Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Regional cooperation and regional security have become increasingly salient issues in contemporary international politics. Regional cooperation was seen as an effective way of achieving peace, security and development in Europe after World War II. There was a strong academic interest in regional studies in the 1960s and early 1970s especially in America as reflected in the abundant literature on the topic published during this period. Interests declined in the latter part of the 1970s, though in actual practice regional associations have increased in number since then. The Cold War period by perpetuating the balance of terror kept the focus on the international level to the forefront.

The end of the Cold War has led to a reduction in global tensions and ideological strife. The ideological reason for interference in other parts of the world is lost. Superpower withdrawal could also help in diffusing local conflicts and give more freedom to work for peace. So, the disintegration of the USSR, and the rise of new economic powers in Europe and Asia created conditions for more autonomous regional spheres to emerge. Though great powers will continue to influence regions of their interest, security issues are more likely to stay regional. Thus, what we may be witnessing is the rise of many new ‘regional orders’ rather than a new ‘world order’.

Much is said about global interdependence but regional interdependence of the cultural, economic, political or military kind is equally significant. Local sources of regional conflicts including ethnic rivalries and long standing territorial
disputes are further complicated by intervention, direct or through proxies by the major powers, due to the larger struggle for international power.

The process of regional cooperation has assumed a new significance in today’s interdependent world. Changes in military technology, especially the development of nuclear weapons and missiles, has undermined the physical defensibility of all states. The dynamics of technology have also led to a shortening of social, economic, geographical and political distances and the greater movement of people, ideas and information. Thus, modern technology and expanding economies have made states interdependent and have forced them to take a broader view of their individual political and economic interests. Moreover, states today face many problems such as transnational organized crime, including terrorism and drug trafficking, that need coordinated multinational effort if they are to be overcome.

A regional approach can not only promote beneficial cooperation in diverse fields of activity but also provide an institutional framework for peaceful resolution of conflicts among member countries. A regional approach is also seen as an effective way of binding a regional predominant power to regional welfare and the process of regional security. Thus security and regional cooperation have become closely linked and mutually reinforcing. Politically, the purpose of regional cooperation is to develop a sense of common interest necessary to successfully thwart external intervention. It can create an atmosphere of goodwill and trust among regional states making war an unlikely mechanism in future conflicts. Moreover, stability inside a region allows member states to concentrate more energy and resources on governance and developmental tasks.
On the economic front, regional cooperation in matters of common exploitation of resources, and enlarging markets could lead to higher rates of economic growth. At the environmental level too, a regional integrated arrangement provides better opportunities to collectively deal with transborder effects of greenhouse gases, air and water pollution, flood control, and deforestation as well as enable better management of river basins.

Shared approaches to resolving these problems would surely reinforce patterns of political cooperation within the region, while interdependence and interaction in economic and environmental matters could also help stabilize political relations. With shared stakes in maintaining political stability at both national and regional levels the regional security scenario will improve. Regional cooperation does not give an immediate answer to all problems but the long-term costs of lack of cooperation are much higher. One conspicuous example is the high resource and developmental cost of maintaining military forces in regions lacking cooperative institutions and experiencing conflicts.

Some post World War II regional cooperation efforts are mentioned below: The West European case is the oldest and most highly developed instance of institutionalized regional integration, starting with the integration of the coal and steel industries among six countries in 1953 to European Union of 15 states with the introduction of a single currency in year 2000. Europe has certainly come a long way since the catastrophic World War. The Organization of African Unity since its inception in 1963 might not be able to resolve all regional conflicts, but it certainly played a vital role in bringing about reconciliation between Tanzania and Uganda. OAU was also part of programme of return of Refugees to Rwanda based on Anusha Peace Agreement of 1993. In the Congo, the OAU’s special
representative was involved in signing of the Libreville Accord between the Presidential coalition of parties and the Opposition. The Association of Southeast Asian States was formed in 1967. The process since then is said to have brought ASEAN to the brink of what Karl Deutsch called a ‘pluralist security community’ where no nation seriously considers war as an instrument of policy against another community member. The Latin American Free Trade Association formed in 1968 was marred by dissatisfaction over the distribution of benefits among members. The South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) came into existence in 1985. Though, this Association has not progressed up to the desired level due to mutual distrust of the two largest member-states, one cannot negate its contribution to regional security however small it may be. The North American Free Trade Arrangement is seen as an example of a free trade agreement involving partners of vastly different levels of development -- the US, Canada and Mexico where military conflict is definitely precluded.

REGIONAL COOPERATION AND SECURITY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

The Concepts of Region and Regionalism

Views differ regarding the most important factors that must pre-exist before a tract of territory can be called a region. Regions could be delimited on the basis of geographical proximity, common ethnic, linguistic, social, religious customs and similarity of threat perceptions. In short, the people of a region have more in common with each other than with any other part of the world. The term ‘regionalism’ is employed to denote an idea of collective action at the regional level. Integration, unification, conflict management, cooperation at the regional level are all
effects of regional collective action. Several approaches have deeply affected regional integration in the past years – for Federalists, political integration meant the creation of federal institutions; for Neo-Functionalists, it meant supranational dealings on increasingly important and controversial tasks which nations are unable to cope with today; for Transactionalists, it refers to the probability that conflicts will be resolved without violence. However, most of the literature developed on regional integration in international relations is best suited to the developed states. The model of regional cooperation for the developing states has to be different due to the under-developed structure with prevailing economic imbalances and lack of internal cohesion in these states which is quite unlike that of the developed states.

Classical liberal economic theory assumed that the states involved in any sort of cooperative endeavour would have substantial trade among themselves. However, in developing countries usually the economic relations are competitive rather than complementary. Their trade relations are more with the developed nations rather than among themselves. Most of these states are former colonies whose economies are fashioned in such a way as to meet the requirements for the colonial power till independence. These economic relationships continued even after independence.

Regional cooperation in developing states does not necessarily aim at political or economic integration but rather the effective functioning of an intergovernmental association with specific purposes. Here, 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 effort at trying to have a better position in an international system which continues to be unfavourably structured. Regional
cooperation can be either functional, stressing piecemeal and non-political cooperation in the economic, social or cultural sectors, or be security oriented and address political and perhaps military issues. As the EU exemplifies, regional cooperation can ultimately embrace both.

**Concepts of Security and Regional Security**

Realists have long dominated security studies, taking the states as the exclusive unit of analysis facing military threats from outside its borders. Systems theorists viewed various segments of the international system as linked and argued that the security of part of the system is intertwined with that of the whole. But the essential thrust of the security concept remained externally oriented. The Cold War, by perpetuating the balance of terror, succeeded in stressing the Western strategic definition of security. The concept of alliances for security purposes kept the external notion of security intact. Moreover, the security of the international system as a whole revolves around the European industrial states and North America.

With the technological, communication and information revolutions, rise of non-state actors, and new issue areas like the environment, all of which blurred the distinction between 'high' and 'low' politics and domestic and foreign policy issues called into question the relevance of the state-centric paradigm and the external orientation of the security analysis.

Another problem with the realist security view is that it assumed that concepts developed in Europe and America would readily translate into other regional contexts. Most Third World countries suffer from threats emanating from within their borders. The historical experience in the Third World both under
colonial rule and after political decolonization has been very different from that of modern Europe. The boundaries of Third World states have been drawn for administrative convenience during the colonial period showing immense disregard of existing cultural and linguistic heterogeneity. Nation builders had to attempt a transfer of the loyalty from the people from traditional centres of authority to the state. There exists within each state minorities not always willing to accept or identify with the majority rule resulting in social conflict. Developing countries lack what has been called ‘unconditional legitimacy’. In the Weberian concept of legitimacy one component is a common belief in a given political and social order which is usually lacking in these states.

The waning tensions of the Cold War have brought variety of non-military threats to security like economic, environmental, transnational organized crimes including drug trafficking and terrorism to the forefront. Most of these problems are transnational in nature calling for a wider regional approach. This does not mean that non-military threats to security did not exist earlier. They were always there, only they have emerged with greater clarity in the post-Cold War era with the apparent diminution of global superpower conflict. Nor does it mean that military threats have vanished. Military power remains a crucial ingredient of state power, but it alone is no longer enough to protect the security of the state.

New attention is directed towards concepts of comprehensive security. Broadly, security is defined not only in terms of defending a state from its external and internal enemies, but of assuring that the people do not suffer undue hardships, and that conditions are created for their all-round development. It could be argued that including all possible threats to the well-being of the people into definition of security drowns the term of its meaning. But traditional military definitions of
security were too narrow for present-day realities. Hence there is need to evaluate security in a comprehensive framework of military, political, economic, environmental threats at national, regional and international levels.

Regional security means at its best peaceful relations at three different levels: among regional states, within regional states, and with extra-regional states. In addition, regional security goes beyond the military sense to economic growth, environmental sustainability and social development. Regional security is not only an essential intermediary stage between national and international security but has a dimension of its own.

Regional security has both internal and external dimensions. Internally, regional security deals with intra-and inter-state conflicts. The threats emanating from within state boundaries assume far more significance with regard to developing states. The historical experience in the Third World both under colonial rule and after political decolonization has been very different from the modern European nation-state system. These boundaries are drawn by colonial powers with complete disregard for ethnic, religious or cultural heterogeneity resulting in ethnic conflicts. These can spill over and create serious repercussion on the regional security environment. The internal dimension could be externalized with the intervention and subversion from outside.

Regional security can be disturbed by conflicts both among regional states as well as with extra-regional powers. Moreover, the more intimately a major power is committed to supporting regional security of a particular region, the more dependent upon it the regional powers tend to become. However, an external power could also act as a catalyst in promoting the regional security notion among the regional states.
The end of Cold War has changed the international security scenario, however deep rooted structural relations of the North-South gaps still exist. There still exists deep polarization of the world’s population into small areas of relative wealth and much larger areas of relative poverty.

Regional security is concerned with the existence of peaceful relations among regional states, security from extra-regional threats as well as the internal development and growth of regional states. Regional security cannot be comprehended without taking into account the national and international security levels which condition regional security to a significant extent. State conduct is conditioned by the international system as it affects the opportunities available to states. International security is about what happens within regions and between them. Regional stability is vital for intra-state growth and development. Thus, all the three levels of security are interrelated and interdependent.

ASEAN, SAARC AND REGIONAL SECURITY

During the Cold War period, regional security in South East Asia was determined by great power competition, between the US, the former USSR and China. Great power intervention internationalized local conflicts and fuelled regional rivalry. The Cold War directly contributed to the ideological and political polarization of non-communist ASEAN and communist Indochina. Fear of great power rivalry and uncertain security guarantees contributed to the ASEAN notion of regional security based on Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN). Thus, emphasis on regional autonomy and self reliance is an important part of ASEAN’s regional security approach.

Though the regional conflicts like Indochina were settled with end of the Cold War, it created strategic uncertainties. A possible scramble by China and
Japan seeking to step into the vacuum left by departing superpowers has emerged as an issue of concern among ASEAN states. ASEAN also has to work for a new regional security identity embracing all the South East Asian states. The past reluctance of ASEAN states to engage in military security deliberations at the regional level has been shed with the formation of ASEAN Regional Forum which also involves extra regional powers in the ‘security dialogues’ process.

The security scenario in South Asia has also been constantly influenced by the extra-regional powers. Along with the US, and the former USSR, China has also made persistent attempts to shape a favourable regional balance of power for itself by involving itself in South Asian conflicts. Though SAARC does not deal with cooperation in political or military field, nevertheless it has played crucial political role in its own way. Moreover, in the SAARC region, cooperation even in non-controversial issues like environment assumes political significance. Today, nuclear weapons have added another dimension to regional security in South Asia.

On the economic front, the GDP of ASEAN states has risen steadily putting some of the regional states already in the company of the world’s industrial nations in terms of real GDP per capita leading to greater economic security till the recent economic crises in the region, which will be briefly analysed. In South Asia, all states are moving towards economic liberalization. South Asian states can simultaneously increase their attractiveness to foreign investors if they open up their own markets to each other.

The need for energy security is an important dimension of ASEAN security and that has environmental implications. In South Asia too, energy security and the potential of harnessing water resources for power generation, flood prevention,
development of an inland navigation system and afforestation feature in regional discussions.

One of the most significant achievements of the ASEAN is that small and medium member-states together have established considerable bargaining power vis-a-vis big developed nations. The meeting between ASEAN and its dialogue partners consisting of Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand and the US exemplify this capacity.

ASEAN has evolved an engagement strategy to 'manage' an increasingly stronger China in the post Cold War era through a combination of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy. Soon after the Tiananmen Square episode China normalized diplomatic relations with all members of ASEAN. Subsequently, cooperative ventures were undertaken by China and ASEAN, such as the ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Project. For the first time, China agreed to discuss the South China Sea dispute at the Brunei meeting of the ARF and later suggested joint development programmes.

The emergence of APEC and ARF are vital as they highlight the breaking of European monopoly as the world's economic and strategic focal point – one of the factors contributing to this is the success of the ASEAN as a regional organization. SAARC has yet to show this sort of solidarity in extra-regional relationships, and some of the reasons why are explored later.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to analyse the interrelationship between security and regional cooperation in both theory and practice -- through a comparative study of ASEAN and SAARC. Conceptual analyses is vital to this study. The study begins with analyses of the concepts of 'regional cooperation',
'security' and 'regional security' and then focuses on the following: The regional policies adopted by the two Associations are comparatively studied to draw conclusions regarding their contributions to regional security. Intra-regional relationship among the member-states have an impact on the perceptions of individual member-states towards regional policies and regional cooperation endeavours. The intra-regional comparisons are analysed within the broader context of the changing international environment i.e. how the extra-regional factors have influenced the regional security and regional cooperation dynamics of the two regions.

**Why a Comparative Study**

Usually an analysis of regional cooperation has been limited to a case study of a particular region. Although there have been attempts to draw lessons from one region that are applicable to another, not much comparative analysis of regional cooperation has been undertaken specially from the point of view of its role in enhancing 'regional security' broadly conceptualized in the context of South East Asian and South Asian regions. Moreover, most of the published analyses on regional cooperation focused on supranational integration, drawing lessons from the European community. Thus, the level of integration was used as the criterion for judging the success of regional organizations and supranational integration was considered to be the ultimate goal. However, in South and South East Asia the ultimate goal is definitely not supranational integration. Thus, the criteria for measuring success should be different, i.e. the role these Associations have played in enhancing regional economic, environmental security and controlling transnational organized crime.
One of the primary benefits of regional studies itself is its comparative approach. Comparative study provides an opportunity for an analytical study of the existing patterns of roughly similar activity and comparing differences within these similar patterns.

To understand contemporary international politics and the emerging new security scenarios it is vital to understand the politics of regions. Security has been widely examined at both the state level and the level of international system. However, the regional level, comprising the dynamics of security relations among the regional states, has been the least studied. Perhaps this is due to the fact that while systemic and unit levels of analysis are easy to define, regional level poses a problem due to the contestability of the concept of ‘region’ in the literature on international relations.

In this study, we do not treat different regions as identical or each region as unique. Regions differ in their characteristics not in terms of the variables but in the values attached to those variables. The comparative study takes the regional security as the common dependent variable and explores the role of respective regional associations (ASEAN and SAARC) in enhancing regional security in South East Asia and South Asia. The study will further look at national, intra-regional, and extra-regional factors in the two regions which encourage or inhibit regional associations furthering regional security.

Such an exercise in understanding and developing a framework of interrelationship between regional cooperation and regional security based on regional specificities as well as commonalities of the two regions can lead to better knowledge about particular regions, their regional security scenarios,
respective regional cooperation efforts, as well as the general process of interrelationship between regional cooperation and security.

**Reasons for a Comparative Study on ASEAN and SAARC**

We take ASEAN and SAARC for our comparative study as both are similar in a number of characteristics, but differ in other aspects that are considered important in the dynamics of regional security and the process of regional cooperation. A comparative study of ASEAN and SAARC’s role in building and strengthening regional security is additionally illuminating because both encompass regions belonging to the ‘developing world’. However, ASEAN has made greater progress towards building regional security in terms of conflict management. In South East Asia disputes have not completely vanished, but fall short of jeopardizing regional peace. This sense of regional security is not evident yet in the SAARC region.

States in both South East Asia and South Asia area are drawn into mutual relationship by geographical proximity, shared problems and mutual hostility. Both regions face nation-building problems complicated by the fact that despite their ancient civilization, most of these present-day states are the artifacts of the colonial period with weak states institutions. Their national identities are subverted often by subnational or transnational identities. People of the same linguistic and religious group find themselves divided among several neighbouring states. This creates a peculiar security problem, with every state fearing subversion by its own neighbour. South East Asian states have not let these problems hinder the growth of regional cooperation, though Indochina was excluded at the time of
the formation of ASEAN. But cooperative efforts reduce the vulnerability to these disintegrative forces. SAARC is yet to tackle similar problems cooperatively.

Most developing countries being producers of primary products, tend to export similar items and thus compete with each other. Thus, very little intra-regional trade takes place as their individual trade relations with metropolitan states are stronger. Nevertheless, specific trade complementarities can be created in order to foster greater intra-regional cooperation. Though the ASEAN states took a long time in developing close economic relationships with each other, today they are moving towards this goal. What is needed is a political will to do it.

Research Questions

1. What are the threats to regional security in South East Asia and South Asia?

2. What models of regional cooperation have ASEAN and SAARC adopted? How different have been the forms of regional cooperation for the achievement of regional security in the developing countries from Western models of regional integration?

3. In what ways have the regional associations, ASEAN and SAARC, contributed to regional security as broadly defined in South East Asia and South Asia respectively?

4. How vital were the members’ common perceptions in political and security affairs for the success of regional associations?

5. How did intra-regional and extra-regional security environment affect cooperative efforts in ASEAN and SAARC?
Chapterization

Following the first chapter, “Introduction”, the second chapter “Theoretical Aspects of Region and Regionalism” examines the concept of region based on geographical, cultural, historical and other factors. Various approaches to the concept of ‘regionalism’ are also analysed, such as federalism, functionalism, neofunctionalism, transactionalism and consociationalism are examined in some detail. Different types of regional integration – economic, political and social are discussed.

The third chapter “Theoretical Aspects of Security and Regional Security” analyses the concept of security in military-strategic as well as non-military terms, these include economic, environmental, transnational organized crime and threats to nation building. External and internal dimensions of regional security are discussed.

Delineating South Asia and South East Asia from the point of view of Regional Security Complex, the fourth chapter “The Creation and Early Evolution of ASEAN and SAARC” analyses diverse motivations leading to the formation of ASEAN and SAARC and the aims and objectives of these regional associations. It also describes the organizational structure of the two organizations and their evolution through the decades in comparative perspective.

Chapters five and six concentrate on the roles of ASEAN and SAARC in dealing with non-military regional security issues in South East and South Asian regions respectively. The fifth chapter “ASEAN and SAARC Approaches to Non-Military Issues: Economic Dimension of Regional Security” analyses the role of the two respective associations in the economic direction. ASEAN Preferential Trading Arrangement; SAARC Preferential Trading Agreement; ASEAN Free Trade
Area; South Asian Free Trade Area; the concept of Natural Economic Territories and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) are dealt with in this chapter.

The sixth chapter, "ASEAN and SAARC Approaches to Non-military Issues: Environmental and Transnational Organized Crime Aspects of Regional Security" analyses the environmental issues like deforestation, water and river sharing, transboundary haze in the two regions and the actions taken by the two respective associations in this direction. In the area of transnational organized crime-issues of drug trafficking and terrorism are examined in detail.

The seventh chapter "ASEAN and SAARC Approaches to Regional Security: The Political and Military Dimension" analyses ASEAN's evolution into a security-diplomatic community over the years; divergent threat perceptions among SAARC's members have prevented them from moving in the same direction though. Further, the chapter discusses ASEAN's concepts of ZOPFAN; how it dealt with the Indochina crisis; policy of constructive engagement towards China; ASEAN Regional Forum; ASEAN's concept of South East Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ); the question of nuclear security in South Asia; bilateral military cooperation; and the role of Non-Governmental Organizations.

In the concluding chapter inferences are drawn on the basis of observations set out earlier in detail.