



## The resilient cultural and religious diversity of South Asia

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### Abstract

*South Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives and Bhutan have been considered as a source of religious, philosophical, cultural, scientific and culinary influences since ages. The historic traditions of these countries not only depict how different religions and cultures of these regions are related to each other, but also the dynamics of their influence on the contemporary world. The diversity of these countries also expresses their social, political and artistic ideas and their remarkable influence on the rest of the world through their linguistic, cultural and ethnic range. The study also points out how their intellectual ideas and philosophies are shared or sometimes opposed by the entire globe. So, present paper is going to examine the socio-cultural characteristics of South Asia, entailing their traditions and living, besides their influences on the rest of the world over time. It is also going to explore the resilient and vibrant journey of these diversified cultures throughout the recent past.*

**Keywords:** Culture, Religious, Lifestyle, Languages, Influence, Traditions, Linguistic.

### Introduction:

South Asia is a basket of different religion and cultural diversity. Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism owe their birth to this region while Christianity, Islam and Judaism arrived later on from other parts of the world to this part of the globe. Eventually, all major religions have made their roots in this region irrespective of the fact whether they originated from here or not. The religious and cultural diversity of this region has a noticeable impact on traditions of these countries and it is not hard to notice the socio religious reflection in the traditions of various ethnic groups in the region.

As we know, South Asian region is the most densely populated part in the entire globe. India is the most populated country in world. It is a beautiful mélange of diverse cultures, religions and languages. Interestingly, it is also the world's largest democracy. People have freedom of expression, freedom to opt any culture, so its impact on the social life and the life style of the people is evident. Notwithstanding above, India being one of the oldest civilizations, her social, cultural and political environment is dominantly influenced by its history.

During the recent times South Asian Diaspora is predominantly spreading across the world. Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh which are mostly containing Muslim population are having great prominence around the world. Similarly Buddhist based countries like Sri Lanka and Bhutan and Hindu based countries like India and Nepal have attracted the economies around the globe.

### **Objective:**

1. To study the socio, cultural and religion environment of south Asian region.
2. *To study the influence of South Asian culture on the rest of the world.*
3. *To analyse historic perspective in comparison to present scenario.*
4. To study its influence and impact on the contemporary world.

### **Scope:**

The study will be an in-depth analysis of the history and present scenario of these countries through the prism of socio religious and cultural environment.

### **Methodology:**

An exploratory research will be done on the topic. The study is theoretical and descriptive. Qualitative analysis could be used after studying different literatures on the topic.

### **Implications:**

The findings will be based on the fact that their resilient culture has an impact on the rest of the world and countries of this region.

### **Literature Review:**

To study the cultural, “social and political diversity of South Asia lots of papers reviewed from the past researches. explained that south Asian nations which were formally colonized have, inherited boundaries which encompass politically problematic cultural diversity, such as Muslim communities in southern Thailand”. (Rig, 1998) “Lack of fit between political ‘containers’ called nation-states and lived social-cultural identities extends beyond a politics of border regions”. (Bajunid, 1999).” Analysis of the politics of nationhood has also proceeded within the more recently established tradition of landscape politics”. (Wong, 2002) “work on migrant domestic workers in Singapore, for example, explores how the government’s desire to incorporate women into formal employment has resulted in transformed gender ideologies—but only for some women. (Huang, 1999); Southeast Asia (SEA) is characterised by fascinating social, cultural and linguistic variations and is also diverse demographically and geographically. Its heterogeneity lies across the areas of religion, governance and finance. Although they may share similar values, Southeast Asian people differ in their forms of cultural expressions that comprise their rich diversity. Such multiplicity of cultural expressions is manifested in their literatures, music and art”. (Aguas, 2014); “Different ethnic groups inhabiting the Southeast Asian region generally have distinct local languages or dialects. The region boasts around a thousand languages, spoken by different people who have inhabited Southeast Asia for millennia” (H.J.Bendra, 1965).; “In this respect, it builds positive identity, self-determination and wellness. Increasingly, culture is used to refer to more material phenomena, from sports, clothing, movies, music, and food”. (W.Fu, 2008)

### **Similarities and Cultural Diversity:**

As already explained, one of the features of southeast Asia is its cultural diversity. Different religions, different languages, different cultures and even geographical diversity also found in South Asia. The effect

of this diversity is that different lifestyles, different food habits and different outfits are part of this region. As per estimation, around six thousand languages are spoken in the world, and from this estimated around thousands of languages are spoken in this South Asian region. If we study archaeological data, human habitation is found around a million years ago in this region. In early times there was a migration of human habitation to the south east region. Even the tribal from china moved to the mainland through river way. If we divide mainland into three parts Linguistically, then culture includes three families, The First one is Austro-Asiatic (like Cambodian and Vietnamese), The Second one is Tai (Like Thai and Lao). And third and last is Tibetan-Burmese Including highland language and Burmese.

In earlier times around four thousand year ago, people originating in Taiwan and southern part of china mostly spoke languages belonging to Austronesia. At that time migrants shifted to Philippines and Malay-Indonesia and they belonged to Austronesia families. So it is evident that south Asian people eventually adopted different environments. In earlier times or we can say in Pre modern era, many nomadic groups also known as orange laut or sea people lived in small boats. The deep jungles were the home for wandering people of small groups. Many of these tribal people are fierce head hunters.

Different tribes of different areas are having different staple food in eastern part of Indonesia. The fruit of the lontar palm is a stable food apart from sago in few areas. And if we go to fertile plane lands of java and mainland of Southeast Asia, communities of the area mostly grow in their coast area the irrigated rice, which is generally considered not suitable for agriculture due to mangrove swamps. Mostly people are doing Fishing as their occupation in these coastal areas. More equality can be noticed in men and women. This may be due to reasons of late arrival of the religion and lack of urbanisation in these areas. Cultural impact in these regions is coming from mainly two directions. The influence came from Chinese expansion in around two thousand years ago. In the south of Yangtze River, Chinese expansion of these areas led to the colonisation on Vietnam. The Vietnam was independent from china in 1427. But Confucians philosophy had a very much influence, when Vietnam got freedom. Buddhism and Taoism gained through china in Vietnam.

As far as rest of mainland is concerned like the western area of Malay-Indonesia and across Bay of Bengal, mostly Indian influence is noticed. The population of Vietnam, Bali, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia people are mostly cultivating irrigating rice. Most of the rulers of these areas had adopted Hinduism and forms of Buddhism.

People in south East Asia are either Nomadic or semi-nomadic. This difference also impacts their physical and political environment. The culture of south Asian nations is highly influenced by India as discussed earlier. Most of the countries of the region use Brahmi alphabet which is north Indian alphabet and Pallavi which is south Indian alphabet. That's why most of the south Asian peoples have names sounded with Indian, Persian or Europeans. Lots of examples could be seen which showed Indian vocabulary sounded in vocabulary of south Asian countries. In Thai language Chand or Jan: Jaan/Moon, Sukorn; Soour/Swine, Mali; Chameli/jasmine, Suriya; Solar/Sun, Artit; Aditya/Sun, Dara; Tara/Star, Ko; Ko/Cow, Manus; Manunya/human etc. Even traditions, costumes and architecture of most of the south Asian countries have a similarity like India and China. Since around near to 100 BCE the most of the south East Asia adopted Indian, Hindu religion, culture during that early period.

Angkor wat, a hindu styled temple, is the largest religious monument of the world in Cambodia. The word Cambodia is derived from the word "Kambojas which is an Iranian clan.

Bhutanese culture is also very close to south East Asia. Bhutanese culture and their race is completely different from other south Asian countries. The people of these countries have Mongolian features. The people of Eastern Bhutan have close similarities with Burma; where as people of western Bhutanese have close affinity with Tibetan people.

## Islam in south Asia:

The existence of Islam plays an important and significant contribution in South Asian culture. The beginning of Islam in these countries started in thirteenth century. Islam spread the message by their teaching which teaches oneness of God that is Allah. Islamic teaching were spread through a succession of prophets and ultimately through Muhammad. The teachings of Islam are contained in their holy Book Quran. For a Muslim there are five pillars or requirements, which include the confession of faith, Prayers five times a day. Their rituals include fasting between sunrise and sunset in the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of Lunar year. They are also encouraged Pilgrimage to Mecca or hajj at least once in lifetime, if possible and payment of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of income as alms.

After Prophet, Islam continued to expand in various parts of the world. Between eighth and fifteenth centuries, a united Muslim Empire spread in North Africa, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Southern Spain and western Arabia.

During the period of around tenth century, Islamist people were among the traders in south East Asia, and few of them travelled to middle east for study. During that early period, significant trade was passing from Yemen and the Swahilli coast to Malabar and Bay of Bengal. Muslims traders from china were settled in coastal towns on the Chinese coast and these Muslims of china eventually developed links with other nearby communities from central Vietnam, Borneo, the southern Philippines and the Javanese coast. Even Muslim traders from different parts of India have spread the idea of Islam. Traders from the part of Bengal, Gujarat and Malabar were among the traders from India.. The Muslims teachings were very appealing such as Sufism by using techniques like meditation and trance that provide direct contact to Allah.

In 1292, the first confirmed Muslim traveller, stopped in Sumatra. In trade routes, along with coastal area, Inscriptions and graves with Muslims dates are also found. In 1430 the ruler of Maleka situated in west coast of Malay peninsula adopted Islam. The language of this region is Malay language. This area was considered as key trade centre at that time. Since, Malay was simple language and this language was easy to understand, the people along that trade route linked the Islam to the world. Muslim teachers therefore used common language to teach. Arabic words are also incorporated into Malay particularly related to social practice, Political life and spiritual beliefs.

Over time Islamic teachings were adopted by many people. Local heroes became Islamic, and their graves were placed for worship. Muslims were mostly recognised by their dress style. Muslims lived in Urban centres had a better access to education. The era of reform gained in the early nineteenth century. A group called Wahhabis captured Mecca. They were the people who wanted stricter adoption of Islamic laws. Many people of south East Asia were attracted towards Wahhabis.

Slowly, a concept of modernist Islamic thinking, started developing in Egypt. Educated Muslims of south East Asia were thinking about reforming Islam as a way to answer western challenges. Muslim Reformist often had a controversy with those that followed older pre-Islamic customs.

At that time when colonization started, Mostly Europeans colonized all Southeast Asia except for Thailand. Malaya, Burma, Singapore, and western Borneo were under the British. The Dutch claimed the Indonesian archipelago; Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam were French colonies. East Timor belonged to Portugal; and the Spanish, and later the Americans, controlled the Philippines.

After world war second, when these countries got freedom, the politically active Muslims were interested that Islam should be adopted by these states. These countries have Muslim population in minority in the present time. In Malaysia, Muslims are around 60 percent of the population and there must be significant adjustments with the largest non-Muslim group. (international.scu.edu)

## **Culture Diversity in South Asia- India and Beyond:**

South Asian culture is characterised by linguistic, cultural, and geographical diversity. Countries in South Asia, like India, are home to a diverse array of cultures and religions.

The Himalayan Mountains formed India into a subcontinent around 50 million years ago. From the earliest civilizations to the present day, India's rich cultural variety has served as a rock-solid foundation for South Asian culture. Many features of south Asian civilizations were seen throughout the epochs from the time of the Indus Valley Civilization to the present day, according to archaeological evidence. South Indian culture has a long history of sophisticated bath houses and sanitation systems. Evidence of South Asian religious heritage may be seen in the statues of God Shiva.

### **Hinduism and Buddhism**

Development of Hinduism and Buddhism has played a significant role in the development of south Asian culture. These two religions are not only important from spiritual point of view but these are part of social, political and cultural life of the people.



Buddhist temple in Nalanda.

### **Source- Google Images:**

Development of caste system have Major influence on Hinduism in the south Asia . The caste system was very much incorporated into Hindu traditions and it was describing social status of the people. Later on Buddhism emerged against fighting injustice created by caste system. Buddhism was a response to the complex issues of survival and answer to mysterious questions that surround human experience.

### **Growth era of Civilization:**

Pyramids, “Mummies and Golden tombs of Egypt and Mesopotamia depict different phases of early civilisation. Egypt and Mesopotamia were not the only “early civilizations.” as per one of the discovery of 1920. In the vast Indus River plains (Present Pakistan and western India), under layers of land and mounds of dirt, archaeologists discovered the remains of a 4,600 year-old city. A flourishing, urban civilization had existed at the same time as Egyptian and Mesopotamian states approx. area twice each of their sizes”. (brewminate.com)

The Indus Valley people were already quite distinct from other civilizations, even before they constructed any tombs, mummies, or monuments. People in the Indus Valley were being pragmatic in their support of the secular, ordinary people. This website is called BrewMinate.

The members of the culture practiced stratification based on beliefs in an afterlife. While other civilizations were focusing on the wealthy, the supernatural, and the afterlife, the ancient Maya thought that resources were better circulated among the living rather than displayed or buried. The people of the Indus Valley seem

to have lived in relative tranquilly. Little weaponry and no sign of an army have been uncovered, according to the evidence. No evidence of violence have been found in the excavated human bones or in the remnants of the buildings. Thus, it is safe to say that the Indus Valley people aspired to and achieved peace.

The Indus Valley Civilization made significant contributions with the two ancient towns of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, which are situated in modern-day Pakistan. Another name for this culture is the Harappan Civilization. While searching for Harappan artefacts, several seals were found. The first item ever found at Harappa was a one-of-a-kind stone seal with an inscription and a unicorn engraved onto it. Since then, identical seals with various animal emblems and inscriptions have been discovered all throughout the area. Evidence implies they belonged to the same linguistic system, even if the writing has not been decoded yet.

The Indus Civilization's breathtaking architectural treasures were unearthed in the valley. These artefacts demonstrate that the Harappan civilization had an advanced knowledge of sanitation and was well structured. It is clear that cleanliness was of paramount significance throughout the Harappan civilization. Water for everyone's baths came from nearby wells and was installed in every city dweller's masonry residence. Wastewater and sewage were channelled away from residential areas by the city's intricate drainage system. The networks extended to even the most modest homes on the outskirts of the towns. In order to avoid seasonal floods and contaminated waters, massive platforms and higher lands were constructed. Streets could not have been built upon these platforms. These cities' streets were well-kept, with a pattern of straight lines and correct angles. The uniform size and use of bricks to construct all of the structures further added to their picturesque. The cities were remarkable and are considered as a masterpiece of that time. People of that time were religious. Wells of these cities have pictures of goddesses made by clay, which was great evidence that Harappan people followed god. Kids toys and games were also found, which shows that people at that time liked to play games. Many other articles like pottery, textiles and beads were also found which shows that people had skills and craftsmanship and trade also flourished at that time.

The foremost reasons that the Indus valley civilisation flourished is the trade, skills and their good planning. But eventually, in around 1900 BCE this civilization came to an end. Slowly their Prosperity disappeared.

It is believed that the reason behind the end of Harapan civilisation was the invasion of Aryans from the north. Aryan came from Ganges valley after the end of this Indus valley civilisation, so the belief that Aryans are one of the reasons for the end of Indus valley civilisation.

### **Caste System:**

Hindus believe that the four-headed god Brahma created the cosmos and adore him as a result. The ancient scripture Rigveda put this out. The heavenly embodiment of four groupings is Brahma. From his lips came priests and instructors, from his arms came kings and fighters, from his thighs came merchants and traders, and from his feet came labourers and peasants, according to popular belief.

It is founded on the idea that all living creatures inherit a certain set of attributes, as many philosophers have stated. Wisdom, intellect, pride, and passion are inherited qualities, however less fortunate aspects are inherited as well. Those who believe in this philosophy say that one's way of life is responsible for everything. Social rank, employment, and even food are the major tenets of the caste system.

A different school of thought proposed that the invaders of south Asia were really Aryans coming from central Asia. A population control mechanism known as the caste system has been instituted. Prior to allocating populations to specific jobs, the Aryans established social roles. Without the ability to move up or out of their social class, people remained where they were born, worked, married, dined, and died. According to this school of thought, European languages and civilizations were inherently better since they were the first to emerge. Various views contend that the Aryans did not construct the caste system. In the opinion of the majority of academics, the Aryan invasion from the north did not occur. Some even go so far as to say

that the Aryans, if they were real, would have come from South Asia and then migrated to Europe. Everyone agrees that the Aryans did not originate the caste system in South Asia on their own, regardless of their identity or homeland. This website is called BrewMinate.

As a result, the actual beginnings of South Asia's caste system remain a mystery. One thing is known, though: the caste system in South Asia predates recorded history by many millennia, and it remained mostly unchanged until the middle of the twentieth century. This website is called BrewMinate.

The term "varnas" was used to describe several types of jobs in ancient India. Within the varnas, there was a system of hereditary vocational groupings called jatis. There is a racist society, according to many scholars, since there are social groupings and laws that forbid intermarriage among the groups. This, however, is not the case. The term "varnas" refers more to social stratification than race. The four varna were established to classify people according to their vocation and economic status. The Brahmin caste was known for its spiritual leaders and instructors. Nobility and warriors were referred to as Kshatriyas. Vaishyas were the name given to merchants and manufacturers. Sudras were the workers' names. This website is called BrewMinate.

A fifth caste exists in Hinduism, and that is the untouchables, who are said to have done all the nasty labour. These individuals were responsible for the dreadful activities linked to illness and contamination, such as handling sewage, cleaning up after funerals, and dealing with animal skin. It was believed that the untouchable caste exemplified impurity, whereas the Brahmin caste represented cleanliness. There was a strict no-touch policy between the two sets of participants. Because of how strictly they followed this regulation, Brahmins felt compelled to wash if they were even slightly touched by an untouchable. (<http://www.coursehero.com/>)

The Hindu faith is built on certain significant concepts, and it is the oldest religion in Asia. It is necessary to comprehend the foundational ideas of this religion before delving into its details. Their ancestry may be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization, an advanced culture that thrived from 4000 to 1500 B.C., according to archaeological findings. This civilization's inhabitants were forcibly removed. They found new neighbours in the northwest region of India and relocated there. Some time later, they crossed paths with a population from central Asia who had brought Vedic religion and martial principles with them.

Many contemporary Hindu artefacts not found in any Vedic culture have been unearthed by archaeologists in the Indus Valley civilization's old ruins. God and goddess statues and amulets, enormous swimming tanks for the temple, and figures of yoga asanas are all part of this collection.

Hinduism is based on a synthesis of the gods and beliefs of the Vedas with those of the Indus Valley. The beliefs of the indigenous Indians and the Vedic ideas of the immigrants from central Asia apparently blended together when they arrived in India. There is one religion and several ways in Hinduism. There are many other faiths, but this one is unique.

Despite the fact that Hinduism does not have a single creator. It is thought of as a way of life. Nothing is defined as the beginning or the conclusion of the world's religions, and there is no canonical text that contains all of the laws and truths of the faith. It is a synthesis of beliefs, values, and ways of being in one's spiritual life. Behaviours, not ideas, are the defining characteristics.

Hindu philosophy holds that all faiths provide different interpretations of the same divine truth. This is why Hinduism gives people a lot of leeway—and especially encourages it—to follow a religious path that speaks to their unique set of intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual requirements.

Hinduism has many different kinds of followers. There are certain rituals that each devotee observes. Some Hindus may choose to worship prominent gods like Vishnu and Shiva in a huge public temple, while others may choose to worship lesser-known deities in a personal shrine. When they respect one other's decisions,

however, they are both good Hindus. Hinduism places a high value on the Vedas and the Upanishads. Sacred prophets and seers heard and recorded the timeless truths in the Vedas. This website is called Course Hero.

Time and life, according to the Vedas, are cyclical. Common belief is that following physical death, the soul enters a new type of rebirth called reincarnation.

The endless cycle of reincarnation is known as samsara. The quality of a new birth is governed by something called karma. The cumulative effect of one's deeds in past lifetimes, or karma, may have positive or negative outcomes. Dharma, or righteous and moral behaviour, is the way to positive karma. This website is called Course Hero.

The Upanishads are a collection of sacred texts that arose between 600 and 800 years after the Vedas and primarily address the topic of liberation from the cycle of reincarnation. A liberation and final enlightenment called moksha is described in the Upanishads as a means to escape Samsara.

### **Emergence of Buddhism:**

Vishnu and Shiva became the deities most widely worshipped throughout the Vedantic Period (800–400 B.C.E.). After it, new religions like Jainism and Buddhism began to grow in India.

In defining humanity's role in the cosmos, Siddhartha Gautam, founder of Buddhism, questioned some of the Vedic ideas. This new religion's sceptical stance inspired a little uprising in South Asia in the 6th century. The Vaishyas were vocal in their opposition to the Brahmins' hegemony and the unfairness of the Hindu caste system.

Animal sacrifices and other corrupt Vedic rites were conducted by many Brahmin priests, leading to animosity against these practices. New ideologies and academic teachings emerged in response to the persistent outrage about unequal social authority. The founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha, cast doubt on several aspects of Vedic religion.

Siddhartha, a prince, came into this world in the Himalayan foothills in 563 B.C.E. He had a life of ease and plenty as a royal. Siddhartha abruptly left his kingdom at the age of 29 in search of meaning in his life.

His worldly existence quickly became unsatisfactory after seeing poverty, sorrow, and sickness. He gave it all up because he was so overwhelmed by the feelings brought on by his ordeal outside the castle. Abandoning his most fundamental desires was the first step in his quest for enlightenment. He endured a time of hunger as he embarked on his journey. When he was younger, he was so skinny that he could feel his hands resting on his stomach and small of back. At last, he had an epiphany as a result of all these times of cutting himself off.

The need to seek an other route became apparent to Gautama later on. He made up his mind to live somewhere in the middle, between his affluent and poor lives.

Seated under a pipal tree, Gautam engaged in profound meditation. He hoped to achieve enlightenment by focusing intently. All temptations from this world were repelled by Siddhartha. After forty days of meditation, he attained nirvana, the pinnacle of spiritual achievement. He broke out of the cycle of pain after fully comprehending his past existence. He became known as the Buddha after achieving enlightenment.

For decades, Buddha traversed northeastern India, teaching his teachings to anybody who would listen, regardless of gender or caste. In order to encourage people to choose the middle path, he recounted his own experiences. He was so persuasive that even the highest-ranking Brahmins and nobles decided to join him.



The Buddha passed away in 483 B.C.E., after having spent 45 years on the road preaching. “Strive on with awareness.” Those were the four words that he left behind, a message of encouragement. Those who follow him always do this.

After achieving nirvana, the cessation of all suffering and the realisation of one’s own divinity, Gautam Buddha left this world. Bhikkus, or communities of monks and nuns, formed along the paths that Buddha took to disseminate his teachings.

They strolled the countryside in solitary meditation, often clad in bright yellow robes. For about two centuries, the mainstream Hindu believers eclipsed these modest adherents.

The suffering and death he saw during one of his conquests in the third century B.C.E. inspired Mauryan ruler Ashoka to become a Buddhist. During the period, several aggressive rulers expanded their domains via brutal conflicts while constructing the vast Mauryan Empire. Ashoka embraced a philosophy of nonviolence, forwent all forms of violence, and integrated Buddhist teachings into his governing methods.

Buddhist expansion was advocated by King Ashoka. To disseminate the Buddha’s teachings to neighbouring regions, he sent monks. This tidal wave was essential in the global growth of Buddhism, since it extended beyond India. Most adherents of the Middle Path of Buddhism lived in countries like Japan, central Asia, Ceylon, Burma, Nepal, Tibet, and Burma. Approximately 350 million people throughout the globe practise Buddhism at this same moment.

### **Recent trends in South Asian Region:**

At present, South Asian region is undergoing noticeable changes on many fronts. There is a vast transition in demographic part. Population growth, newer trends; everything is changing. Malaysia and Philippines are the countries having young population where as Singapore and Thailand are aging faster. It is the cheap and plentiful labour force which helps to develop industrialisation in this region. As per data, population in this region will expand from 49 percent to 56 percent by 2030. Urbanisation in this region is increasing day by day. Around 80 million workers are considered productive. Their earnings are higher in a dynamic urban setting. Companies are selling a wide variety of goods and services, providing workers good and lucrative opportunities.

The demographic shifts have also led to the technological developments. Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, innovations in the area of 3-D printing and new composite materials are the developments led to shift towards new avenues. This has led to reduced labour intensive techniques and creating new opportunities also. There are B to B businesses which are creating new opportunities for environment. For example development of aircraft industry not only helps their subsidiary industries which are producing raw material and supplementary products but also leads to develop tourism industry. There is another emerging area in Renewable energy, which could help to achieve sustainable development goals and also reduce reliance on fossil fuels and enhance energy security. Therapies and advancement in the area of medical science, have not only helped to eradicate a plethora of diseases but have also raised life expectancy and quality of life. Apart from all this, countries of south Asian region are currently moving towards globalisation, free trades and regional integration.

Different Association like SAARC, ASEAN are formed for regional integration of these countries. SAARC is an economic and political regional organisation, whose aim is to accelerate the process of economic and social developments. The aim of this association is to improve quality of life of the people of South Asian countries and work for economic growth and progress of these nations. It is also working for strengthening corporation with other developing nations. Similarly there is another platform ASEM, which is a unique association of ASIA and Europe working to handle big challenges like climate change, trade investment etc.

### **Conclusion:**

Economic integration comes in several forms in the South Asian area. However, they take on many forms and shapes according to their levels and objectives. It is anticipated that higher-level international projects with a “whole-of-the-globe” scope will have a more difficult time materialising. But initiatives for more localised integration, such as subregional economic partnerships or cross-border commerce, will most certainly grow. The ASEAN Economic Community 2025 plan is only one example of the integration initiatives now under development by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In order to improve the flow of commodities, services, money, data, and people, this distinctively Southeast Asian method of integration establishes long-term objectives and gives nations leeway to achieve them.

Many other forms of integration find their presence in the South Asian region. A typical example is the Greater Mekong Sub-Region, where the northern ASEAN countries have worked together for more than 20 years to increase integration. Improvement in transportation and refinement in trade and labour laws are some of the positive consequences of the integration in this region. Cross-border trade between Thailand and its neighbours has indulged in cross-border trade for quite a long time, which has served as a catalyst for the transformation of small towns into developed hubs. The efforts for integration adopted in Southeast Asia can be adopted as role models by other emerging market economies. This is important because, as it can be seen from the experience of the past two decades of globalisation, countries having gone through such integration have had greater incentives to reform and enhance their competitiveness. (<http://www.imf.org/>)

It is anticipated that South Asia's connection with the global economy would persist and expand rapidly. Still, there are two obstacles that will remain as a result of continued exposure to global financial markets and systems. The first is that crises, shocks, and periods of extreme stress are happening more often in the financial markets. Emerging market economies in Southeast Asia and other regions will still be affected by big and unpredictable capital flows, even if the global financial system has been strengthened by certain post-crisis changes. Unpredictable swings in regional currencies pose a constant threat to the whole spectrum of integration since they may lead to confusion and complications for businesses. The problems are worsened by the fact that certain countries have complicated monetary policies. On the other hand, there are instances when capital flows are much more unstable, leading to fear in the bond, currency, and stock markets and having negative effects on economic development and stability.

Second, when the country's huge savings account is opened up and transferred out of China, the country will solidify its position as a major player in international finance. In addition to Belt & Road, China has established a number of projects and financial organisations that will play significant roles in the international monetary system, including the New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

#### **Building resilience:**

Putting aside the above, one encouraging aspect is that several South Asian nations have shown a commendable ability to adapt to changing circumstances. And that is exactly what will likely happen along the road as well.

Southeast Asia must develop resilience, defined as the ability to recover quickly from adversity, if it is to meet the challenges and uncertainties of the future. In addition to seizing chances, both apparent and hidden, it is critical to have a flexible mindset. Ahead of us are longer-term threats, including climate change and technological upheaval, which must be carefully navigated. Resilience in this area has grown since the regional crisis of 1997, which is a positive development. Companies, consumers, financial institutions, and the government all have healthier balance sheets, and economies are more diversified and governments have more flexible exchange rate regimes. Financial systems are also less likely to have crises since banks, for example, are better capitalised. The region's growth and resilience in the face of recent market shocks and extreme swings—including the global financial crisis, several crises within the Euro area, and the precipitous drop in commodity prices—serve as evidence. (<http://www.imf.org/>)

In the coming time china and India are emerging as major world powers to establish global ranking. These two powers of south Asia are growing and will definitely change the Global scenario and influence on the world. After India Economic policy 1991.on f LPG that is Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation, India is also playing a significant role in the development of this region. The Government has promoted bilateral and multilateral initiatives to provide better infrastructure and to develop regional trades. India's policy since 1991with the focus on trade and connectivity has improved regional cooperation in south Asia.

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