CHAPTER IV

SOUTH ASIA: CONFLICTS WITHIN THE REGION
South Asia is a region which emerged as a geopolitical entity on international scene soon after the end of World War II. Prior to that the region was a British dominion comprising of British India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) and Maldives. Out of these five countries British India was partitioned in 1947. Pakistan which emerged as a state out of that partition was further partitioned in 1971. This process of partition brought into being two new states in the region. And now the region comprises of India, Pakistan, Bangaldesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

This geopolitical entity of seven nations right from the days of British withdrawal from the region has been in a perpetual state of instability and turmoil. Its constituent members have, more or less, witnessed highly acrimonious relations among themselves. Such relations have even sometimes led to the outbreak of open hostilities. The region in its about four decades of decolonised history has not only experienced the traumas of four-full scale wars but also the troubles of various secessionist/separatist and autonomy/disintegrative movements. It is on the whole has been very unstable and volatile region witnessing almost all kinds of conflicts, ranging from acrimonious relations to full scale wars, emanating from weak and fragile socio-economic and political systems, ethnic, religious and secterian divisions, as well as from unsettled nature of the territories.

The region like other regions of the Third World has long been a troubled region with all its internal instability and intra-regional conflicts. This chapter deals with both
the inter- and intra-states conflicts of the region. However before discussing the conflicts, it becomes imperative here to discuss also some of the peculiar characteristic of the region as they directly/indirectly cast a bearing on the conflicts of the region.

Before the World War II, the whole of the region was a British dominion. And the dominance of the British India was unmistakably very strong in the region. It was so dominant that it radiated its power in every direction, north and south, east and west. The Himalayan states (Nepal and Bhutan), Ceylon (Now Sri Lanka) and Maldives were all dependencies of the British empire, ruled either from Delhi or directly from London. With the partition of British India into present day independent states of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, the predominant position enjoyed by the British India was inherited by independent India.

After the partition the ruling elite inherited the perceptions that, like British India, independent India was also destined to play a major role in Asia and World affairs. So, the strengthening of India's pre-eminent position in the region became the major objective of Indian foreign policy. India considered its neighbours as an integral part of its own security system. It was during the British days that the

security of, one country was organically linked with the security of other countries. A unified and similar view of security which emerged from the Vicegeral lodge from New Delhi prior to 1947 does not apply any longer in the region as the security perceptions in the region are as varied as there are states. Contrary to the realities of post-colonial period; the security perceptions of British India has been regarded in India as a pride heritage of Indian colonial past. The assertiveness of India's security perceptions drawn from that of British India has constantly been a factor, influencing the political dynamics of the region. Many of the troubles, especially intra-regional have been, more or less, the product of contradiction of India's security perceptions with that of the rest of countries in the region.

The region is Indo-centric. India is not only the largest, strongest and the most developed country is South Asia, it also constitutes the core of the region. Others are not only smaller powers but can be said to be on the periphery. In any case, they show either a peripheral outlook (Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldives) or tend to look to other regions in search of identities (Pakistan and to a lesser extent

Sri Lanka and Bangaldesh).\(^5\) The geopolitical imbalance amongst the constituent countries is viewed with concern by the neighbours of India. Other than this India shares borders with all of its neighbours while none of them have common borders with each other.\(^6\) They have also more in common, socio-culturally with India than among themselves. It is to be emphasised here that in any case of inter-state tensions in South Asia, India remains the common factor, willingly or unwillingly by virtue of its centrally located geographic situation in the region.

The region is a civilizational entity. The countries and the people of the region have a history to share. And the cultural similarities between the peoples of the region are not uncommon. They speak common languages, share same religions, wear the same dresses and have the traditions of art and music.\(^7\) Most of the countries emerged with shared colonial past, similar political experiences and common social values. The socio-economic and political structures have, by and large, been similar in all the countries of the region. There exists many bonds like ethnic, linguistic, religious and social similarities, administrative, legal and and military systems which link the countries of the


region. All these linking bonds whether provide a feeling of commonness to the countries of the region or not. They have, certainly, been the conflict prone/promoting factors in the region. They have been the cause of differences and contradictions in the political dynamics of the region. And the politics of the region since its decolonization has been dominated by differences and contradictions rather than cohesiveness, historical, cultural and political ethos. The regional commonalities in South Asia, in place of a true feeling of togetherness, cohesiveness and unity generate differences, cause tensions in the intra-regional dynamics of the region.

The region like many other regions of the Third World is economically underdeveloped. It is amongst the poorest, most densely populated, most illiterate parts of the world, with minimal rate of growth, serving a population of over a billion containing one half of the world's poor. The plight of the countries of the region is that they are economically very fragile, caught in a debt-trap and dependent on large scale foreign aid. Besides being economically highly dependent on the developed countries, there exist economic disparities in the region. The economic developments


whatsoever, has been very uneven in the respective countries of the region. This unevenness in economic sphere causes conflicting situation between the peripheral and the core areas, between the developed and undeveloped regions. For instance, the struggle for autonomous Gorkhaland and separate statehood for Jharkhand, areas in India are the conflicts having overwhelmingly economic orientations. The economic disparities in some of the countries of the region lead to social, economic and political tensions in South Asia.

The political institutions in the countries of the region of South Asia are not viable systems. They are weak and fragile. They, generally, represent low and divergent levels of political development. India and Sri Lanka amidst various weaknesses in terms of their functioning as democracies have been recognised as more viable political systems than rest of the countries of the region. Other than these two countries, all other countries have not been democratic as India and Sri Lanka are in the region. They have been more or less, totalitarian systems. Pakistan and Bangladesh, most of the time since their independence, remained totalitarian systems dominated by military establishment. And whenever democracy came into existence in these two countries it remained, besides military's involvement in statecraft, under constant threat of being taken over by military establishments. Democracy in these countries is still not properly institutionalised. Nepal has been most of the time
a monarchy with Panchayat Raj system. Its recent transition to democracy is yet to be edified. Bhutan retains the authority of monarchy as the dominant institution while Maldives has been practicing one party rule. The non-viability of political systems in the region where leads to dischartment, dissent, disagreements it also manifests itself into the vulnerability of the regions. As a result regimes become repressive and dictatorial resulting into the alienation of large number of population from their respective regimes. And the leaders both civilian and military to save their regimes most often choose an arena of confrontation with domestic dissent and disagreements. Besides they (majority if not all) use, in most cases, anti-Indianism as a convenient means for maintaining internal cohesion and safeguarding their respective regimes. The ruling elite in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have used anti-Indianism as a convenient substitute for a more viable and meaningful symbol of their national identity. The Indian elite have followed the same strategy at times to keep the country integrated and for obtaining power on real/perceived threats from external powers especially Pakistan. Desh Bachao (save country) was the reigning theme of Indira Gandhi's government in the last four years in power from January 1980 when she regained power till her assassination in October 1984. In all these years, she only talked of destabilization, disruption and the ultimate disintegration of the country's unity by an alliance of internal and external enemies of the country.  

The non-viability of political institutions in South Asia proliferate instability in the region.

There exists vast and fundamental differences in ideologies of the countries of South Asia. There has been a clear emphasis on the particular religions and linguistic components of social life than on secular and universal goals. For some of the countries like Pakistan which emphasizes on Islam and Urdu, religion has been the very raison d'être. India constitutionally talks of secularism. However inspite of the emphasis being given to secularism in India as a state policy, sectarian, communal, regional and linguistic forces have become powerful in the political processes of the country. Bangladesh which also started, more or less, on the same lines as India, later on changed its course towards increasing involvement and influence of religion in the politics of the country. The emphasis has been on Hinduism in Nepal and on Buddhism and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. Bhutan remains under Buddhist influence while Maldives is a Muslim society with relatively less influence of religion in politics.

The emphasis being given by South Asian countries on particular ideologies where has became an instrument of political profiteering than as a trend reflecting national consensus, it also leads to tension building and sometimes even to violent dissent within the countries of the region.

Almost all the countries of South Asia like most of the Third World countries are multi-ethnic societies cutting across national borders. India amongst them is a highly
heterogenous society with maximum cross border affiliations than the rest of the countries in South Asia. Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan also encompass heterogenous people. The heterogeneity in Bangladesh and Maldives is relatively and comparatively non-existent than all other countries of the region. Heterogeneity tends to orient the political behaviour of society along ethnic, religious and cultural lines. Internal conflicts with ethnic dimensions and very often with cross-border repercussions have become quite frequent in South Asia. And the transformation of heterogenous societies into homogenous, integrated ones has been a turbulent process. Pakistan, Bangladesh and the ongoing ethnic and religions conflicts in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan have been the price the region has paid for the ethnicization of the societies. As a result a minimum of socio-political homonization has been attained by few countries while majority face violent threat to their respective authorities. Heterogeneity has been contributing towards troubles in intra- and inter-state political dynamics of the South Asian region.

The political geography of the region is not demarcated on any clear-cut definitions. There exists a number of territorial disputes in the region mainly with India being one of the disputants in almost all the disputes. It is only few decades ago that there existed no clearly demarcated boundaries amongst the respective countries. The present day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were part of the
British Empire. And Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives all were the dependencies or colonies of the British Empire either ruled from Delhi or directly from London. The political boundaries were drawn on ethnic, religious and cultural lines. Gowher Rizvi writes that the political boundaries of the countries in the region are "neither the product of history nor geography; but determined artificially on lines of religion and ethnicity — naturally enough, the boundaries are drawn along the religious lines and are most contentious ones". Territorial disputes have often led to open hostilities in the region. They are, still the cause of major dissensions, and hostile relations, in the region.

The troubles of the region of South Asia, its tensions, mutual suspicion and mistrust and occasional hostilities have been one of the conspicuous features of the region. The problems like those of fragile political institutions, lack of societal consensus, distorted economic development, etc which are, more or less, prevalent in all the countries create an environment of insecurity and instability not only within the countries of the region but very often they also result into cross-border dispersions. These problems interacting with various other factors have converted South Asia into a very conflict prone region. There exists a large number of

conflicts of varying degrees and nature both at inter and intra-state levels. These inter and intra-state conflicts have much of their roots in colonial and past-colonial policies and strategies of Great/Super powers. Before discussing the conflicts, it seems to be necessary here to trace out the roots of the conflicts of the region.

The whole of the South Asian region was the part of the British colonial empire. The colonial rule extending over the countries while ended left behind itself. The colonial culture, inadequate political systems, economic and technological backwardness and above all artificially created boundaries which have become intrinsic sources of both inter and intra-state conflicts in the region. Colonialism to a considerable extent determined the contours of various social, economic political and cultural problems, the region has been undergoing since its decolonization. 12

The context of economic development of the countries of the region in the present past-colonial period has been conditioned by their encounter with the colonialism. During colonialism the whole of the region was structurally linked with the world capitalist system. The imperial Britain did not take any effective measures to develop indigenous

industry but concentrated on facilitating the supply of raw materials from the region to the British industrialists to enable them to export the finished products to international capitalist market. Britain not only exploited the economic resources of the region it also imposed severe restrictions and devised the policies which restricted the industrialization of the region. P.N. Haksar points out that "the decisive difference between the countries of this region and the developed countries is not in the rate of growth in population, which of course, is an important factor. In India, for instance, the reality is that it has not witnessed the same economic development processes and expansion of production as have been witnessed in the European countries. These processes were artificially arrested by the working of British capitalism, which drove a majority of the population into dependence on a primitive and over burdened agriculture. While the wealth of this region was drained, while industrial and other development outlets were choked and thwarted, agriculture which has been rendered the sole source of subsistence for mass of the people, had itself been placed under crippling conditions and was condemned to neglect and deterioration." The impact of this linkage was an economic disaster. The region has no doubt, been decolonised, yet its economic independence and self-reliance is a far cry. The countries of the region are still part of the

13. Ibid.
world capitalist system.\textsuperscript{14} And being part of that system they are susceptible to all the pulls and pressures. As a result we see the least control over the process of development as well as over the proliferation of social and political tensions in the region.

The imperial Britain created unnatural and absurd state system in the region. The division of the region was done on the basis of ethnicity and religion. It was so arbitrary and artificial that it led to greater number of conflicts and tensions in the region. The trouble between the chief protagonists of the region, India and Pakistan, started even before their independence. The establishment of Pakistan was the logical fulfilment of a British policy of divide and rule. In order to get it implemented the British first convinced the Hindus and the Muslims that they were entirely different and could not get on together.\textsuperscript{15} As part of their policy of divide and rule the British made persistent efforts to inculcate among the people the dangerous idea of religion as the basis of nation-states. Infact, they did all to keep the people divided.

\textsuperscript{14} Kalim Bahadur (ed) op. cit. p. 1.

Pakistan which was partitioned on the basis of religion was a geographical absurdity which ultimately led to its further partition in 1971. The British were aware that geographically Pakistan was not a viable structure and it was even predicted by Lord Mountbatten that the eastern wing of Pakistan would break away from Pakistan in a quarter of a century. In fact the British had more sinister intentions to divide/balkanize the region. The British wanted to break up India into several sovereign states, thinking that the resultant weak states would remain tied to Britain as independent dominions. Also writes S.D. Muni that "the British indecision, conscious or otherwise, regarding the status of princely states of Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir added significantly to the conflict potential inherent in the Indo-Pakistan relationship." However, it is not to say that the roots of all the conflicts in South Asia lie only and only in its encounter with colonialism.

Infact, the region was never united socially, politically and religiously. It had always consisted of a


large number of kingdoms. The ethnic, religious and social factors were, no doubt, existing in the region. The point to be emphasised here is that these factors were exploited to develop differences and animosity among the people to facilitate the British colonial rule. For instance, like Hindu-Muslim antagonism might have been a fact of Indian political life, the intra-elite conflicts were not visualised in such simplistic terms, prior to the British rule. The British encouraged the communally based evolution of Indian political life. It suited to the British imperial designs that the intra-elite conflicts be depicted in communal terms. Such a British policy of divide and rule left an indelible mark on the evolution of the subcontinent’s political life that it not only led to the division of India in 1947 but to the continuing hostility between the two successor states, India and Pakistan. As a result, in the wake of decolonization the countries of the region came into existence as an internally conflict and tension-ridden societies. And their decolonization more or less coincided with the onset of cold war. And the region became wantedly or unwantedly the part of East-West rivalry. The Great/super powers linkage of their global strategies with the regional affairs activated and inflated the conflicts of the region. The conflict prone situation inherited by the decolonised South Asia was intentionally maintained by these powers to keep them divided and to bring them into their respective

areas of influence and control. It could be said that there might be some other roots of the South Asian conflicts but the preceding discussion is indicative that the majority of the conflicts have, more or less, the elements of colonial legacy.

South Asia has been a troubled region with all its internal disturbances and instabilities. An American scholar Norman D. Palmer has described South Asia as "an area characterised by relative lack of contacts and cooperation among the indigenous states, and by an unusually high and persistent level of conflict". Its internal disturbances and intra-state instabilities appear to have become the order of the regional political dynamics. The intra-state conflicts are on the rise with almost no decline in inter-state conflicts of the region. First we will discuss here the inter-state conflicts and then afterwards the internal conflicts of the respective countries in South Asia.

As South Asia is a region with India towering over and sharing borders, with the rest of six other countries in the region while none of them have common borders with each other, India is involved in almost all the inter-state


conflicts. While there exist almost no conflicts among the rest of other countries with the only exception of ethnic conflicts between Pakistan and Bangladesh, and Nepal and Bhutan. The Bihari population still living in Bangladesh has been a matter of discord between Pakistan and Bangladesh.\(^{22}\) Nepal and Bhutan are separated from each other by a narrow stretch of Indian land in northern west Bengal. There exists a sizeable number of Nepali population in Bhutan estimated to be between 30 and 50 percent of the total population of the kingdom of Bhutan. This sizeable number of Nepali population in Bhutan which has strong cultural and some political attachments with the mother country has become persistent cause of conflict between the two countries.\(^{23}\) Leaving aside the Maldives, which lies about 90 miles away from the south of Indian island territories Lakshadweep and Minicoy, India has conflicts of varying degrees and nature with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal Bhutan and Sri Lanka.

At the heart of the inter-state conflicts in South Asia lies India-Pakistan problem, the hub of which is Kashmir: a territory claimed by both and divided between them. Ever since the partition of the British India in 1947, the relations between these two countries, the chief protagonists of the region has been conflicting, discording

\(^{23}\) *Ibid.*
distrustful and suspicious. The process that made the Indo-Pakistani relations conflict prone is rooted to a considerable extent in two-nation theory which stemmed from the belief that the Muslims of the sub-continent required a separate homeland based on Islamic ideology and its tenets, the injection of which into the politics of the Indian Nationalist Movement ultimately led to the partition of the sub-continent\(^{24}\), thereby creating so much hatred and divisions between the Hindu and Muslim communities that when the decision to partition the sub-continent was taken, it was greeted with unprecedented communal carnage in the history of the sub-continent. Besides creating hatred and divisions between Hindus and Muslims, it also exercised a considerable influence on the elites of the sub-continent in developing image perceptions about each other. The images, perceptions, identities or the pictures in minds of the elites of these two countries made their relationship prone to conflict.\(^{25}\) Jawaharlal Nehru seems to be closer to reality when he said that "the question of India-Pakistan relationship was


a psychological thing resulting from the way, the subcontinent was divided between India and Pakistan. There was a complete emotional upset of the people in India and Pakistan because of this". The partition trauma caused such psychological schism among the elites of both India and Pakistan which became the primary source of conflict between them.

The other factors which have made their relations susceptible to suspicion and distrustfulness are the apprehensions expressed by the Pakistani leadership that India has not reconciled itself with the independent sovereign existence of Pakistan. Infact, certain statements made by the Indian leadership have forced Pakistan to think on these lines. Jawaharlal Nehru said that may be "in this way we shall reach that United India sooner than otherwise.... ...." Sardar Patel expressed his views even more sharply: "Sooner than later we shall be united in common allegiance of our country". These statements and many others made by Indian leadership convinced Pakistan that India will not tolerate the independent existence of Pakistan and will try its best to harm it. This became a major cause for developing a feeling in Pakistan that India would disrupt


the very existence of Pakistan at whatever cost. Mohammad Ali Jinnah reacting to the statements made by the Indian leadership lamented that "it is very unfortunate that vigorous propaganda has been going on...... that Pakistan is...... merely a temporary madness and that Pakistan will have to came into the union as a pertinent, repentent, erring son". 29 Such feeling was also expressed by Ayoob Khan, saying that "the cause of our major problem is India's inability to reconcile herself to our existence as a sovereign independent nation.... At the back of it all was India's ambition to absorb Pakistan or turn her into a satellite". 30 Furthermore, India's involvement in Bangladesh crisis leading to the dismemberment of Pakistan's eastern wing strengthened the feeling of Pakistan about India's intentions. As a result 'the average Pakistani seems to be convinced that India has plans to destroy or weaken Pakistan in order to dominate it. 31 All this explains a reason why the two countries exhibit an almost permanent neurosis in their relations.

The territorial dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir which still stands unresolved, has been the

the major source of irritation between them. Both have conflicting claims over Kashmir which they justify on the basis of images and perceptions they have created for themselves on the eve of partition. They represent the two conflicting perceptions of the partition. Indian ruling elites perceived partition as a political arrangement and the accession of Kashmir to India on the basis plurality and secularism of Indian society, completely disregarding the Pakistani perceptions that the sub-continent was partitioned on the basis of religion and Kashmir being a Muslim majority state should have rightly gone to it. Explaining the Pakistani claim, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto asserted that "If a Muslim majority area can remain a part of India, then the raison d'être of Pakistan collapses...... for the same reason .... Pakistan must continue unremittingly her struggle for the right of self-determination of the subject people. Pakistan is incomplete without Jammu and Kashmir both territorially and ideologically." It seems necessary to point out here the two important and very interesting aspects of Kashmir problem. First, both India and Pakistan at the time of partition readily acquiesced in leaving Kashmir, a Muslim majority state with a Hindu ruler, as an independent state along with two other states of Hyderabad and Junagadh with Hindu-majorities and Muslim rulers. The states of Hyderabad and Junagadh were promptly

integrated by India despite opposition from Pakistan. As the Kashmir problem had certain similarities with Hyderabad and Junagadh, Pakistan believed that in the light of Indian action in the two latter cases, its claim on Kashmir was legitimate and natural because of its predominantly muslim population. Pakistan therefore got physically involved in Kashmir under the cover of tribal raiders.\(^{33}\) Secondly Britain deliberately intended to keep the Kashmir a disputed territory between India and Pakistan 'by allowing accession and India's military action to stop the interference of Pakistani sponsored tribal raiders in Kashmir, the Lord Mountbatten, the then Governor General of India denied Kashmir to Pakistan and by adding the condition of plebiscite to the accession, he attempted to deny it to India knowingly that the overwhelming muslim majority in Kashmir would certainly vote in favour of Pakistan.\(^{34}\) The acquisition of Kashmir has become bone for India and Pakistan, a question of prestige for which they have been continuously in a state of conflict.

It has became quite frequent in India/Pakistan to blame each other for their internal problems. India alleges Pakistani involvement in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and also in north-eastern troubles of India. Pakistan, on the other hand, blames India for its internal problems in Sindh, North West Frontier province and Baluchistan. Both the

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countries have displayed considerable propensity to complicate and exploit the fragile process of integration in each other's country. India's unconcealed sympathies for the autonomy demands of the then East Pakistani people and the Pakhtunistan demand of the North West Frontier Province on the one hand and Pakistan's support for dissidents in Punjab, Kashmir and north-eastern region and its lip-sympathies for the Indian muslims in general on the other, are the evidences of exploitation of each other's internal tensions and weaknesses. The conflicting relationship of blames and counter-blames sometimes helps the respective regimes of both India and Pakistan to suppress, avert or deal with internal problems. The ruling elites in Pakistan have found anti-Indianism a convenient substitute for a more viable and meaningful symbol of national identity. Pakistan for long has made the use of Indian threat to suppress dissent in the East Pakistan as well as to contain dissidence in the smaller provinces of West Pakistan. In case of India, the agitation and the self-immolation threat by the Sikh leaders on their demand for a separate state was withdrawn as a result of the outbreak of conflict between India and Pakistan in 1965. Like Pakistani elites, Indian elites have also found at times using of external threats a convenient mechanism either to deal with an internal crisis situation or satiate the regimes political ends. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, during her

35. See: Ibid., pp. 42-43.
regime in 1980's extensively talked of destabilization, disruption and the ultimate disintegration of the country. As the two countries are locked in a perpetual state of conflict, the domestic developments in each other's country have, most often repercussions across. The borders, like the effects of Hindu-Muslim communal riots in India are strongly felt in Pakistan and the struggle against the autocracy in Pakistan finds strong sympathy in India.

India is far superior than Pakistan in almost every respect. And India's superiority in the region is viewed with concern not only by Pakistan but also by other neighbours of India. Pakistan from the very beginning, being conscious of its regional inferiority, has strived hard to counter-balance India's regional superiority by obtaining extra-regional support and developing intra-regional linkages explicitly designed to deal with India. 36 India on the other hand has always sought to structure the region free from extra-regional involvement in order to preserve and protect the pre-eminent position it enjoys in the region. 37 Pakistan brought the extra-regional powers in the region by joining the U.S. sponsored military alliances CEATO and CENTO, thereby bringing India closer to the Soviet Union. This Pakistani urge have partly or to counter-balance India's regional superiority has been a persistent source of irritation and conflict between both India and Pakistan.

Having looked upon one another as enemies, both India and Pakistan have felt threatened by each other. And in order to strengthen their respective defences they have been locked in a perpetual conflict of arms procurement. Pakistan in order to augment its defence sought extra-regional affiliations and made the search for arms a key element of its foreign policy. India seeing the arms race as provocative and destabilizing sought it to be stopped within the region thereby seeking the legitimization of its preponderent position in the region. This was completely unacceptable to Pakistan's perception of regional balance. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto wrote in 1967 that "After two decades of independence, Indo-Pakistan relations have remained static. None of the animosities have been removed, none of the causes of partition remedied. In the prevailing conditions, a reduction in the armed forces of India and Pakistan would freeze the disputes forever and befit India. It would amount to de facto recognition of India's superiority in the subcontinent and for all intents and purposes, legitimise its usurpation of Pakistan's economic and territorial rights.... Bilateral disarmament between the adversaries is a negation of sovereignty and on admission of defeat by one of them". So the Pakistan urge for procuring arms continued. The arms race between India and Pakistan where 'brought into play an action-reaction spiral between them each making allegations and

counter-allegations in turn, it also exercised a very adversarial impact on the security horizons of South Asia.

Furthermore the U.S.-Soviet alignments and their equations with India and Pakistan provided a substantial boost to the arms procurement activities in the region. They provided arms to both India and Pakistan considering it as an effective instrument for extending their respective influence in the region. The intervention of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in 1979 further intensified the arms race between both India and Pakistan. India considered the large arms transfer to Pakistan which began in the wake of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan as highly provocative, destabilizing and escalatory. India lobbied hard against the U.S. supply of advanced sophisticated arms to Pakistan such as F-16 aircraft and Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS). It accused Pakistan for wrecking bilateral relations by cultivating extra-regional alliance.

The Pakistani regime asserted that Pakistan must continue to arm owing to its conventional military vulnerability to India and the latter's military expansion programme. Pakistan's arms procurement activities, especially during the last decade have extended from conventional arms to


nuclear weapons. Pakistan associates the acquisition of nuclear weapons with its sovereignty, national pride and national security. The proponents of nuclear programme hold that nuclear weapons will provide the ultimate guarantee of regional security. They believe that Pakistan can do that by building up such a nuclear deterrent which can neutralise India's regional dominance and deter India's conventional military threats by raising the costs of conflict to unacceptably high levels. Apart from the larger issues of sovereignty, national pride and security, there are many in Pakistan who subscribe to the American-Jewish Hindu conspiracy against Islam thereby justifying Pakistan's nuclear weapon acquisition programme. Whatever be the motivations behind Pakistan's nuclear weapon programme, it was in fact, India's acquisition of nuclear weapon capability, demonstrated in 1974, which led Pakistan to go ahead with its own nuclear programme. Despite the fact that both the countries claim that their nuclear programmes are for the peaceful exploitation of the nuclear energy for civilian use, they are locked in a conflict over the issue of joining Non-Proliferation Treaty and making South Asia a nuclear weapons free zone. India along with other factors such as its acrimonious relations with China and the latter's status as a nuclear weapon power, considers the Non-Proliferation Treaty discriminatory as it excludes the

nuclear weapon powers from its jurisdiction. Pakistan on the other hand, makes its stand conditional to India's joining of Non-Proliferation Treaty. In this way their respective nuclear programmes have become a source/conflict between both India and Pakistan.

Various factors intermingling with the disputed nature of Kashmir have brought the subcontinent to wars in 1948, 1965, and 1971. While there have been no further regional wars since 1971, there was a war scare in 1987. The crisis began with a series of grand Indian military exercises (operation Brass Tacks) along the Pakistani border in Rajasthan and Punjab. The military exercises generated a real war scare. There is speculation that senior officials, intended to provoke Pakistan into a move that would have justified a forceful Indian response or they had planned to attack Pakistan in North. The crisis was instead resolved by General Zia's sudden and dramatic flight to India apparently to watch a Cricket match followed by direct Rajiv-Zia-discussions. This was a major incident when border tensions nearly reached to the border of explosion. Small confrontations like intermittent border clashes are not uncommon. Therefore the possibilities of their escalation into incidents are not less in an environment where the deep-seated enmity between India and Pakistan

looms large. Furthermore, the extension of conflicting relationship into nuclear sphere and the ideological differences being kept alive at a boiling point by the problem of Kashmir, the relationship between India and Pakistan will remain acrimonious in the near future.

Leaving aside India, Bangladesh has normal relations with all of its South Asian neighbours. The major problem that cause irritant in India-Bangladesh relations are sharing of Ganges and Brahmaputra waters and the Farakka Barrage, the Teen Bigha Corridor, conflicting claims over the New Moore Island, dispute over the demarcation of the Maritime boundary, migration of Bangladeshis across the national borders etc. The distribution of waters of Gangetic and the Brahmaputra river systems has absorbed the attention of both India and Bangladesh for over a decade. 44 Before the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, the issue of water distribution was a matter of conflict between India and Pakistan. The problem was inherited by Bangladesh which continues to bedevil the India-Bangladesh relations. Moreover the construction of the Farakka Barrage for the controlled distribution of water is still an undecided issue. The distribution of water has been a major irritant responsible for the embittered relations between India and Bangladesh.

There exists since long even before the independence of Bangladesh, a dispute over the enclaves held by one

state in the territory of other. This dispute over enclaves was resolved to a satisfactory levels the signing of an agreement between India and Bangladesh in May 1974. India got the Beru Bari and in exchange Bangladesh was given Dahagram and Angorpota enclaves. Under the agreement, the Teen Bigha corridor was to be leased to Bangladesh by India. The corridor is yet to be finally leased to Bangladesh. The delay in leasing the corridor to Bangladesh continues to embitter their relationship.

A much more difficult territorial dispute between India and Bangladesh is over the Islands at the mouth of river systems in the Bay of Bengal directly to the South of both India and Bangladesh. These newly emerging islands are located in areas where the territorial waters of India, Bangladesh and Burma merge. The islands are also in the areas where it is said that there may be large off-shore oil and gas resources awaiting exploration. Among these, 'the New Moore Island which rose to the surface in the Bay of Bengal, a decade ago, has given rise to considerable tension. The issue is under negotiations with both India


47. Ibid.

48. A. Appadorai and M.S. Rajan, India's Foreign Policy and Relations, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1985, p. 633.
and Bangladesh preparing their cases on the basis of conflicting interpretations of the International Law and the Law of the Seas.

The dispute over the demarcation of maritime boundary arose in 1974 when Bangladesh awarded 30,000 square miles of off-shore area extending from South of the Sundarbans in the West to the Chittagong in the east for oil and gas exploration to the foreign companies. In doing so, Bangladesh went by the concept of its continental shelf extending up to 200 miles.\textsuperscript{49} India disputed the claim of Bangladesh. And the question of demarcation of maritime boundary between them is yet awaiting an amicable solution.

India's serious dispute with Bangladesh stems from the longtime movement of the people both Hindus and Muslims from the east Pakistan and later Bangladesh into the north-eastern part of India, especially Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. The population movement continues from Bangladesh to India in search of better economic prospects. The Bangladeshi immigrants, though, primarily concentrated in the north-eastern provinces of India, have gradually spread to other parts of India as distant as Bombay, Delhi, and many other places of India.\textsuperscript{50} The presence of large number of Bangladeshi citizens in India has been an


extremely difficult problem for the government of India. These immigrants have already shown their potential to destabilize politics in the north-eastern part of India. "The so called 'anti-foreigners' agitation which started in 1978, in Assam and which once caused difficult problem for New Delhi has merely been controlled. The control issue has remained unresolved". Moreover the denial of Bangladesh that there has been any substantial migration of Bangladeshis into India since 1971 adds to the complexity of the problem. Bangladesh also insists that members of the Bengali community are Indian citizens for whom it has no responsibility. To deal with the problems India decided to fence the Indo-Bangladesh border. Bangladesh resents the fencing of border. Not only this, on 20 and 24 April 1984, a few days after the work on the fencing had started, shots were fired across border killing or injuring a few personnel of the Indian Border Security Force and a survey team. This led to same exchange of fire between Indian and Bangladeshi border security forces, eventually resulting in a total halt of the construction work. Migration issue is a major issue that continues to create tensions between the two neighbours.

The more persistent issue in Indo-Bangladesh relations concerns the tribal communities that straddle the border in Chittagong Hills and the neighbouring Indian states of Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. The tribal separatist movements have been active on both sides of the border for years and both the countries have accused each other for providing assistance to the tribal dissidents in other states. Since 1983, the government of Tripura has been alleging that the tribes from Bangladesh are linking up with the tribal dissident groups in Tripura to destabilise the Indian state. The tribal dissidents also strain Bangladesh's relations with India.

The Hindu-Muslim ideological differences also has relevance for Indo-Bangladesh relations. It may be remembered here that before the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the Hindu-Muslim divisions have, often, led to the communal violence in that country causing the exodus of many Hindus to India. And once these people were in India, there was a Hindu backlash against Muslims. However since the creation of Bangladesh no serious communal violence took place there. There exists an apprehension that Hindu Bangladeshis may feel threatened at some point by the Islamization.

drive of the Bangladesh. The actualization of such apprehension may cause the exodus of thousands of Bangladeshi Hindus to India thereby further deteriorating the existing conflicting relationship between India and Bangladesh.

With Nepal, India has no major boundary dispute especially since the signing of a treaty between British India and Nepal on 15 November 1860. There are, however, India's periodic disputes with Nepal, when a border river changes its course with the issue usually whether the old or new river bed should constitute the boundary. More than the boundary dispute, the dispute which causes troubles in India-Nepal relations is cross border migration of peoples both from India to Nepal and vice versa. The problem of Nepalese in India and Indians in Nepal is largely attributable to the open border between the two countries. According to the Gurung Report the "Nepalese people have been emigrating since the nineteenth century and the main factors which contributed to this were: population pressure in the Hill, lack of employment opportunities, social injustice and exploitation, recruitment opportunity in the British Army. The process of emigration is still in operation mainly due to the opportunity available for recruitment in Indian Army, employment opportunities in

Indian cities and for educational and other purposes.\(^60\) There is a large number of Nepali immigrants (many of them Indian citizens) settled in various parts of India.

Like the Nepalese in India, Indians are also emerging as an important ethnic minority in Nepal. However no accurate figures of Indian immigrants in Nepal are available, they are mainly based in the fertile Tarai region of Nepal bordering the Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

The total number of Indians in Nepal, according to demographic experts, would be between 5 and 6 million. Of the total number of 9 million Nepalese living in India, 6 million are immigrants from Nepal.\(^61\) India and Nepal have about an almost same number of their people living in the territories of each other. However, the majority of the Nepalese people in India are the poor people from the hills. They work for small salaries generally as security guards, maids, ayas, unskilled factory workers and boys in small restaurants. The Indian immigrants, on the other hand, are educated, skilled people earning high salaries or engaged in business and trade. Economic power of the Tarai region where the Indians are mainly based resides with Indian.

It is to be noted here that simply the presence of Indians in Nepal or Nepalese in India is not a major cause of conflict.

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between the two countries. The autonomy demands of Nepalese of Indian origin in Tarai region and the correspondingly alleged political activism of Nepalese in Sikkim, Darjeeling and other adjoining areas had made Indo-Nepalese relations abrasive.62

Like the problem posed by the Bangladeshi immigrants the growing number of Nepali immigrants in the bordering districts of northern and north-eastern India also has potential to cause tensions in Indo-Nepal relations. The Nepali migration to India has raised the so-called Nepali question in an extensive area of the Himalayan foothills in north-eastern India, from Sikkim through northern West Bengal to Assam. Nepalese have become politically important in Sikkim, where they compete with Bhutias and others for political power. In September 1983, the controversy between the Chief Minister of Sikkim Nar Bahadur Bhandari, a Nepali, and the state's governor, Homi Taleyarkhan, a Bhutia, leading to the fall of the Bhandari government was partly sparked off by the Nepali question. Taleyarkhan was in favour of the Bhutia and Kazi communities who by virtue of their economic strength have always controlled the power in Sikkim even though constitute only 23% of the population, the Nepalese accounting for about 75%.63 The Nepalese by

their sheer strength of numbers have the capacity to call shots in the political affairs of the state. As in Sikkim so in the northern district of Darjeeling, the Nepalese have emerged as a strong political group. Constituting the majority of Darjeeling's population, they exercise almost total control over the city's life. However, the Gorkha Land issue is so strident as it was some times ago, its protagonists loose no opportunity to hold the area (Darjeeling and Kalimpong) to ransom whenever their interests are affected.\textsuperscript{64}

The growth of Indian in Nepal is said to be causing anxieties to the government of Nepal. There exists a big divide between the Hindi speaking people of Tarai region and the Nepali speaking hill people. In the 1950's the Tarai people demanded national status for Hindi language along with Nepali. They formed a political party, the Nepali Tarai Congress with an objective to establish an autonomous Tarai state within the state of Nepal.\textsuperscript{65} Nepal's main problems of integration comes from the Tarai region. It is also said that the Hindi-speaking people of Tarai region are politically and culturally more oriented toward India than Nepal. The Nepali elite foresee the possibility of the Tarai people organising regionally conscious political activity in an opportune future. Sikkim's annexation by

\textsuperscript{64} India Today, 15 June, 1984, pp. 160-61.
India in 1975 sharpened this fear which, later on, was also confirmed by a former Foreign Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Jagat Mehta, when he wrote in 1985 that the Indian's in Nepal are on the way of forming a majority in the Tarai region and this leads to anxieties and restraints about the writ of Kathmandu. However, it should be noted here that the presence of Indians in Nepal and Nepalese in India have not so far directly caused any serious conflicts between the two countries. They have certainly been the cause of tensions between them.

With Bhutan also, India's relations are not very cordial. India has a very minor territorial dispute with Bhutan, which has been settled in principle but not by an actual border demarcation. Indo-Bhutanese relations have been troubled with the cross-border implications of the conditions of Nepalese, Bengalese, Assamese, and Marwarese living in Bhutan and Bhutias living in Sikkim and other part of northern Bengal. The loyalty of Nepalese, Bengalese, Assamese and Marwarese toward the monarchy is suspected by the ruling elite of Bhutan. They feel threatened from India's and Nepal's ability to influence the political change in

in Bhutan. About the fears of the Bhutanese ruling-elite writes an Indian Scholar "the Bhutanese rulers in their heart of hearts, do not rule out the possibility of an agitation from the Nepalis, posing a threat to the monarchy and the dominance of Drupkas. This probability was reinforced in Bhutanese mind as a consequence of the development in Sikkim during 1973 to 1975". Although Bhutan is highly dependent on India, both economically and politically, its relations with India are not so cordial. This is probably due to the threat, it perceives from India's potential political and economic ability to influence the desired political change in Bhutan.

India-Sri Lanka relations have been, more or less hostile. Various factors have caused such a relationship. There came up a issue of political status of persons of Indian origin: the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka, soon after when Sri Lanka disenfranchised them in 1948 thereby denying them the political rights they were enjoying like other citizens of Sri Lanka before independence. In fact, the question of Indian Tamils goes back to the 19th century when they were brought by the Britishers to work on tea plantation in Sri Lanka. Both India and Sri Lanka have argued litigiously over the issue: the former's point of view has been that the Indian Tamils should be given Sri Lankan citizenship as they are domiciled there for

69. See: S.D. Muni, "Bhutan's South Asian Initiatives", Strategic Analysis, Vol. III, No. 12, March, 1984. Drupkas is an ethnic group in Bhutan, the political power resides with them.
generations and have contributed to the Sri Lankan economy, while the latter, linking their emotional and family ties with their ethnic brothers in South India, maintains that they were simply brought to work there and they still live exclusively in Sri Lanka as Indian citizens. Moreover, Sri Lanka claims, that is a problem left as a legacy by the British and should have been solved by them before departing, hence Sri Lanka is under no obligation to give them citizenship after independence. However both the countries attempted to resolve the problem for which they reached to agreements, first in 1964 and then in 1974.70 Unfortunately these agreements have been the victims of bureaucratic delays, divergent interpretations, tardy methods of implementations and the petty politicking by the governments on both sides. The question of Indian Tamils between India and Sri Lanka to a considerable extent has been resolved but it still causes irritants in their relationship.

There came into light in 1956, a territorial dispute between India and Sri Lanka over the uninhabited island of Kachchathivu which lies in the Palk straits. The island became a point of conflict between the two countries, both offering claims and counter-claims over the sovereignty of the island. Furthermore, when India extended the limits of its territorial waters to 12 miles in 1968, Sri Lanka

correspondingly responded in 1970, thereby ensuing an acrimonious debate over the ownership right of the island. However, in a pragmatic and far-sighted manner, an accord was reached between India and Sri Lanka in 1974 whereby a boundary line was agreed which runs from the Palk straits to Adam's Bridge. As a result of this accord, the island of Kachchathivu fell within the jurisdiction of Sri Lanka. Although the dispute has been resolved, it remained a major source of conflict between the two countries for about almost two decades.

The foremost source of conflict in recent times which has led to the deterioration of their relationship is the ongoing ethnic conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils in Sri Lanka. The majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils are locked in an armed conflict for about a decade. The Tamils are fighting for the establishment of their independent homeland in the north-eastern region of Sri Lanka which lies about 18 miles away from the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The Sinhalese despite being a majority invoke the fears of being drowned in a Tamil majority with a possible future Sri Lankan Tamil tie up with about 60 million Tamils of Tamil Nadu. The Sri Lankan perception of threats originating from India is rooted in the ancient as well as the modern

history of the region. Sri Lanka at various stages in ancient times entered into relations both of alliances and hostility with the Chola, Pandaya and Chera Kingdoms of South India. As almost all the invasions came from the South India Kingdoms, the historical memories continue to haunt the Sinhalese people in Sri Lanka.

In the decolonised history of Sri Lanka, it faced the typical security dilemma of a small state keen to preserve its independence and integrity in relation to its big neighbour India. The Sri Lankan leaders, following the independence, viewed India with distrust and suspicions. Certain statements made by Indian leaders provided sustenance to their fears. Jawaharlal Nehru, visualised in pre-independent India the "small nation state is doomed" and envisaged that "Sri Lanka would inevitably be drawn into a closer union with India presumably as an autonomous unit of Indian federation". Besides Jawaharlal Nehru, K.M. Panikkar also opined that "the internal organisation of India on a firm and stable basis with Burma and Ceylon was the essential pre-requisite to a realistic policy of Indian defence". Sri Lankan leaders as a consequence leaved on the British through defence agreements by granting


73. For both Nehru and Panikkar's statements See: Spotlight on Regional Affairs, Vol. 5, No. 4, April 1988, p. 3.
bases and facilities. The Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Sir Kotelewala (1953-56) expressing his fears relating to the problems of Indian Tamils said that "If we do not solve it now, I can visualise that in twenty years of time we will be sitting in Delhi as part of India". Historical memories intermingling with Sri Lanka's perception of Indian threat kept alive its fears and suspicions. Furthermore, the sympathy and assistance which the Tamil militants received in India, especially in Tamil Nadu sharpened Sri Lanka's fears. India's action of air-dropping of food and medical supplies to the Tamils of Sri Lanka in 1987 almost confirmed Sri Lanka's fears. Although India has consistently maintained that its is in favour of unity and integrity of Sri Lanka, the historical memories along with the recent developments keep alive the fears of Sri Lanka. The ethnic conflict in recent times has become the major cause of conflicting relationship between India and Sri Lanka.

The least known and the least developed state of South Asia, Maldives has no conflicts with any of its neighbours including India. Maldives wants to keep itself isolated both from regional as well as international power politics. However both India and Pakistan compete for developing cooperative and friendly relations with the republic of Maldives.

74. Ibid, p. 4.
There exists a number of different kind of inter-state conflicts in the region. And in most of the conflicts, Indian factor is very conspicuous. In other words, almost all the countries of the region are lacked in conflicting relationship with India. They have conflicts with India rather than among themselves. The principal sources of inter-state tensions and conflicts along with the territorial disputes are the extremely complex ethnic, religions, linguistic and tribal groups along and across the national borders in the region. As there are many inter-state conflicts in the region, the intra-state conflicts are also large in numbers. Many of the sources of both inter and intra-state conflicts are either same or they are interlinked. We would discuss here about the intra-state conflicts in the region. However, it is beyond the scope of a study of this length to provide the detailed account of intra-state conflicts.

India, the regional giant in South Asia, has always been a conflict ridden society. Since independence in 1947, it has witnessed different kinds of internal conflicts ranging from violent expression of ethnic diversification to armed struggle for self-determination. Although, the conflicting situations have existed in almost every part of India. But its north-eastern region has, specially, been very conflict-prone. This has been the region which witnessed the largest number of armed struggles. Many of them are, still going on. At the time of India's
independence, Assam was the only full-fledged state in the region, the other six states attained their statehood mainly as a consequent of armed struggles. This situation is no more limited to north-eastern region. It has spread in almost every part of India, specially the northern part. The consequences of its escalation are very alarming having a direct bearing on the very fabric of nation state with serious security implications.

India is the most complex of human societies. It does not possess a single, nation wide coherent and homogeneous society. In fact, it possesses the maximum ethnic diversity in the South Asian region. There exists a large number of ethnic groups based on religion, language, tribe, caste, sect and even region. So much ethnic diversity, for one reason or the other, has been the potent source of internal conflicts in India. It has been manifesting itself in different forms from social tensions and violence to armed insurrections. The causes for such manifestations of ethnic diversity are very complex and varied. One observation is that in a plural society, the position and status of one ethnic group affects the reactions of other groups. The antagonistic reactions of


other groups and mutual distrust and suspicion lead to overt conflict.\(^77\) Ted Gurr Robert in his recently completed research project argues that grievances about differential treatment and the sense of group cultural identity provide the essential bases for mobilization and shape the kinds of claims made by group's leaders.\(^78\) It is generally a relative sense of deprivation, discrimination or differential treatment which generally breeds conflicts in a plural societies like India.

From ethnic diversity, there emerges out varying nature of social tensions most often leading to violence. The most prevalent and perpetuating is the Hindu-Muslim antagonism. In the year 1947, India witnessed the large scale communal violence over the issue of partition. Since then what has developed is a widespread Hindu-Muslim tension, suspicion and antagonism. And during the last decade or so Hindu-Muslim tensions have flared up as a result of certain cumulative causations, like cultural antipathies, memories of the past humiliation, contemporary economic competition and above all the exploitation of these by politicians. Communalism in India has became a potential conflict which could escalate into a widespread


national calamity. However so far it has not manifested itself into a generalised violence. Nevertheless, it needs to be considered as one of the unpleasant possibilities which theoretically might arise. Its potentiality is evident from a SIPRI estimate according to which the ethnic and communal violent in India since early 1980's has been at the highest level since its independence. Its estimates show that about 10,000 people were killed in various separatist, ethnic and religious violent in India during 1983-86, and the casualties have been on increase. Hindu-Muslim communalism besides being a source of internal turbulence also has cross borders ramifications. Its effects are felt in Pakistan and Bangladesh, most often leading to tensions between the respective governments of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

India has also been experiencing various autonomist and separatist armed movements, seeking to overthrow the established structures of authority. There exists a large number of such movements, presently going on like autonomist Bodoland and Jharkhand Movement, Separatist armed movements in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Assam. Many of these conflicts were inherited by India at the time of independence like Naga and Mizo insurgencies, Punjab, where existed an opinion for

for an independent homeland for Sikhs, and Kashmir where the plebiscite front was already active and the Maharaja Hari Singh tried till the last moment to retain the independent status of Kashmir.  

The consequences of these movements, specially the separatist movements are very grim for the security of India as they could not be passed off as a law and order problem to be dealt with. They have attained unduly exaggerated proportions, bringing the very national polity in question. The outside support to these movements not only promote and strengthen them, it also vitiates the relations between India and those supporting the movements.

A white paper issued by the Government of India in 1984 implicitly blamed Pakistan, and unnamed external powers, for extending unspecified assistance to the Sikh terrorists: "The fundamental challenges to India's unity have arisen from communal fanaticism and other divisive forces with powerful external support. The target is now secularism, the basic foundation of India's unity. Repeated external aggression and other pressure having failed to break the unity and integrity of India, attempts are now being made to cause internal disruption, pressing religion into service. This is the warning which the recent developments in Punjab are giving to the nation...... The Government have reason to believe that the terrorists were receiving different

types of active support from certain foreign sources. The significant relationship between internal and external forces of subversion is a well known fact of the contemporary international scene.\textsuperscript{81} Pakistan got involved itself in Punjab and the Jammu and Kashmir separatist movements by giving them a measure of support and a greater degree of sympathy, specially to Kashmiri militants. Pakistan's involvement in those internal problems of India has severely strained India's relations with Pakistan.

The separatist armed movements in north-eastern region, which emerged generally due to maldevelopment of area and existence of large number of ethnic and tribal groups there have generally been contained in military terms. However, they have not been completely combated. They are going on somewhere in low profile and at other places with ferocity. The movement in Nagaland which is now based in the hill areas of Burma adjoining Nagaland, has split on ideological grounds into the well defined antagonistic groups - National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and Naga Federal Government (NFG). The objectives of both groups continue to be the achievement of an independent Nagaland, through armed struggle. In Manipur, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) from across the border has been trying to strengthen its organisation with help from the NSCN and the Burmese insurgent groups. Insurgency

\textsuperscript{81} White Paper on Punjab, Government of India, New Delhi, July 10, 1984, pp. 54-58.
in Manipur, despite under control is keeping itself alive through sporadic acts of violence. The insurgents from Mizoram are based in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and have been supported by the Government of Bangladesh. The insurgency situation in Mizoram is much under control keeping in view the insurgency movement led by Tribal National Volunteers (TNV) in Tripura which has stopped up its extremist activities and intensified violence, having its base in Chittagong Hill Tracts, receiving active help from the Mizo National Front and Bangladesh. In Assam, after the prolonged state of civil disturbances, which had at one time taken the shape of armed violence based on ethnic, linguistic and religious factors, the United Liberation Force of Assam has taken up arms to liberate Assam from India. The counter insurgency operations recently launched by Indian armed forces have brought the ULFA movement under control. However, ULFA is still active there. In Punjab and Kashmir the situation is not much different. Various militants organisations are struggling for the cause of independence. All this has beset India with a myriad of internal problems, severely eroding the established structures of state authority.

It is now more than four decades since Pakistan came into being as an independent state carved out of

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British India mainly on religious grounds. All these decades have been full of internal upheavals and crises. It has experienced virtually all varieties of internal conflicts: ethnic and sectarian struggles, civil war, secession, Coup d'etat etc. The leaders of Pakistan highlighted the strength of religious unity based on Islamic faith which recognised no regional, ethnic or linguistic loyalties. However the secession of Bangladesh has shown that the religious faith is insufficient to engender a genuinely cohesive and homogeneous national sentiments. The centrifugal factors, ethnicity, historical traditions and geographic locations prevail over religious community. Pakistan's weakness still lies in its lack of internal cohesion and consequent lack of identity.

Ironically, Pakistan since its formation has experienced a little if any social equilibrium. There has been an imbalance in the distribution of resources, benefits and power between the numerous ethnic groups which form Pakistan. The uneven economic development started from the very beginning. The priority to the development of west Punjab and Karachi was given at the cost of other areas thereby generating a feeling of discrimination among the people of other areas. Pakistani ruling elites instead of nation-building concentrated on state-building. Even at the former level, the task of nourishing and strengthening

the political process was neglected. As a measure of state-building Pakistani elites brought the whole of Pakistan under one unit in 1955. This measure was purely introduced for political purposes as it was designed to neutralise the numerical majority of the Bengalis of East Pakistan, to suppress the ethnic movements in the Frontier Province and Baluchistan and to provide Punjabis a dominating role in the politics of Pakistan. They employed the ideology of Islamic unity to deny the validity of the claims and demands of the less privileged ethnic groups, Sindhis, Bengalis, Pathans and Baluchis. The maldevelopment and the regional imbalances along with Pakistani elites urge for state-building at the cost of nation-building explain the reason of repeated breakdowns of political stability in Pakistan.

Pakistan like India is also a ethnically divided society. However it is not so ethnically heterogenous as India is. It possesses mainly four ethnic groups, Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluchis and Pakhtoons. Punjabis are mainly concentrated in the province of Punjab, the economic and political power mainly reside with them, Sindhis in Sindh, Baluchi in Baluchistan and Pakhtoons in the North Western

Frontier Province (NWFP). Punjabis and even Sindhis set their eyes toward Delhi and perceive a cultural unity with India. Baluchis and Pakhtoons on the other hand, feel a cultural affinity with their western neighbours Iran and Afghanistan where their ethnic brothers Iranian Baluchis and the Pathans live. Pakistan has always been afflicted with the problem of power and resource sharing among these four provinces. And Pakistan even after the secession of Bangladesh has not yet been able to evolve a political system in which its ethnic groups would not feel deprived and discriminated. Pakistan is still faced with the basic problem of national unity and survival.

The fragile state of Pakistan was created without consideration of geography or race, so that all its population belongs to linguistic or ethnic groups which lead to the problem of disintegration. The ethnic groups struggle for realignment with neighbours, specially Pakhtoons and Baluchis. Baluchistan was virtually garrisoned than governed by the British. The centripetal tendencies toward their ethnic brothers across the borders have been prevalent among both Pakhtoons and Baluchis. In Sindh also, one of the


dominant streams of politics is centered round the independence of Sindh province. This was also reflected, at the British time, in the Second Hur Movement in the 1940's which compelled the British to clamp Martial Law in Sindh in 1942, which was not lifted till only a few months before independence in 1947. After the creation of Pakistan, although, these states became part of Pakistan, their strong sense of ethnicity and identity remained. Moreover, the social, political and economic policies adopted by the successive ruling elite of Pakistan accentuated these feelings instead of obliterating them.

Besides these ethnic groups there also exists a small Hindu minority as well as Mohajirs who migrated from India to Pakistan in the wake of the partition of the British India. The Hindu-Muslim antagonism is not so apparent or violent in Pakistan as it has been in India. However, the Mohajirs are being treated as immigrants by other ethnic groups. And the violence in areas where the Mohajirs have substantial strength is becoming quite common, contributing to the Pakistan's problem of internal disorder and political instability. Furthermore most observers of the Pakistani scene also point out toward the prolonged presence of the millions of Afghan refugees, the likelihood of their return to mother country is not promising. There exists a situation

of uncertainty, which may lead to turbulence in Pakistan.  

The other factor which cause internal unrest in Pakistan is the fragility of its political system. Since 1958, the military has been active in Pakistani politics and dictating its own terms on the society. In the history of Pakistan, there have been three military regimes, the last one being that of General Ziaul Haq. However, there is presently a democratically elected regime in Pakistan, but the roots of democracy are yet to be institutionalised. Till the structures of democracy are well edificed in Pakistan, the civilian requires and the politics with remain vulnerable to the interference of Army establishment there. All these things figure out a very grim scenario for Pakistan which is still in search an identity.

Bangladesh is relatively free from the internal turbulences and upheavals. It however, shares the same socio-political tensions that most of the post-colonial least developed countries have been going through. Bangladesh in the region is also, by and large, a cohesive and homogeneous state, least afflicted by ethnic conflicts as well as problems of integration. It is, however, not entirely free from

ethnic troubles. A Chakma tribal insurgency is going on there for years in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, bordering the Arakan region of Burma as well as the Indian state of Tripura in the north-eastern part of India. The ongoing insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts has added to the socio-political tensions in Bangladesh. The predominantly Buddhist people of this region did not accept their inclusion in the state of Pakistan in 1947 and kept the Indian flag flying till there was an army operation by Pakistani armed forces. After the partition of Pakistan, the problem was inherited by Bangladesh which is still continuing. According to a Bangladeshi scholar the "life has become militarised in the entire districts of Chittagang Hill Tracts with the members of the armed forces controlling the civil administration and the tribal insurgents frantically trying to perpetuate their influence in the dense forest areas in the interior of the district." The insurgency in Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh is, however, an internal crises. It also has repercussions across the borders in the form of straining relationship between Bangladesh, Burma and India.

Bangladesh is largely a homogeneous state, about 85 percent of muslims. There also exists a small Hindu minority.

which religiously has distinct identity but culturally it is integrated in the sense that it shares the common language, Bengali, with the Muslims. The Hindu-Muslim conflicts specially since the inception of Bangladesh have been relatively negligible. However, the possibilities that there may emerge such conflicts in future as the effects of communal violence in India are also felt in Bangladesh. If so happens, it will bring forth a large number of Hindu refugees to India thereby causing a direct bearing on the relations of India and Bangladesh.

Bangladesh since August 1975, when its liberator leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in a military coup, a military junta has ruled it staging a number of military coups. General Ziaur Rahman, a military ruler was killed in an army mutiny in Chittagong in May 1981 to be followed by a presidential election bringing Mr. Justice Abdu Satta to office until March 1982 when Lt. General Mohammad Ershad proclaimed Martial Law and the resumption of military rule in Bangladesh. However the struggle of democratic forces in Bangladesh has brought the nation under a democratically elected regime, the roots of democracy are yet to be strengthened and institutionalised there in order to deny the chances of military's involvement in the politics of Bangladesh. Bangladesh in comparison to India and Pakistan is not much conflict ridden. However,

the ongoing troubles portray a frustrating scenario for a country like Bangladesh which is abysmally poor and likely to become more so under a fast increasing population and economic under development.

Nepal, a land locked country in South Asia, has also not been free from internal upheavals. There has always been a struggle between those who support the party based democracy and monarchy, always eager to retain its complete hold on political power. The demands for party based democracy started gaining much strength during the closing months of 1989. Those demanding democracy were met by brutality from the army. Their continued resistance and struggle forced the King Birendra to yield, which brought Nepal very close to party based democracy under a constitutional monarchy, abolishing the old Panchayat Raj system, consisting of the King enjoying all pervasive powers; Prime Minister, elected members, and voters but no political parties. Nepal registered an unprecendented restructuring in its political arena, immediately before the onset of the decade of nineties. The democratic reforms which the people of Nepal achieved after their long struggle are still on their way to institutionalization. The present government there is democratically elected, it however, has the responsibility to give strength to the structures of democracy in Nepal.

96. Ibid.
Nepal, like other countries of South Asia, also possesses ethnic configuration. The presence of Hindi-speaking people in the Tarai region of Nepal has not, so far, become the cause of open and violent conflict. But the ruling elite feels threatened from the increasing size of Hindu-speaking people in Nepal. They suspect that the cultural and political loyalties of these people are toward India rather than toward Nepal. Furthermore, the demands of these people for autonomy have augmented the feelings of ruling elite in Nepal. The increasing size of Hindi-speaking people in Nepal has become a cause of concern in Nepal, which also strains Nepal-India relations.

Bhutan also is a monarchy. However, it has not been the cause of internal unrest there. The ruling elite in Bhutan like Nepal, feel threatened from the increasing size of immigrants whose loyalty toward Bhutan is subjected to suspicion and fears. The ruling Drupkas in Bhutan feel threatened from the presence of better educated and more politically conscious Nepali population along with the Bengalese, Assamese and Marwarese. The conflicting situations exist in Bhutan but so far they have not led to violent conflicts except developing strained relations between Nepal and Bhutan.

Besides the conflicting scenario emerging out of the presence of ethnic groups in Bhutan, the divisions within the Drupkas can more easily lead to political instability there. The divisions within the royal family
and the dominant Dorji and Wangchuk claims of Drupkas are believed to have prompted several attempted coups, the latest in 1974 and to the assassination of Prime Minister Jigme Dorji in 1964.\textsuperscript{97} Despite all this, Bhutan has been a peaceful country in the region of South Asia.

In the South Asian region, the country which has experienced the most serious political instability, eroding its democratic credibility and its ability to survive as a nation-state is Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka achieved independence in 1948 as well as the antagonistic relations between its ethnic groups mainly the Sinhalese, constituting the majority and the Tamils, a sizeable minority. The ethnic antagonism, to the greater extent, remained non-violent till the early 1980s with only three major ethnic outbursts, first in 1958, second in 1977 and the last one in July 1983.\textsuperscript{98} Since July 1983, the ethnic conflict has turned completely violent. This seemingly unending bloody conflict characterises the recent political crisis in Sri Lanka.

The present on going ethnic conflict between the Sinhalese who control the political power and the Tamils has its roots in the history of the island, specially in a highly mythological belief. According this belief Buddha

\textsuperscript{97} S.D. Muni, Bhutan's South Asian Initiatives", Op. Cit.
selected Sri Lanka to be a citadel of Buddhism and the Sinhalese people were charged with the task of seeing Sri Lanka becomes and remains such a citadel. The survival of Buddhism is dependent on the survival of the Sinhalese people; the people surviving as long as they espoused the Buddhist doctrine and controlled the land consecrated to the religion. What has been stressed in the recent years is that the Sinhalese are the inheritor of the more ancient culture and there is no aspect of local culture which is not profoundly affected from elsewhere. The Sinhalese are clearly in majority in Sri Lanka even then they have nurtured the psychological fear of a minority compared to the larger Tamil community of South India. The Sinhalese consider themselves as the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka whereas Tamils are considered as invaders. The Sinhalese political elite in Sri Lanka, in order to gain political mileage in the post-colonial era, exploited that myth and minority complexion of the majority community which proved disastrous for multi-ethnic society that is Sri Lanka. The result is that a bloody conflict is going on for about a decade in Sri Lanka between its two ethnic groups. The successive Sri Lankan governments where supported the


Sinhalese to keep themselves in power. They also tried to defeat the Tamils by military means. Sri Lanka instead of winning the conflict is seized from within due to the very ongoing conflict. This conflict of Sri Lanka produced cross-border repercussions in the region, especially straining the relations between Sri Lanka and India.

The other internal conflicts which also brought the unprecendented consequences for the island were the armed insurrections led by radicalised Sinhalese youths first in 1971 and the later in 1987. In 1971 a militant organisation, Janatha Vimukhti Peramuna (JVP), staged an insurrection to seize power, which was defeated by Sri Lankan armed forces with the help of outside support. The organisation re-emerged in 1987 soon after the signing of India-Sri Lanka Accord in July 1987. Sri Lanka, after the two and half years of a bloody civil war and extreme political uncertainty finally managed to score a military victory over the JVP. By the end of 1989, the organisation lost its entire leadership captured and killed by the Sri Lankan armed forces. One significant outcome of this domestic strife has been the militarization of the whole society, elevating the armed forces to the centre stage of Sri Lankan politics. The ethnic conflict and these two armed struggles by radicalised Sinhalese youths caused unprecedented political instability in the island state of Sri Lanka.

A passing reference should also be made about the internal conflict situation in Maldives. Maldives has a congruous ethnic religions and linguistic configuration in South Asia. It has been almost free from all kinds of conflicts. It has, however, potentialities of a political division between its northern and southern parts separated by a 50 mile long channel. Maldives keeping itself aloof from the upheavals of South Asia has remained quite peaceful since its independence in 1965.

Almost all the countries of South Asia are faced with the growing problems of internal disorder and political instability, which most often are reflected in their respective relations with one another. Besides many internal conflicts there also exists a large number of inter-state conflicts in the region. The conflicting situations in South Asia are also added and abetted by the respective countries of South Asia as well as by extra-regional powers. In the next chapter of this study we will discuss about the involvement of both regional and extra-regional powers in the affairs of South Asian countries in general and in the conflicting situations of South Asia in particular.