South Asian region, one of the great cradles of human civilization, is passing through a transition. This has brought a trend of change in the relations among the countries of this region. South Asia as a geo-political region came into focus in the early 1980s when the seven nations of the region, viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were brought together in a regional cooperative organisation, SAARC. This region is unique in the asymmetries posed by the size and location of states. India is the central and the biggest country and the South Asian balance of power revolves around it. The region is characterised by the very uneven levels of development, clashing ideologies, different national interests, political, territorial, ethnic and economic disputes and prides and prejudices. At the same time, the two largest and strongest countries, India and Pakistan are pushing each other into a nuclear arms race which will expose the whole
of South Asia to new and more intense bilateral, regional and global tension. There are many other issues related to stability, security and peace in the region. Terrorism and militancy is the big threat for the region. The issue of exodus of migrants and refugees from one country to another has also affected the relations among the countries of the region.

The world is changing so fast and so radically that regional relations cannot continue to remain at the prevailing pace and level. Accordingly there are signs of change and dynamism in South Asian regional relations in some significant respects. Among the contributing factor behind this is the impact of global economic activism on the one hand and the upsurge of democratic aspirations in the countries of the region on the other. Despite the presence of a number of common features the countries of South Asia has not been able to evolve cooperative relations and their relations are characterised by numerous conflicts. Of late, of course, these countries have the need of cooperation and made some progress in this direction by creating an institution, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. There is more cooperation among nations today than at any time in the past.
The whole thesis is divided into eight chapters. In Chapter-One, South Asia has been identified as a region. Though the region is not clearly defined but after creation of 'South-Asian Association for Regional Cooperation' (SAARC), the only institution in the region, it has become more or less defined. It includes seven nations, viz., Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. All these countries are introduced in this chapter in geographical, historical and demographical respects. Chapter-Two discusses the problem of the nuclear proliferation, a much talked about issue. The countries of this region which are involved in this controversy are India and Pakistan. But the issue is so much important that all other smaller nations are also concerned about it. These countries are suspicious about Indian hegemony after the Pokharan nuclear explosion of 1974. Though India has expressed its intentions from the very beginning that it will use the nuclear power only and exclusively for the peaceful purposes. The vexed issue of signing the NPT, India's and Pakistan's nuclear policies and the idea of declaring South Asia as a nuclear weapon free zone are also dealt with in detail in this Chapter. Chapter-Three points out the significance of the Indian Ocean for the security of the region. In the light of huge militarization of the ocean the concept of the Indian Ocean as a Peace Zone, which was initiated by the countries of this region, has become irrelevent today. Now the region has
to live in these changed circumstances. They need greater regional cooperation to harness the resources of the ocean for their development. Chapter-four deals with the burning issue of terrorism and militancy. Almost all the countries are facing the threat in one form or the other. Most affected of them are India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The fundamentalism and separatism are the main factors behind this menace. The politics of assassinations has been a very frequent practice in the countries of this region. The concerned countries realise the problem and efforts have been made by them to suppress it. One step in this direction is taken at the SAARC forum. All the member nations signed the Regional Convention on suppression of terrorism. They have also tried to evolve a universal definition of terrorism. Chapter-five speaks of the issue of migrants and refugees. The region, since the partition of India, has seen a mass migration of the people from one country to another resulting to a influx of refugees in almost each country. The migration to and from India in 1947, Bangladeshi refugees in India, Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, Indian migrants in Sri Lanka and Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India, refugees from Bhutan to Nepal, and the Afghan refugees in Pakistan are included in this chapter. Chapter-six deals with the issue of water sharing among different co-riparian countries of the region. The rivers which originate in the Himalayas from west to east
flow through Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. There is an enormous potential of water-resource management which has been exploited only to a little extent. There is a vast opportunity for these countries to utilize the water resources through mutual co-operation. Chapter-Seven throws light on the border issues confronting the region. This covers mainly the border disputes between India and Pakistan and between India and China. Though China has not been included as a nation in the South-Asian region, but as India, the biggest country in the region, is involved with China over the borders, the issue is included. Though the process of solving these issues is not very fast but a changing and hopeful trend is seen and there is a gradual progress towards the solution.

Chapter-Eight is written to show the trend towards a change in the pattern of relationship among the countries of South Asia. This trend is brought by the creation of SAARC, which is the first attempt towards the institutionalization in the region. Though it does not deal directly with the issues, we have taken in this thesis, it is playing a role of creating an atmosphere in which countries can mutually discuss their problems and can try to solve them through extended cooperation. The major conclusion is that the fact that 'cooperation and
conflict are to nations what love and hate are to human beings'. There are many conflicting issues in the region which affect the relationships among nations, but at the same time the region is marching towards a good future by increasing cooperation among themselves.