Regional cooperation has become increasingly salient issue in contemporary international politics. Regional cooperation was seen as an effective way of achieving peace, security and development in Europe after World War II. The end of the Cold War, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the rise of new economic powers in Europe and Asia, created conditions for more autonomous regional spheres to emerge.

Regional cooperation in developing states does not necessarily aim at political and economic integration but rather at the effective functioning of an intergovernmental association with specific purposes. Regional cooperation essentially comes under the framework of collective self reliance through economic, technical cooperation as well as indigenous conflict management. Regional cooperation is an endeavour to attain a better position in an international system which continues to be inequitably structure. Regional cooperation can be either functional, stressing, social or cultural sectors, or be security oriented and address political and perhaps military issues or both.

While rest of the world witnessed a remarkable growth of regional organizations South Asia with a sizeable chunk of land area and about one fifth of the global population remained aloof from such developments. The states of South Asia were all the time entangled with either the problems of internal political stability or the disputes with their neighbours. The South Asian states inherited poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment as well as political instability from their former colonial masters. Naturally, removal of poverty
and achieving social and economic development occupied a peace of priority in these states. They had started looking up to the developed countries of the west to assist them in achieving their national goals. In the process the potential of regional cooperation has suffered a neglect.

But with the time it had been realized by the South Asian nations that they are homogenous as far as their racial, social, cultural and ethnic homogeneity and women historical background is concerned. They had all the necessary conditions for the growth and success of a regional organization.

It was in early 1980’s when seed of regional organization was sown by the then Bangladesh President Zia-ur-Rehman. SAARC was formally launched in December 1985 at Dhaka Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the States of South Asia. The SAARC is an unique example of regional cooperation. It is non-western, non-militaristic and non ideological. The prime objective of the SAARC is to promote the welfare of the people of South Asia and to improve their quality of life by bringing economic growth, social progress and cultural development.

However from the very beginning of SAARC faced a problematic and sceptic political environment. It has witnessed a lot of hurdles in its short existence. Sometimes the bilateral issues between the SAARC countries, sometimes the big size of India and sometimes big powers like USA and China’s interference in South Asia all hampered its smooth going.

The present study deals with the regional cooperation in South Asia and with that the study of SAARC, its origin, development and challenges it faces etc.
The first chapter is an introductory chapter. It deals with the international political arena after the World War II, also includes the conditions of the Third World Countries specially in South Asia, Superpower interest in South Asia, evolution of SAARC and its objectives and aims.

The second chapter is a description of the SAARC’s body and structure. It includes SAARC Summits, SAARC’s Charter, SAARC’s functionary bodies etc.

The third chapter deals with the inter-state and intra-state conflicts in South Asian region. It reveals those reasons which were responsible for the arisen of these conflicts.

The fourth chapter is an attempt to find out the relation between India and SAARC. It reveals why India is a dominant actor in South Asia and what kind of relationship does it shares with other South Asian nations, It also deals with India's role in the well functioning of SAARC and other members response to SAARC cooperation.

The fifth chapter deals with the SAARC’s comparison with other regional organizations specially ASEAN and EU. The last chapter is conclusion in which maiden efforts have been made to shed light on some findings and suggestion too for successful SAARC.