The end of the global cold war has resulted in a fluidity in South Asian relations and regional adversaries are trying for areas of convergence. There was a time when except India and Vietnam, the Soviet had no friends in Asia now, we have no Soviets as our friends to fall back on. China has emerged as a major player on the Asian stage with the potential to effect the global balance of power. The geo-strategic location of South Asian sub-continent between the two distinct but, of significance regions of West Asia and South-East Asia, has figured as decisive factors in America's foreign policy calculations. The South Asian region has, consequently been a collateral factor in this regard. After the emergence of cold war, United States tried to design India to contain the communism, but, India not only spurned all US advances, it also acted contrary to United States interest. The military alliances between the America and Pakistan was based on different expectations and aims from the two sides. The America give military aid to Pakistan in the context of its problems of security and defence vis-a-vis India. But, America consider India as the largest of the non-aligned countries. The emergence of 'Uni-polar world with United States as the only surviving super power, posed vital new challenges to our decision makers.

With the rupture of the bipolar system and the emergence of new centres of power, and like any other region in the world, South Asia has started experiencing the realities of a new polycentric world. In the new polycentric world, South Asian countries would be guided by new paradigms and parameters as compared to what we have been used to in the past. South Asia is one such region in which the variable of regional security problems are autonomous and indigenous but the inclination of extra-regional powers for increasing interdependence and
cooperation in various fields would pave the way of stability and socio-economic development, ultimately leading to the peace and tranquillity in the whole region. However, a poly-centre international order would undoubtedly make inter-state relations in this region more complicated, because all the seven nation states of South Asia - India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives are developing countries and are passing through different stages of development and nation-state building.

There is a deep-seated element of contention between the largest but, continental power, India and its smaller neighbours. India is motivated by both its historical impulses and contemporary perceptions to continue its drive for hegemony to maintain peace in the region. As a response, the smaller powers would naturally make efforts to ensure their survival as a sovereign states. While other countries of the region are too weak economically and militarily to stand up to India, Pakistan is the one regional power which has persisted in resisting the Indian drive for hegemony. Notwithstanding the India pressure by itself, Pakistan has had to conduct an active diplomacy, and also entered into an alliance relationship with the west at the height of the cold war, not so much out of a genuine fear of communist expansion, as out of a desire to political and military leverage in the face of Indian threat. Pakistan's fears in this regard are imaginary for strategic analysis in India make no secret of their view that Pakistan constitutes that one obstacle to what they consider to be India's natural and destined rise to the position of paramount power in the region.

Despite the creditable beginning of SAARC and the Indo-Pak commission, it is evident that the enormous difference in size and power between India and the other constituents of South Asia give rise to misgivings among
its neighbours. Pakistan finds it difficult to reconcile itself to India’s pre-eminence in South Asia; its policy makers emphasize that Pakistan can never accept such a situation. Pakistan’s stances to the Indian approach and its overall foreign policy outlook can be seen at two specific levels—that dealing with problems of the region and the other with its relations with the super powers. At the regional level Pakistan considers Simla Agreement to be equivalent to a No War Pact and the problem of Jammu and Kashmir to be a problem of continuing concern which should be solved on the basis of Simla Agreement and the relevant U.N. Resolutions.

India and Pakistan still remain trapped in the nightmare of enmity and tension. The two countries could have settled down to good neighbourly co-existence with commonalities of languages and cultures fostering mutual sympathy, trust and understanding. The important thing is that since 1947, India and Pakistan have not only saddled with bitter and mutually antagonistic postures against each other but have also fought three wars. Among the disputes and major issues that have incessantly aggravated their security concerns are the bitter legacy of the past, Kashmir dispute along with linked issues of Siachin, Wullur Lake Barrage, communalism and the ethnic disturbances, intermittent domestic problems the indulgence of extra-regional powers, nuclear question and the terrorist activities. Pakistani leaders every now and then harp on the Kashmir issue; The internal policy of Pakistan demands that this issue be kept alive. No party or government, civil or military can afford to forget Kashmir at this stage in the evolution of Pakistan. Pakistan consider Kashmir 'A cap on the head' while India needs it from the strategic point of view.
USA and the European Economic Community have urged both India and Pakistan to resolve their outstanding problems bilaterally within the framework of the Simla Agreement. China, another important actor in the polycentric world order, wants that both India and Pakistan should find a "just solution" to Kashmir dispute through bilateral peaceful negotiations. As regards India's ties with Pakistan, though the two countries have been able to initiate an agreement on the non-attack of each others nuclear and other key installations, the bilateral relations have generally suffered because of the growing help to terrorist. Some of the pronouncements of Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sherif that his government would continue to support terrorist activities in Kashmir and Punjab have contributed to a deterrioration of Indo-Pak relations.

Another major factor aggravating Indo-Pak security concern is the nuclear issue. With China being a nuclear power and Pakistan crossing the nuclear threshold, India has not closed its nuclear option. Public evidence indicates that both states are within easy reach of nuclear device. Indeed the present ambiguous situation seems to suit the interests and pocket books of both countries. A Pakistani bomb would mean the loss of American financial and military support and would be followed by a much larger Indian programme. An Indian bomb might led to greater prestige in the developing world but, it too would be followed by a Pakistani equalizer and might endanger India's access to western high technology.

While advocating international peace and disarmament, India has sustained a thorny arms race with Pakistan which has created ever higher degree of insecurity for both. At the diplomatic level, it calls for a shift towards political techniques of conflict resolution and confidence building measures. As a matter of fact, India has brought
almost all south Asian nation states except Pakistan within the reach of her informal regional security framework. In the case of Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka, formal treaties, accords and agreements have connected these countries with the regional security framework of India. Most significantly, even through Nepal might have strived to balance China against India in the diplomatic game. Nepal could not, but follow the Indian line on all security issues affecting South Asia in a polycentric world order. India had for more than two decades been persuading Nepal to agree to a common endeavour on water resources development and proceeding with hyde/multipurpose projects on common rivers.

As regards Bhutan, it is worth mentioning that the way in which Bhutan finds accommodation in the security framework of the South Asian sub-system is still marked largely by the strategic perceptions of the past and the China factor. Bhutan agreed, to be guided by the advice of the Government of India with respect to its foreign relations. Like other South Asian nation-states, Bhutan also faces the problems of development and nation-state building. At the same time, the ethnic Nepalese factor in the southern Bhutan constitutes an emerging threat to its internal stability and security.

Turning towards Indo-Sri Lanka scenario, it can be speculated that the strategic and political dimensions of their security framework have been rapidly changing on the basis of emerging patterns of relations between them over the recent years. India's perception of Sri Lanka factor has been compounded by an ensemble of many considerations. There has been, first, the influence of Tamils on the domestic politics of both Colombo as well as New Delhi. Secondly, there has been serious threats to India's security due to the influx of refugees of Sri Lankan Tamil origin as the fall-out of the escalating Sinhala-Tamil
ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka since July, 1983 and evidently, India's approach and direction to the management and resolution of this crisis. There have also been, thirdly, some irritants in the Indo-Sri Lanka relations that related to the political and diplomatic behaviour of Sri Lanka government towards India. Furthermore, geo-political and geo-strategic and responses to Sri Lanka turmoil.

As regards Bangladesh, it can be stressed that its major security concerns are the product of its domestic vulnerabilities, the challenges of nation-building, the tribal sub-nationalism in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the environmental challenges, the high population growth rate and its divergent perception and position on the issues of mutual interest vis-a-vis India. A section of the public opinion in Bangladesh, including the government circle itself, subscribes to the view that the Indian factor overshadows the rest of external threats to the security of Bangladesh. Negotiations on eastern water settlement and the transfer of Tin Bigha through the Indo-Bangladesh Agreement of 1974 have been striking examples. As the Supreme Court has decided in favour of the transfer of Tin Bigha to Bangladesh and transfer has taken place, this should be followed to remove the last hurdle in enforcing the 1974 Agreement. This would certainly open fresh avenues of mutual trust and cooperation in other fields.

As regards Maldives, it can be visualised that for all practical purposes, its political stability and interests be protected and promoted within the framework of the SAARC, and India should be more inclined to do so as a consequence of the commonalities of interests in the Indian Ocean. Maldives was already indebted to India for its ready support to foil a coup on November 3, 1988. Equally, notably is the fact that the SAARC Heads of State or Government not only condemned the attempt to destabilise
India has the largest area, the highest population, the profounding natural resources and commandable strong army to protect its borders, a navy to safeguard its ports and trade and no other country of South Asia can standby India in industrial developments. It is only India which has the capacity to act as a check to extra-regional powers from interference in the region. India is a guarantee of peace to small neighbour, a treasure of resources to needy neighbours and a ray of hope in the region. It is the best out of the good neighbours, economically more sound than any other SAARC country, militarily more strong than any other country in South Asia and politically more realistic than six nations. The study reveals undoubtedly, "the emergence of India as regional power".