CHAPTER – IV

THE KATHMANDU SUMMIT

Ever since the emergence of SAARC on 8 December 1985, South Asian nations adopted a new path of cooperation and mutual consultation to peacefully resolve their mutual problems and to embark upon collective diplomacy for securing its primary objective, i.e., the betterment of the standard of living of the people inhabiting the region. At Dhaka, the seven nations adopted the 1985 SAARC Charter which formalised the routine mechanisms for the smooth functioning of the SAARC process. Since the birth of SAARC at Dhaka in December 1985, annual summits had become a regular feature of the SAARC forum.

It was unanimously decided by the seven leaders who assembled at the second SAARC summit in Bangalore in 1986 that the next SAARC summit would be held in Kathmandu. The third summit held in Kathmandu in the first week of November 1987 offered a new chance to the leaders to renew their personal contact with one another, to review the cooperative activities under the framework of SAARC, consider steps to consolidate the progress made over the years and to take decision on the future course of activities in the light of past experience.¹

Preparatory Phase of the Third SAARC Summit

In the summer of 1987, a SAARC Ministerial meeting was held in New Delhi for preparing the ground for the Kathmandu summit. At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of India, the SAARC Council of Ministers held its third session in New Delhi from 18-19 June 1987 under the chairmanship of N.D. Tiwari, the External Affairs Minister of India and the leader of the Indian delegation. The ministers recommended to the Heads of State or Government of the SAARC countries that the third SAARC summit in Kathmandu would be held from 2-4 November 1987. They decided to hold the

fourth session of the Council of Ministers in Kathmandu immediately before the third SAARC summit.

Like the previous SAARC summits, the Kathmandu summit too witnessed a series of preparatory meetings. In fact, months of hectic activity had been carried out before Kathmandu could be made to host the third SAARC summit. One such meeting was the meeting of the Programme Committee for the third SAARC summit in Kathmandu, held on 27 October 1987. The main objective of the Programme Committee consisting of the senior officials of the member countries of SAARC was to prepare the necessary ground for the summit.²

That the Government of Nepal was determined to make the third summit at Kathmandu a great success became evident from the fact that since the Bangalore summit a year ago, the Nepalese officials had been devoting a lion’s share of their energies to this end. By the middle of October, they had completed the necessary infrastructure for the session, including a new building complex as a rest house for the Heads of State or Government who would be attending the meeting. It had been decided beforehand that the three-day summit would be held at the imposing Royal Nepal Academy.³

Foreign Secretaries and other high level dignitaries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka arrived in Kathmandu for attending the SAARC Standing Committee meeting at which K.P.S. Menon formally handed over charge to Narendra Bikram Shah, his Nepalese counterpart.⁴

The Foreign Ministers of the SAARC countries arrived at Kathmandu for a two-day pre-summit meeting beginning from 31 October. The SAARC Council of Ministers held its fourth session at Kathmandu as a preparatory to the third SAARC summit under the chairmanship of the Foreign Minister of Nepal.⁵

Addressing the inaugural session of the SAARC Foreign Ministers' meeting,

³. Patriot, 27 October 1987
⁴. The Times of India, 29 October 1987
Natwar Singh, the Minister of State for External Affairs, reiterated India's stand that economic sectors were the crucial underpinning for all regional cooperation activities. At the Foreign Ministers' meeting, it was decided that a regional convention on suppression of terrorism would be signed. During the Foreign Ministers' meeting, the Nepalese Foreign Minister, S. K. Upadhyaya, cautioned that it would be overambitious to seek rapid solutions to problems that had been haunting the member countries for decades. Nevertheless, after prolonged deliberations, the Foreign Ministers endorsed the draft on suppression of terrorism for approval by the Heads of State or Government and for signing by the ministers after the conclusion of the third summit. They also took into account the recommendations of the Standing Committee requesting the member-states to incorporate the following points in their policies or plans:

1. To achieve the goals of universal immunisation by 1990.
2. To promote primary education, maternal and child nutrition.
3. To ensure facilities of safe drinking water and adequate shelter before the year 2000.

The Kathmandu Summit

The regional politico-economic environment was rather gloomy at the time of the holding of the third SAARC summit at Kathmandu. New initiatives and dilemmas came to the limelight of the third summit meeting in the Himalayan Valley. Although some marginal improvements were visible in the bilateral climate of the South Asian horizon with the conclusion of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord in 1987, Indo-Pakistani relations were at a low ebb. Terrorism spearheaded its ugly head rapidly in most of the countries of the region. While failure of the monsoon had partially affected substantial portion of the region,

7. The Standing Committee held its meeting in Kathmandu under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and deliberated on the reports and progress made by various committees.
some countries were badly affected by severe drought. On the eve of the summit in Nepal, India and Pakistan clashed at Kathmandu on Afghanistan’s admission to the seven-nation forum and on nuclear non-proliferation. It should be mentioned here that just before the opening of the Kathmandu summit, the Government of Afghanistan submitted an application for membership to SAARC. The Afghan request was put forward and supported by India in informal consultations at the political level, during which Minister of State for External Affairs, Natwar Singh told his counterparts, namely, Zain Noorani (Pakistan), Mynopo Dawa Tsering (Bhutan), Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Shailendra Kumar Upadhyya (Nepal), A.C.S. Hameed (Sri Lanka) and Fatullah Jameel of Maldives, that New Delhi was very much delighted to welcome Afghanistan into the SAARC forum.9

The Ministers decided that SAARC Foreign Secretaries should thoroughly examine the issue of admission of new members. But Pakistan made it clear that none of the other SAARC members approved of the Indian support to Kabul and therefore, the Afghan application stood the chance of being rejected.

Since the SAARC Charter does not contain any provision for the admission of new members, observers or guests, the summit was confronted with the problem of adoption of unanimous resolution.10 No consensus could be reached on the admission of Afghanistan largely due to the conflicting views of Pakistan (which opposed the motion) and India (which supported it). Owing to the differences of opinion, the ministers suggested that the issue should be referred to the Standing Committee for due consideration and appraisal.11 In this context, it should be made clear that there was no dispute over the justification of Afghanistan’s application and it was unanimously agreed by all that historically Afghanistan belongs to the South Asian region and possesses its due share of cultural heritage. Pakistan simply agreed that it would be

11. The Telegraph, 9 November 1987
improper to adopt a final decision on the issue of Afghanistan’s admission to the regional forum so long as the Afghanistan problem was not resolved.

This brief analysis of the prevailing political atmosphere in South Asia simply revealed the fact that the masses of the seven South Asian countries were hardly in a mood to devote attention to the annual ritual of a summit. Nevertheless, the summit took place and its consequences were not entirely disappointing.

Amidst ceremonial grandeur and fanfare, seven South Asian Heads of State or Government stood together for the third time on a common platform – this time the venue was the Himalayan Valley of Kathmandu. As the leaders of the seven countries reaffirmed their faith in regional cooperation being the sole panacea for all regional problems, the third year of the SAARC had commenced with the inauguration of the forum’s third summit at Kathmandu on 2 November 1987. The Kathmandu summit opened with a call by its leaders for further consolidation and expansion of the areas of cooperation initiated by the seven-nation forum.

The collective and individual opinions, expressed at the summit’s opening session, revealed a reaffirmation of faith in SAARC as an instrument for the upliftment of the destinies of the people of South Asian countries. One new and distinctive point that seemed to have crept into the perception of all these leaders was the fact that each one of them acknowledged that it was crucial for SAARC to recognise that bilateral issues were bound to cast a shadow on the political scenario of the region and inevitably on the association’s prospects.

After a brief opening statement, the then Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi handed over the gavel to king Birendra of Nepal who assumed the chairmanship of SAARC till the next summit in Colombo.

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13. Ibid.
14. The Times of India, 3 November 1987
THE KATHMANDU DECLARATION

The Kathmandu declaration adopted by the seven Heads of State or Government at the concluding session of the third summit on 4 November 1987, echoes the sentiment of South-South cooperation by its fervent appeal to the developed and developing countries to channelise trade surpluses for development, revive growth in flagging economies, overcome debt difficulties, expand expert access to developing countries and stabilise rates more closely and provide emergency aid to the poorest countries.15

The concerted opinion of the summit leaders was that the external environment had a critical bearing on the economics of the South Asian region. They also expressed concern that growth in the global economy had slowed down with adverse consequences for the region.

The leaders had taken a serious note of the deteriorating ecological system in South Asia and the resulting natural disasters like flood, landslide, drought and cyclones. New Delhi particularly suggested the imperative need to maintain an ecological balance in the region and a concerted move to tackle the impending natural calamities like flood and drought.16

The seven leaders also decided that the cooperative measures should be progressively carried out within a broad framework of a long-term perspective.17 Herein they emphasised the need for further consolidation and rationalisation of the ongoing activities pursued within the contours of SAARC Charter. Keeping in mind the fact that the people of South Asia were willing to enhance their contacts with each other, the leaders decided to make SAARC increasingly responsive to popular needs and aspirations. They strongly believed that this in turn would bring about a qualitative improvement in the general atmosphere of the region contributing to peace, friendship and

17. The Hindustan Times, 6 November 1987
cooperation in the South Asian sub-system.

The Heads of state or Government of the seven South Asian nations stated that policies and practices of domination and intervention pursued by the Superpowers were primarily responsible for destroying peace in the international environment.\(^{18}\)

The seven leaders unanimously decided that the member countries of SAARC should put a ceiling on their defence expenditure, otherwise, their development activities would suffer from paucity of funds.

Furthermore, they highly appreciated the agreement reached between the United States and the Soviet Union on Intermediate Nuclear Forces and added that the understanding between the two should be treated as a precursor of future accords between them to curtail drastically their strategic nuclear missiles and to avoid the extension of the arms race to space. The SAARC leaders expressed their unequivocal support for the conclusion of the treaty forbidding vertical as well as horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Heads of State or Government expressed pleasure at the launching of SAARC Audio-Visual Exchange Programme coinciding with the opening of the third SAARC summit in Kathmandu. While taking into account the dates for the institution of the SAARC Chairs, Fellowships and Scholarships and the commencement of Organised Tourism among SAARC member countries, they directed that the plans of the SAARC Documentation Centre and the SAARC Youth Volunteer Programme should be put into practice as soon as possible.

The Summiteers satisfactorily noted that the signing of the Agreement which, in course of time, would pave the way for the setting up of a South Asian Food Security Reserve and expressed their opinion that this would enable the people

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of South Asia to meet food shortages and overcome acute crisis in the region.

The Heads of State or Government expressed their happiness at the conclusion of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism and regarded it as a significant step towards the prevention and elimination of terrorism from the region.19

The leaders who assembled at Kathmandu expressed their firm belief that the Kathmandu summit had succeeded in consolidating the gains of SAARC and imparted a renewed strength and direction to the future process of regional cooperation. They were also convinced that the Kathmandu summit had helped to usher in an environment conducive to the strengthening of this process.20

Achievements of the Kathmandu Summit

The Kathmandu summit is regarded as yet another epoch-making event in the history of SAARC’s onward journey. The third summit at Kathmandu had witnessed two significant achievements – the convention on terrorism and the food security reserve.21

After several rounds of negotiations among senior officials, Foreign Secretaries and Foreign Ministers, a convention on suppression of terrorism in the South Asian sub-continent was signed at the Ministerial level in the presence of the summit leaders.22 There was a clause in the convention, which stated that the convention while providing for the extradition of alleged terrorists was to be ratified by each SAARC government within a period of six months.

As laid down in the convention, the seven member states of SAARC promised to abstain from organising, instigating and participating in civil strife or terrorist acts in member countries. While emphasising the significance of relevant U. N. resolutions on terrorism, the articles of the convention

20. See Abul Ahsan, n. 1, p. 144.
22. Patriot, 21 November 1987

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stipulated that the member-states were not bound to extradite a fugitive or offender if it was unjust or inexpedient to do so.\textsuperscript{23}

The regional convention on suppression of terrorism though regarded as a concrete outcome of the deliberations in Kathmandu, was actually nothing more than a paper declaration. First, the convention had to be ratified by the seven member-states. Ratification, as it is known, is a very complex and time-consuming procedure. So far as India was concerned, ratification was not an easy matter. In fact, India had not ratified the two international conventions on terrorism it had signed earlier. In the case of India, the convention required not only the approval of the cabinet but also amendments to the Extradition Act and the Criminal Procedure Code.\textsuperscript{24}

Secondly, there is no provision in the convention, which renders it easier to extradite terrorists in the absence of bilateral extradition treaties. In the South Asian context, only India and Nepal possess such a treaty which implies that in spite of the convention being ratified by member states individually, its provisions can be enforced only in those countries which have bipartite agreements. For instance, India can not compel Pakistan to extradite anyone under the convention since there exists no extradition treaty between the two South Asian giants.\textsuperscript{25}

Thus, it is evident that in the absence of bilateral extradition treaties among the member states of SAARC, the convention loses its significance. The convention can not fulfil its main purpose, namely, to check the menace of terrorism, because of such difficulties, which beset the process of implementation of the convention.

Another milestone achieved by the SAARC leaders at Kathmandu was the agreement for setting up a South Asian Food Security Reserve of 2.19 lakh tonnes, out of which India would contribute a lion’s share of 1,53,000 tonnes.

\textsuperscript{23} For a detailed discussion on the Convention relating to Suppression of Terrorism, see \textit{SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism}, SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu, 1987.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{The Times of India}, 14 November 1987.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid}
This was indeed a statesman-like move by the summit leaders. The leaders hoped that the food reserve would provide a basic safeguard against food crises and scarcity situations in the region.\(^{26}\) The decision to set up the 200,000 tonnes food security reserve reflected the will of the South Asian countries for attaining collective self-reliance.\(^{27}\) Although most of the regional states made remarkable progress in the attainment of food self-sufficiency, their rate of progress had not always been equal and the dangers of natural and artificial calamities remained as earlier. It had been pointed out by the critics that the food reserve\(^{28}\) seemed to have little importance to the bigger countries like India because the reserve would be of hardly more than 2 lakh tonnes of food grains. Nevertheless, it could be of immense help to the smaller nations like the Maldives.\(^{29}\) Undoubtedly, the quantity of the reserve was very small, but at the same time, the signing of the agreement had paved the way for its enhancement in due course of time. As for example, Pakistan had done so by increasing the amount of its contribution voluntarily. Those who had wholeheartedly supported the idea of setting up a food reserve pointed out that although the food reserve is a modest one, what should be borne in mind is its crucial role to eradicate hunger from the region.\(^{30}\) Moreover, the establishment of the food reserve demonstrated the determination of the Summiteers of taking the organisation ahead. South Asia is subject to unpredictable, volatile and uncertain climate. Sometimes excessive rain and sometimes drought have devastating effect on this region. Hence the leaders attached immense importance to the fact that the region should be self-sufficient in food supplies and should be capable of maintaining an adequate stock to thwart future calamities in the region.

\(^{26}\) See *Third SAARC Summit: Kathmandu*, n.18, p. 16.
\(^{28}\) The SAARC leaders at Kathmandu recognised the significance of regional and sub-regional collective self-reliance with regard to food security as a means of combating the adverse effect of natural and man-made calamities. Realising this, they stressed upon the need for the establishment of an emergency food security reserve by member countries of SAARC. It would be administrated by the SAARC Food Security Reserve Board. Moreover, the reserve would consist of an adequate stock of wheat or rice or a combination of both. For an elaborate discussion on the SAARC Food Security Reserve, see *Agreement on Establishing The SAARC Food Security Reserve*, SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu, 1988.
\(^{29}\) *The Telegraph*, 9 November 1987.
\(^{30}\) Bishwa Pradhan, n.27, p. 55
Considerable degree of anxiety was expressed throughout the world about the ecological imbalance and its grave impact upon the South Asian region. The SAARC leaders at the third summit in Kathmandu expressed their profound concern at the fast and continuing degradation of the environment including massive damages and destruction of forests in the region. They particularly noted that the region was afflicted with natural disasters such as floods, droughts, landslides, cyclones and tidal waves which had severe impact causing vast human misery. As these natural calamities and environmental degradation were seriously undermining the development process and prospects of the member countries, the SAARC leaders decided to intensify regional cooperation with a view to strengthening their disaster management capabilities. They directed the Secretary-General to commission a study on it in a well-planned framework.31

From the very inception of the SAARC process, the leaders realised that the cherished goals of the SAARC would remain unfulfilled unless and until the core areas like industry, trade and finance would be brought within the purview of the SAARC. For the first time at Kathmandu a discussion on this topic was carried on by the leaders which revealed a willingness on the part of the member-states to examine the possibility of the inclusion of the core areas of cooperation in the SAARC agenda. In this context, a concept paper on the establishment of a Multi-Sectoral Investment Institution prepared by Bangladesh was given due consideration.32

The Charter of SAARC lays down that the membership is restricted only to the seven founding states. But in the process of gradual evolution, the need was felt to work out modalities for possible future expansion of membership as well as granting permission to other interested countries and regional organisations to attain observer/guest status in the association. The Summiteers at Kathmandu directed the Standing Committee of Foreign Secretaries to look into this matter in order to cater to the future evolution of

31. Third SAARC Summit: Kathmandu, n.18, p. 15.
32. The Hindustan Times, 3 November 1987
Informal discussion of bilateral and controversial issues is usually held in various SAARC summits. Like the two earlier summits, during the Kathmandu summit too, the leaders exchanged their views on bilateral problems informally and made a couple of important decisions. For example, at the Kathmandu summit, Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, and Mohammad Khan Junejo, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, while reviewing their bilateral relations, decided (i) to resume official level talks over Siachen glacier issue, (ii) to resume Foreign Secretary level meetings for discussing the Non-aggression Treaty proposed by Pakistan and Peace and Friendship Treaty proposed by India, and also the draft proposal for non-attack on each other’s nuclear installations, (iii) to hold secretary-level talks for improving trade and economic cooperation and prevention of illegal border crossings, and (iv) to hold a meeting of the surveyor-generals for demarcating maritime boundaries in the Sir Creek area in the Rann of Kutch. These decisions had indirectly acted as a catalyst to create a better understanding of each other’s point of view on a number of issues of mutual concern and to promote a friendly atmosphere in the region.

Problems faced by the Kathmandu Summit

Like the previous two summits, at the Kathmandu meeting also differences arose between the two major partners of SAARC, namely, India and Pakistan. Conflicting views were shared by India and Pakistan over Afghanistan’s entry into the SAARC as well as on the issues of nuclear non-proliferation. New Delhi was favourably inclined to welcome Afghanistan into the SAARC. In fact, the Afghan request was put forward by India in informal sessions at the political level. But Pakistan strongly opposed this move. At the same time it was asserted by the Pakistani delegation that since none of the other members had approved of the Indian support to Kabul, the Afghan application should be rejected. Pakistan argued that as the Governor of Afghanistan was under

33. Bishwa Pradhan, n.27, p.59.
Soviet siege the question of its getting the membership of SAARC appeared to be ridiculous. In informal parleys, the Minister of State for External Affairs, Natwar Singh, refuted the Pakistani allegation that Afghanistan was not a sovereign independent nation to be eligible for SAARC membership. Further, he asserted that Afghanistan was a member of the United Nations Organisation (U.N.O.), of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the Group of 77. So, Pakistan should not raise its objections while granting permission to Afghanistan to become a member of SAARC. Moreover, India insisted for the inclusion of Afghanistan into the regional grouping mainly because the regionality of SAARC would not be complete without Afghanistan and Burma. However, the issue of Afghanistan’s admission was dropped on the ground that it would be automatically qualified for membership of SAARC as soon as it returned to its original democratic sovereign independent non-aligned character.

India had clashed with the Pakistani delegation when the latter insisted for inclusion in SAARC’s Kathmandu summit declaration a reference to its call for a regional approach to nuclear non-proliferation. It was at Kathmandu only that for the first time in a SAARC document the issue of non-proliferation had been mentioned. The draft Kathmandu declaration, which the Summiteers adopted, contained a paragraph on the controversial issue of nuclear non-proliferation; but there was no reference to regional collective arrangement that Pakistan desired.

Addressing the inaugural session of the SAARC summit, the Pakistani Premier, Mohammad Khan Junejo, stated that a joint renunciation of the nuclear option as a binding instrument would reassure the people of South Asia. None of the countries were willing to produce nuclear weapons. Thus, Junejo stated that it was easy to sign an agreement on the subject. However, Pakistan failed to induct the concept of regional nuclear non-proliferation into

36. Ibid.
the draft declaration.\textsuperscript{37} Instead, it was decided that member countries of SAARC would lend their support to honour a treaty prohibiting horizontal as well as vertical proliferation in the global context.

Whether SAARC should seek foreign assistance for development purposes or depend solely upon internal sources was the million dollar question on which the member countries differed among themselves.\textsuperscript{38} A long debate was held on this subject. The debate acquired significance in the backdrop of Bangladesh’s move for setting up a Multi-Sectoral Investment Institution, which was meant for attracting external resources to help SAARC countries in fulfilling their demands. India vehemently opposed the idea of linking regional development to availability of foreign funds and raised doubts whether SAARC could accept capital form the commercial market when international financial institutions themselves were suffering from a paucity of funds.\textsuperscript{39}

After prolonged deliberations on this knotty proposal, the officials recommended that a Working Group should look into the problem as to whether it would be better to establish a mechanism for the identification of those projects which were capable of harnessing manpower, technology and financial resources from within the region. India opposed the concept on the ground that foreign aid never comes without strings attached to it. Moreover, an excessive dependence on aid affects the SAARC countries’ drive for collective self-reliance violating the principles of SAARC Charter. While this controversial issue was being debated, Pakistan suggested that SAARC should explore ways and means of collaboration with the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN).\textsuperscript{40} This issue was settled by agreeing to the fact that the SAARC Standing Committee would be asked to look into the question of relationship with outside agencies, including ASEAN.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{The Times of India}, 3 November 1987.
\textsuperscript{38} \textit{The Hindutan Times}, 3 November 1987.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid}
\textsuperscript{40} Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) was formed on 8 August 1967. Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand are its founding members.
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{The Telegraph}, 9 November 1987.
Besides, with regard to the question of Indo-Sri Lanka Accord,\(^42\) most of the countries of the region, barring Pakistan, appreciated the signing of the accord and lent their full support to it hoping that it would help in resolving the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka and the resulting violence, thereby contributing to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, and preserving its character as multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious pluralistic society where all citizens could live a peaceful life. In this context, mention should be made of the laudable references to the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement made by the king of Bhutan and President of Maldives. The king of Bhutan Jigme Singhye Wangchuk said that the most remarkable event in South Asia during the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi as the Chairperson of SAARC was the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement. The President of Maldives, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom said that everyone under the banner of SAARC was pleased with the new understanding reached between the two brotherly countries, as a result of the accord.\(^43\)

India wanted to incorporate the reference of Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in the Kathmandu declaration but due to Pakistan's strong opposition and on the ground of its bilateral character, it was not mentioned in the Joint Communiqué of the SAARC summit.

\(^{42}\) President J.R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka and the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, signed a bilateral agreement on 29 July 1987. By virtue of this accord, India was allowed to exercise a politico-military role for ushering in inter-ethnic peace and tranquility in the Sri Lankan island. It is officially known as "India-Sri Lanka Agreement to Establish Peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka". Due to this accord, India acquired a definite role in the internal as well as external affairs of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka was no longer in a position to seek military or financial assistance from any country without the prior approval of India. Thus, it is evident that the terms of the treaty could not satisfy the Sri Lankan side and the relations between India and Sri Lanka further embittered. As an aftermath of the signing of this agreement, violent agitations broke out in Southern, Western and Central Sri Lanka. The accord was welcomed by the governments of the United States and the Soviet Union. Despite the fact that the Sinhalese Community of Sri Lanka was vehemently opposed to the conclusion of this agreement, measures were taken swiftly to implement it. For a detailed analysis of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, see Bhabani Sengupta, *South Asian Perspectives: seven nations in conflict and cooperation*, B.R. Publishing Corp. Delhi, 1988, pp 245-260.

\(^{43}\) *The Hindu*, 3 November 1987.
Thus, it is seen that although Pakistan could not mobilise the support of the rest of the SAARC countries in refusing to recognise the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 29 July 1987, it achieved some sort of a victory in stalling a commendatory reference to it in the SAARC declaration.\footnote{44}

\textit{Concluding Observations}

The third summit at Kathmandu failed to live up to the expectation and excitement amongst the members that the meeting would be able to generate a lot of vigour and enthusiasm necessary for the future progress of SAARC. One of the major achievements of the Kathmandu summit was the Convention on Suppression of Terrorism which marked considerable progress beyond the preliminary stage of a "final act". This was a notable achievement of the summit since it was concluded at a time when terrorism was raising its ugly head in all the member countries of SAARC. SAARC leaders expressed their happiness over the fact that their officials were able to identify previous acts of terrorism, which paved the way for an agreement on signing this convention. This was indeed a significant achievement, for efforts to define terrorism often led to political controversies. Such dangers are especially real in regions like South Asia, which abound in terrorist groups of various persuasions. The very fact that the SAARC leaders succeeded in overcoming the difficulties in tackling the problem of terrorism was indicative of their willingness not to allow political differences thwart attempts to eliminate the scourge of terrorism. As a matter of fact, terrorism had created a vicious atmosphere throughout the region, which was very harmful for the future evolution of SAARC. In actual practice, however, the picture turned out to be rather gloomy as the convention was marred by loopholes and disparities on the legal aspects of extradition of terrorists. Moreover, it was not an alternative for bilateral agreements on extradition between the concerned countries.\footnote{45}

\footnote{44. \textit{The Hindustan Times}, 24 November 1987.}
\footnote{45. \textit{The Times of India}, 5 November 1987}
India was not willing to ratify the convention since the process of ratification is a very complex one.

Doubts were expressed in some quarters about the inherent practical weaknesses of the convention. Critics pointed out that the convention listed internationally recognised offences as terroristic; it did not provide an appropriate definition of terrorism and a terrorist. More importantly, even after the signing of the convention, it was not easy to extradite terrorists in the absence of bilateral extradition treaties. Thus, the convention was unable to fulfil its major purpose, namely, to eradicate the menace of terrorism. For in the South Asian region only India and Nepal possess such extradition treaties between them.

Another major outcome of the summit was the agreement on the creation of a food security reserve of 2,00,000 tonnes in stocks to be contributed by the members in their individual capacity. The decision reflected a degree of stability that the region had achieved in the field of agriculture. It also reiterated the fundamental principles of SAARC that the member-states could draw upon the resources of the region, as soon as they faced acute food crisis, before looking for help elsewhere. While the food security reserve represented a positive move forward by SAARC, it had also been found to be rather impractical. The ownership and distribution of the reserve remained fraught with problems that arise in case of bilateral deals; hence, it had been left to individual member countries to hold discussions and negotiate agreements for the release of the required stock. Thus, doubts were raised by the critics about the efficacy of the food reserve proposal.

The third most important achievement of the Kathmandu summit was the decision taken up by the leaders to commission a study on the protection of the environment and the mitigation of natural disasters. The South Asian region is very much prone to natural calamities. These natural disasters and environmental degradation severely hamper the developmental process and prospects of the member countries. In order to tide over this problem, the leaders of SAARC decided to identify regional cooperation with a view to
strengthening their disaster management capabilities. Although this decision was welcomed by all it could not be implemented in practice because of the lack of adequate seriousness on the part of the authorities concerned at different levels within a nation in devising concrete measures. In order to make this effective, coordination among the member countries and greater initiative on the part of the member states of SAARC were necessary. But, unfortunately, these were totally missing in case of SAARC.

It should be mentioned here that the Kathmandu declaration failed to welcome the Indo-Sri Lankan peace agreement because of Pakistan’s objections. Islamabad was simply reluctant to go along with what the official Indian delegation considered as a major achievement and which the Bhutanese tried their level best to mention in the final document as an outstanding instance of cooperation within the group.

At the Kathmandu meeting, SAARC leaders wanted to broaden the long-term SAARC perspective to highlight the measures to expand and strengthen areas of regional cooperation not only through concrete and action-oriented programmes but through the coordination of national policies to find solutions of common problems. This was indeed a welcome approach. But in order to make it effective it was necessary, on the part of the South Asian governments, to make it sure that the SAARC spirit should be promoted by people-to-people contact. It is ironical to note that while the SAARC leaders focused on the role of academics, professionals and non-governmental organisations in this field, very little was done to make it easier for the people of South Asia to visit one another or communicate among themselves through their publications. It thus became an inescapable fact that due to the lack of enough goodwill and mutual trust, the Kathmandu summit could not fulfil its desired goals.

To sum up, it should be stated that despite the signing of the agreements on maintaining a food reserve for member countries and on suppressing the

46. The Hindu, 6 November 1987
47. The Hindustan Times, 6 November 1987.
menace of terrorism, the SAARC summit in Kathmandu did not live up to Rajiv Gandhi's description of it as "a concord for cooperation." Rather, the meeting appeared to resemble, again in the late Prime Minister's words, "a concourse for controversy". In fact, the third summit was spoiled by Pakistan's attempt to thwart and oppose all the moves proposed by India. Thus, it is truly said that the Kathmandu summit failed to evoke any euphoria about the future of this association.