South Asia, as a region, has several unique and peculiar characteristics. The most unique one is the overwhelming size, resource and power of India. It has also been the battleground for enormous conflicts and struggles of a large mass of humanity. This region is one characterised by extraordinary geographical, political and socio-economic diversity. Its conflicts and cleavages are far deeper than those in several other third world arenas. The problem of maintaining political stability and institution building are compounded by massive strategic, economic and demographic postures. The problem of this region is that nations believe in conducting their relationships by exploiting regional discords rather than by underplaying them. The regional approach is always overshadowed, and, therefore,
sabotaged by bilateral differences. Due to this tendency, the process of the emergence of regional consciousness, though extremely desirable, is slow in South Asia. In this research work, all those major issues are discussed which affect the relations, positively or negatively, among the nations of the region, which covers Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Though China is not included in the region but India-China border issue is included in the thesis because this issue affects the security of the region.

This thesis is a library research based upon historical, analytical and speculative approach. The whole work is divided in eight chapters. In Chapter-I, effort has been made to identify the South Asia as a region and all the concerned countries are introduced in geographical, historical, political and demographical respects. Chapters II to VII deal with the major issues in the region. Chapter II deals with nuclear issue, which has engulfed the whole region, specially after the Pokharan explosion by India in 1974. Chapter III unfolds the importance of the Indian Ocean for the region. It speaks out how the activities of outside powers in Indian Ocean affect the security of the nations in South Asia. In Chapter IV, the menace of terrorism, militancy and separatism is discussed. This is one of the burning issues in South Asian region, which has resulted in the killings of numberless innocent persons. Chapter V points out the issue of
migrants and refugees who are present in almost every country of the region. Chapter VI throws light on the issue of water-sharing among different nations, the field in which a great potential of mutual cooperation is available. In Chapter VII, the issues related to boundaries are discussed. Chapter VIII deals with the pattern of regional cooperation specially brought about by the institutionalisation in the term of the South Asian Association for Regional cooperation (SAARC). Though the SAARC does not deal with all those political and strategic issues which have been discussed at length in this thesis, but to a large extent, it has given a chance to seven member nations to sit together for diplomatic conferences and to hold healthy dialogue towards cooperation to make the region self-reliant, which can provide a base and an environment to sort out the different regional issues.

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