use different terminologies while dealing with disaster management. Similarly, it is difficult to understand military jargons, acronyms and terminologies for civilian and vice versa. Various terminologies in practice are associated with the institution and these terminologies possess core values of that institution.²¹² Standardization of disaster related terminologies, policies, doctrines and operational concepts for all actors is a difficult solution.²¹³

²⁰⁹ Metcalfe, Haysom, and Gordon, "Trends and Challenges in Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination: A Review of the Literature," 16.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Florina Cristiana Matei, "Obstacles to Intelligence Cooperation in Countering Terrorism" in Denis Caleta, and Paul Shamella, Ljubljana, *Slovenia: Institute for Corporate Security Studies*, 2014

²¹² Jean-Luc Marret, "Complex Emergencies: Disasters, Civil-Military Relations, and Transatlantic Cooperation," *J. Streets, & DS Hamilton, Humanitarian Assistance: Improving U.S.-European Cooperation* (2009): 350, http://www.disastergovernance.net/fileadmin/gppi/RTB_book_chp18.pdf.

²¹³ Ibid.

Differences in working cultures among agencies create misunderstandings and frustrations. Motives of the mission might also be different for military and NGOs. NGOs have their organizational motives, whereas, the military employment follows after political decisions.²¹⁴ NGOs are more focused on mobilization of locals and their resources; the military mission is supposed to perform the job with its allotted resources. These differences in their working procedures hinder homogeneity in the approach to the mission.

During 2010 flood rescue operations in Pakistan, the Pakistani government did not have clear national guidelines for civil-military cooperation, while various international militaries and NGOs were participating.²¹⁵ Domestic and foreign militaries were very useful as they better facilitated the operation with specialized equipment, robust manpower and wide presence in many parts of the country; however, their way of conduct clashed with the NGOs' principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence.²¹⁶ Therefore, there were incidents of rivalry between the national army and NGOs control of the operation, resources on the ground and facilitation for one another.²¹⁷ The fundamental problem in operating procedures between civilians and military is difficult to change; however, they may better cooperate by creating a better environment for addressing frequent problems through experiences, joint approaches and following up of international norms of civil-military cooperation.

D. CONCLUSION

The militarization of disaster relief operations has increased a great deal, especially in foreign humanitarian assistance. The mobilization of military personnel and military assets are ultimately a political decision of states to achieve their national interests. Even though their goal is to reduce/eliminate suffering of disaster victims, their culture of handling the difficult situation is different than civilian actors in humanitarian

²¹⁴ Franke, "The Peacebuilding Dilemma," 16.

²¹⁵ Madiwale and Virk, "Civil–Military Relations in Natural Disasters," 1103.

²¹⁶ Malešič, "The Impact of Military Engagement in Disaster Management," 991.

²¹⁷ Madiwale and Virk, Civil–Military Relations in Natural Disasters, 1103.

agencies. While operating in urgent situations like disasters, each party feels their basic practices, norms and values are challenged.

The role of military in disaster management is less prominent after the rescue and relief stage. After some phase of the operation, the prime role in the field has to change from military to civilian actor. There are complaints in many cases from international organizations and NGOs about bad cooperation from the military and the host government. However, basic problems lie within those parties such as weak interagency cooperation, bureaucratic hurdles, lack of trust and lack of common working procedures creating conditions for confusion and misunderstanding.

Additionally, there is a plethora of NGOs in the region working in disaster management and they hold certain capability and legitimacy to work as per global norms. So, their importance and role also has to be integrated in the state capacity keeping in view that their working culture is different than the military assets of the government. The host government and the regional center are responsible to strike a balance in the division of roles and development of a working environment for all of them. Therefore, there should be clear guidelines about the role and field of cooperation between these actors. The coordinating body of the whole operation should be well versed with the flow of the operation. Therefore, there is a need of greater interactions, exercises and drills among all actors to converge efforts of all parties during the time of crisis.

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V. CONCLUSION

“The UN has calculated that 97 percent of all deaths related to natural disasters occur in developing countries.”²¹⁸ For example, in 2003, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.6 killed 26,000 in Bam, Iran; four days later, a comparable quake killed just two in California.²¹⁹ This difference in damage and casualties owes more to the collapse of man-made structures, often built with no consideration (or no budget) for seismic improvements, than to the disaster itself.

South Asia is continuously suffering from disasters—natural and man-made. The damage caused by these disasters has long-term and ongoing effects on victims who are not receiving proper relief and rehabilitation after disasters due to weak capacity of the region to cope with these disasters. The effects of disasters are minimized in most parts of the world through disaster risk mitigation plans, disaster response programs within the overall development and security plans, and development of the capability to respond to various kinds of disasters. In contrast, SAARC countries have not been able individually to develop their capacity to respond to these disasters completely or effectively.

Ideally, South Asia would focus on building regional disaster management capability. For one thing, most disasters are regional in nature, cause, and impact, and they require attention from two or more countries in the region. A coordinated regional disaster management capability also reduces redundancy and gaps in a resource-challenged area. Countries are more connected with each other to achieve their shared interest through their regional “clubs” to interact with the globalized world.

The progress of SAARC and regionalism in South Asia is more affected by India and its relations with its neighbors. India is even blamed for meddling in the internal

²¹⁸ “Managing Disaster Risk in Developing Countries: A Global Challenge,” *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society*, Oct 27, 2014, <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/opinions-and-positions/speeches/2004/managing-disaster-risk-in-developing-countries-a-global-challenge/>.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

politics of neighboring countries like Sri Lanka,²²⁰ Bangladesh,²²¹ and Nepal²²² to shape their role in favor of India. On the other hand, the governing parties frequently change in the region which has further imbalanced the region with changing government behaviors toward India and other global actors outside the region—most noticeably China.

The development of SAARC disaster response capability is also at very slow pace because of weak regionalism. The concerns for regional response to natural disasters appeared to be growing in the region after the Nepal Earthquake of 2015. The SAARC Comprehensive Framework for Disaster Management and SARRND laid the path for the development of voluntary standby force for regional response to disaster.²²³ However, there was a lot of suspicion about bringing all the armed forces together in one theater of operations. Even though there were many limitations on the capability of overall operation, the operation offered the platform for the two rival militaries (Indian and Pakistani), who had no problems when tasked by neutral authority. Additionally, India and Pakistan have agreed to establish common SAARC Disaster management force with specialization to respond to natural and man-made disaster.²²⁴ India also hosted the first South Asian Annual Disaster Management Exercise (SAADMEx-2015) including teams from all members of SAARC in India on November 2015. The exercise focused on resilience building against earthquake and chemical emergencies.²²⁵ It is a very first step,

²²⁰ Prashant Jha, “Why Election Verdict Is Good News for Sri Lanka and India,” *Hindustan Times*, Aug 18, 2015, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/why-election-verdict-is-good-news-for-sri-lanka-and-india/story-WkImbRT1vrzxN0a92F79NM.html>.

²²¹ Hasan Mir, “India-U.S. Chasm Opens over Bangladesh,” *Asia Times*, Jan 21, 2014, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/SOU-02-210114.html.

²²² Hemant Ojha, “The India-Nepal Crisis,” *The Diplomat*, November 27, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/11/the-india-nepal-crisis/>.

²²³ “SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disasters,” *Male*, 2011, <https://www.ifrc.org/docs/idrl/N840EN.pdf>.

²²⁴ Pradeep Thakur, “India, Pak Agree for SAARC Disaster Response Force,” *Times of India*, Dec 26, 2015, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-Pak-agree-for-SAARC-disaster-response-force/articleshow/50336495.cms>.

²²⁵ “SAARC Nations Undertake Maiden Disaster Combat Exercise in NCR,” *The New Indian Express*, Nov 24, 2015, <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/SAARC-Nations-Undertake-Maiden-Disaster-Combat-Exercise-in-NCR/2015/11/24/article3144731.ece>.

which has started the cooperation among not only civilians, but also among militaries operating on disaster management.

The traditional humanitarian actors, international organizations and NGOs now have to work together with faster and powerful military components in disaster affected areas. Due to security threats in affected areas and supplementing capabilities from military institutions, their roles in the disaster relief operations are also accepted. Most of the capable countries identify and keep a part of their armed forces on standby as rapid response teams for disaster relief operations to be deployed elsewhere. Interoperability is the key issue where various groups must identify the operating procedure of their co-groups. This requires working procedures, close coordination and understanding each other's capacities and limitations. The actors should focus primarily on "identification of the relief need, sourcing of HA/DR supply with sustained sub-chain, method of estimating priorities in support of the ground requirement and tasking and operating scarce aviation and maritime based assets."²²⁶ Therefore, there is a need to develop common professional language, procedures, commonality in appreciating risk and urgency. This all can be achieved by strong commitments, interactions, joint-exercises and seminars among the participating bodies in disaster operations to avoid civil-military culture clash.

The major problem in SAARC disaster management lies with the disaster management center itself. There should be a serious concern to operationalize SEDMC as soon as possible. Detailed guidelines have to be prepared and adopted on how the new SEDMC will operate or will continue as SDMC. The decision to locate SEDMC is very urgent. The budgeting, staffing and the role of SEDMC have to expand to control and guide NDMOs effectively. Immediate guidelines on establishment of rapid action force and REOC as per the SARRND has to be agreed upon.

Member states also have to be sincere in their efforts to develop their respective NDMOs with guidelines, SOPs, organization, staff and budgets as required to operate parallel with SEDMC. NDMOs should be able to deploy their structure in different

²²⁶ Noboru Yamaguchi, *Enhancing Trilateral Disaster Preparedness and Relief Cooperation*, 57.

sectors within the country to facilitate and coordinate operation in multinational environment. The NDMOs should have clear and detailed plan to include and task the international organizations and NGOs within the country. NDMOs should be able to identify the priorities and divide the resources received from the state and be able to generate resources through international organizations and NGOs for development of additional capability. It is the duty of the NDMOs to concentrate all other resources and guide NGOs to fill the capability gap of government. It is difficult to develop all these capabilities quickly with the limited resources, so there should be detailed planning, programming and budgeting in phases.

The level of the SAARC secretariat should also be lifted from the secretary level to ministerial level, so that he/she is able to call and coordinate meetings of respective ministers on urgent issues. The frequencies of interactions at the ministerial level and secretary level should be increased to develop a better environment among leaders. The director of SEDMC should at least be at the level of secretary, so that he/she might feel comfortable interacting, guiding and cooperating with respective NDMO secretaries.

Some dire disaster related issues concern sub-regions only. Even though some disasters like floods in Bangladesh, floods in Uttar Pradesh/Bihar in India and floods in Pakistan are reoccurring disasters, governments have not been able to develop coherent mechanisms to fight these reoccurring disasters. The information about increased amount and flow of water can be useful for disaster management institutions of lower riparian states. The region has not been able to manage rivers and harness their capabilities for energy and irrigation for greater benefit. Increased subregional cooperation may create possibilities to address those issues. Therefore, SAARC and SEDMC should facilitate those sub-regional issues and push concerning states to find solutions on underlying threats. This will help to increase the culture of cooperation within the region.

The SEDMC should facilitate a platform to synchronize all efforts from international organization and NGOs working on disaster management through its emergency operation center. It should have a plan to task all the government civilian agencies, international organizations, NGOs, local organizations, regional militaries and foreign militaries in close coordination with respective NDMOs and national military.

The SEDMC and NDMOs should have clear guidelines for all actors to involve their roles, limitations and responsibilities so that they will be conversant with the support and cooperation from other agencies involved during the time of crisis. The SEDMC and NDMOs should organize joint exercises, seminars and interactions to develop better cooperation and coordination especially among military and major civilian actors on disaster management.

Finally, the most important aspect to enhance regional disaster management capacity is the enhanced cooperation within member states and the strong sense of the importance of regionalism to address problems in the region. The animosity between the states concentrates their focus on militarization and conflicts. However, there are many soft areas related to environmental protection, disaster management, food, energy, trade, transit, agriculture, poverty alleviation and so on. Rival states should extensively start working on these soft issues. These interactions will develop an environment of dialogue to solve problems like enhancement of regional capacity on disaster management.

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