CONCLUSIONS

South Asia is one of the most conflict-prone regions in the world. The nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in May 1998 have shifted its entire security focus from the conventional to that of the nuclear. These tests have further complicated the already existing fear of instabilities in the region, which has gained enormous ascendancy. Such a view is grounded in the fear that the unresolved Indo-Pak conflict over Kashmir could any time trigger a conventional warfare between the two countries, thus ultimately leading to a nuclear clash in the region with far-reaching global implications. However, as we entered the new millennium, opportunities paved the way by showing up the possibility of the coming up of a new century of cooperative security different from that of the pre-nuclear South Asian security dilemma.

South Asian happened to be a region of intensive security dilemma. Threats to the security of the states in the region have not only been emanating from within but also from the outside. These states are being confronted by both the conventional and non-conventional threats. Despite the fact that India and Pakistan, the two core states in the region, had declared themselves as nuclear weapons states in the year 1998, their new stature failed to liberate them from insecurity or to overcome their mutual mistrust and predicaments. Moreover, the strategy and approach to deal with the security dilemma in the region has remained more or less conventional. However, recently the non-conventional security threats like poverty, governance, water, food, energy and environment have become more pronounced, whereas the hard and un-demarcated borders have remained the major source of conflict in the region. Though globalization has changed the nature of borders from hard to soft for the flow of capital goods and technology, this region is still suffering from limitations of hard borders, which has jeopardized the process of regional integration. This could be due to the trust deficit in the region in general and India and Pakistan in particular.
Though the whole world is moving rapidly in the direction of peace, stability and development, South Asia continues to be gravely threatened by conflicts and multiple security threats both from within and without. In the context of rapidly changing regional, strategic, economic, political and social environment in the region, the ideas of peace, security and development have to be redefined in the broader framework. Security has always remained a serious concern for the states in South Asia but the understanding about security is very limited at the conceptual as well as operational level. The traditional notion of security and its operation in the South Asian region has done a major damage to the security of people in the region. Even nuclearization of the region has failed to provide any security to the people.

Chapter I provided a detailed account of the region. South Asia is an important region, which occupies a unique strategic position in the world. Its population amounts to one fifth of the total world population. South Asia has had deep wounds of alien rule, which damaged the ethno-cultural, socio-economic, politico-strategic, natural heritage and human value system of this region. The hangover of the unstable insecure, violent and volatile cold war on South Asia still persists. There is a big disparity among the countries of this region. It is most impoverished region in the world, where about half of the region’s total population live below poverty line. The ratio of resources to population is very low. The pressure of population growth is increasing on the limited amount of natural resources. Almost all the countries of this region suffer from a series of environmental problems in the form of deforestation, soil erosion and fresh water scarcity. Moreover, the presence of these factors also precludes the possibilities of mutual cooperation among these states for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. These problems lead to the situation of conflict among these countries.

South Asia is also a region of great disparity in the terms of the size, population as well as military capability of its units. The region has been known by many unresolved conflicts for a long time. There are a lot of disputes between India and its neighbouring countries. South Asian countries
are also facing numerous internal cleavages and conflicts. These conflicts involve cross-section of classes, social strata, ethnic and linguistic groups, religions, communities and geographical regions. Religion plays a dominant role in the intra- and inter-state relations of the region. Pakistan and Bangladesh are created on the basis of religion. Religion based confrontations have been a major source of long standing tension and periodic hostilities between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The conflict has remained the dominant modes of inter-state politics in the region. In 1985 by establishing South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), an attempt was made to translate the idea of regionalism into practice. However, the SAARC could not take off as a regional body. The disproportionate size of the economies of member states and the fear of unequal distribution of the cost and benefit of regional cooperation has often led to the indifferent behaviour of the South Asian countries towards SAARC. They have failed to realize that the benefit of regionalism would outweigh its dangers and shortcomings. If the South Asian states are able to forge an effective regionalism, built upon and around the strength of the region, the rewards would be significant for each and all. It would be a win-win situation.

South Asia is one of the most conflict prone regions of the world. Inter-state relations in South Asia are characterised by the existence of a number of bilateral disputes which proved to be too difficult to resolve. While some of them are rooted in the historical past, others are in the current dynamics of bilateral as well as intra-state relations. The lists of these disputes are too long. But in this chapter, we have discussed the major bilateral disputes. In face, inter-state relations involves territorial disputes. In fact, inter-state relations involves territorial disputes from the colonial past like Indo-Pak dispute, the dispute over the sharing of water resources of common rivers including that of the Ganga like between India and Bangladesh, intra-state conflict involving ethno-linguistic and religious groups with cross-border affiliation and conflicting economic interests and other issues etc. Thus, such
issues have actually been the source of conflicts in South Asia. However, these issues have the potential to escalate into violent conflicts at the same time they are also proving to be a source of bilateral or multilateral cooperation among the states. In fact, the nature of such conflicts is such that their resolution needs continued collective efforts of the sovereign state actors across borders.

India is the core state of the region with common boundaries and maritime links with common boundaries and maritime links with rest of the member states of South Asia. It has been involved in running disputes with almost all the other South Asian countries. As India and Sri Lanka have had serious differences over the Tamil question with Sri Lanka suspecting its fostering irredentism being supported from across the narrow waters and by deed. Similarly, India-Bangladesh tensions are the consequence of several irritants, not the least among them being the questions of cross-border movements and incursions, alleged Indian involvement in the Chakma insurgency, unresolved dispute over their common maritime and land boundaries, the (now resolved) teen bigha dispute, the Farakka Barrage and sharing of river water issues. India-Nepal relations for their part are troubled by the presence of large numbers of Indian migrants in Nepal, land-locked Nepal’s economic dependence on India and its need for equitable and separate trade and transit arrangements with its southern neighbours in their internal affairs. India exercises virtual control over the external policies of Bhutan and the 1988 coup attempt in Male has been seen by some as providing India the opportunity to project its power across the ocean and establish its influence in the Republic of Maldives.

However, after the years of failed negotiations and efforts towards cooperation the countries of South Asia would have to be serious to resolve their differences and simultaneously carry forward the process of peace, economic developments and cooperation with all earnestness. Therefore, the concept of conflict resolution in South Asia is not entirely new. In fact, the resolution of some issues generated a remarkable confidence among the
nations in the region and created a hope the other conflicts could also be resolved amicably.

The chapter II included a theoretical analysis of the concepts of conflict and conflict resolution. Conflict is a state of ongoing opposition between two or more parties. However, conflict in itself is not necessarily a bad thing: as an essential ingredient for social change, conflict can be both an opportunity and a threat to development. Conflict exits when a problem arises but there is no clear or immediate agreement on how the parties involved in the conflict can solve the problem. Conflicts are usually complex, concerned with personal, local, national or international issues in which there are several interrelated disputes.

Conflict is about the legitimate distribution of future costs and benefits among the inmates of a society. It often arises because somebody benefits at someone else's expense. Conflict is inevitable in the process of development. Conflicts are contextualised in space and time and dynamic in nature. It abounds all forms of human activity. It is about change in the social fabric of society in terms of distribution of resources, inter-state and intra-state relations. Conflict exists when two people wish to carry out acts which are mutually inconsistent. Conflict is resolved when some mutually consisted set of actions is worked out.

Conflict is a process characterised by stages of initiation, escalation, controlled maintenance, de-escalation and some kind of termination (e.g. settlement, resolution). It is a kid of behaviour on the part of persons, groups or nations. It is the pivotal of all strategic thought. Conflict is an all-pervasive social phenomena. It is a situation where different actors are pursuing incompatible goals. Conflict exists where at least two parties try to pursue the same scarce resources at the same time. Conflicts are not static. They are dynamic. Conflicts occurs at different levels of social life: inter-personal, inter-group, international and interorganisational. Broadly speaking, the concept of conflict encompasses overt and latent interactions amongst contending groups and interests which may be non-violent or otherwise. The diverse
urges, aspirations and expectations of these groups constitute the propelling force behind perennial nature of the conflict. But actual conflict situations are precipitated when these components of propelling force are translated by the leadership of those groups into specific demands for prestige, status, share in power and concrete material gains. Conflicts can be constructive as well as destructive.

Conflict is defined as a situation when two or more parties, with perceived incompatible goals, seek to undermine each other’s goal-seeking capability. It is a disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. Subjective and objective approaches are the two main approaches through which meanings are attributed to the various elements of conflicts. There are direct and indirect conflicts. Conflicts can be realistic or non-realistic. It highlights the claims to be considered. It proves the platform for immediate and direct expression of rival claims. Conflict is always about change. It is about change in social structure and institutions in the distribution of resources, in human relations at many levels. Conflicts also lead to cooperation among parties for peaceful resolution.

Conflict resolution deals with the affairs of humans. It aims at understanding the sources and dynamics of conflict in order to develop more effective strategies and mechanisms for resolving human conflicts. It requires an integrated approach to the problem. Conflict resolution is a social situation where the armed conflicting parties in a agreement resolve to peacefully live with and dissolve their basic incompatibilities and henceforth cease to use arms against each other. Conflict resolution is a situation where the possibility of the use of force is reduced. It means the moving of entire system of actors, issues and actions away from a focus on incompatibilities to a focus on compatibility. It refers to a state of affairs in which the parties to a conflict agree to resolve the conflict by mutual efforts. And the solutions are to be acceptable to all of them without any condition imposed either by any of the parties involved in the conflict or by the Third party. Conflict resolution means
finding a solution to the basic incompatibilities between the relevant parties in which such a way that they voluntarily express their consensus and satisfaction on the solutions to the conflict.

Mediation, negotiations, good offices etc. are the techniques of conflict resolution which are used for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. Unilateral, bilateral and multilateral are the variants of conflict resolution. Among the various paradigms of conflict resolution, the world society paradigm, power politics paradigm, and analytical problem-solving paradigm are the most important. The world society paradigm advocates that conflict resolution offers a more viable outcome of conflict, because it converts the conflicts into a shared problem. It sets up a process in which both sides of conflict participate equally in finding solution which are acceptable to both the parties. Analytical problem solving approach is an advancement on the power politics paradigm. The power politics model is premised on the unrestricted behaviour of states as sovereign territorial entities and on the prolific use of force or the threat to use such force to settle dispute among them. Whereas, analytical problem solving approach suggests the resolution of conflict with the help of a mediator who facilitates the parties to resolve the conflict. Analytical problem solving approach aims at minimising the role of power in any form to the maximum extent for the peaceful resolution of conflict. It lays emphasis on the mutual and constructive efforts among the parties in the conflict for its resolution. The resolution of the conflict, it further reiterates, has to be equally beneficial for all the parties to the conflict.

In Chapter III Indo-Bangladesh conflict and conflict resolution has been discussed in detail. The sharing of the Ganga water has been the most conspicuous issue affecting the Indo-Bangladesh relations. This conflict has been the main conflict since the construction of Farakka Barrage. This conflict has been one of the longest lasting and most interesting of international water conflicts. The Ganga River system is equally important for both India and Bangladesh. For India it is like a lifeline because it serves in several ways like hydropower generation, irrigation and navigation etc. For Bangladesh its uses
are several such as irrigation, power generation, fisheries, navigation etc. Thus, it has been the most serious conflict between both the countries because different governments of the respective countries, at different times, took this issue from varying point of views. India and Bangladesh went through a long-drawn out dispute over sharing of Ganga water which was marked by upstream proactive action, big country insecurity, the lower riparian’s water security fear, suspicion (real or exaggerated), legacy of mistrust and different negotiation tools. In fact, India’s contention was that as an upper riparian country it has every right to utilize waters flowing in its territory. The diversion at Farakka does not create any shortage of waters into Bangladesh. Bangladesh’s contention was that the withdrawal of waters by India at Farakka which has caused scarcity of waters into its territory is illegal, unjustified and inhumane. This problem remained unsolved during the Pakistan period. But the problem took a serious turn after the emergence of Bangladesh. Both these countries tried to resolve the problem of sharing of Ganga waters. For this purpose, both the countries concluded many agreements and accords to solve the problem. But they could not reach to any permanent solution for a long time. Because the problem was not only the scarcity of water during lean season but was that of difference of perceptions, approaches attitudes of both parties towards each other. Both India and Bangladesh prepared two separate schemes to augment the dry season flow of the Ganga. The experts from Bangladesh proposed to augment the Ganga flows by building storage facilities in the upper Ganga basin. The Indian side did not favour the Bangladesh proposal, as the plan would have required involving Nepal in the negotiation process. India perceived the Ganga water conflict as a purely bilateral one. India proposed an alternative scheme of augmentation of the Ganga flow by constructing a Brahmaputra-Ganga link canal, to diver the water from the Brahmaputra to Ganga. This suggestion was unacceptable to Bangladesh on the ground that the link canal excavation will cause loss of fertile land as well as displacement of population in the country.
Due to different perspectives of both the countries the nature of the conflict continued to the fluid over the last forty years. Therefore the nature of the agreements which were concluded from time to time to resolve this conflict has also been different. The most important agreement among these is December 1996 agreement. Earlier to this agreement many techniques of conflict resolution has been used like bargaining, consultations etc. but there was a lack of mutual understanding. In 1996 some unique circumstances developed and their historic alignment resulted in conflict resolution initiatives. On December 12, 1996 the leaders of both the countries signed a treaty that envisages the sharing of Ganga water between the two countries for the next 30 years. This agreement has been heralded as an important step in Indo-Bangladesh relations. It has provided an opportunity for stability within the conflict through a long-term agreement, as opposed to the varied short-term agreements previously utilized.

If seen from an overview perspective in the post-colonial period, the Ganga treaty reflects growing maturity about the tenets of sharing of an international river. The treaty comes close to the established principles of international law on non-navigational use of international waters. Water sharing has been done more or less on a 50:50 sharing formula. The internationally acknowledged principles of ‘fairness’, ‘equity’ and no harm rule to either side are mentioned three times in the treaty. The agreement was considered as the landmark event by both the sides. This is a welcome development. While the concerns of both India and Bangladesh were as far as possible accommodated in the Treaty the fundamental element in the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty is good faith of the parties. Every aspect of the issues involved cannot be spelt out in the Treaty, as some of it can be unforeseen. Even if the Treaty contains ‘water-tight’ provisions it is the sincerity and trust between countries which will play a vital role in adhering to the treaty.

Indo-Pakistan conflict and conflict resolution has been discussed at length in Chapter IV. The conflict over Kashmir between India and Pakistan is
the moot question of fourth chapter. Kashmir is both a cause and the consequence of the India-Pakistan conundrum. Kashmir conflict is now especially alarming because it has implications for the international system itself. The region is the site and the source of some of the world's major terrorist groups. India and Pakistan have fought three wars in Kashmir and their conflict now contains the seeds of a nuclear holocaust. Since the emergence of India and Pakistan as independent states in 1947, the Kashmir issue has dominated the adversarial relations between India and Pakistan. As the two dominions could not make a smooth transition to independence, their relations with each other as sovereign countries, became strained right from inception. In fact, their relations with each other were based on hatred and fear psychosis. The political and religions leadership on both sides of the border were suspicious of the designs of each other. The fight over Kashmir in 1948 added fuel to fire and till now Kashmir is being raked up as the major bone of contention. The two countries again engaged in war in 1965 and 1971. After the 1965 they signed Tashkent Agreement and after 1971 war the Simla Agreement was concluded in 1972.

As a result of 1971 war, the east wing of Pakistan became an independent country and came to be known as Bangladesh. There have been occasional happenings of cross-border firing by both the countries since then. In fact, the international border and the LOC between both the countries had always been live, the culmination of which was Kargil problem, and the massive movement of forces to the border. The alleged cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir became another serious problem between India and Pakistan which has added fuel to the fire. The not-so-good relations, political immaturity, fundamentalist approach to solve the problems and fear psychosis on both sides resulted in a huge loss of men and material during all these years. Both the countries are still continuing with hatred and enmity towards each other. As a result they have been spending huge amounts on defence. The position of India and Pakistan on Kashmir are diametrically opposite.
However, bilateral diplomatic attempts at conflict resolution and normalizing India Pakistan resolutions have been frustrating and have generally ended in failure. They have fluctuated from the promise of the Lahore Declaration (February 1999) to the denouncement of the Agra Summit (July 2001) to the hope of the Delhi Summit (April 2005). In fact, the Kashmir problem always became an insurmountable hurdle whenever there is any effort to normalize and strengthen mutual ties. In such a scenario both the countries should make sincere and serious efforts to normalise relations with each other and permanent resolution of the conflict. But in reality, conflict resolutions had a limited role in the resolution of the Indo-Pak conflict.

The last chapter is about the comparative analysis of the Indo-Bangladesh conflict and Indo-Pak conflicts. Conflict resolution has been successful in the case of Indo-Bangladesh whereas in the case of Indo-Pakistan it failed to yield the desired result. Conflict resolution between India and Bangladesh has been one of the significant developments with regard to conflict resolution in South Asia, which has been resolved peacefully. It marked an end to one of the most complex conflicts in the region. Therefore, the experience gained at conflict resolution in India-Bangladesh water conflict provides a possibility of the replication of the same in the case of other conflicts in the regions. But the same approach has not been successful in the case of Indo-Pak conflict. Probably it was because of the fact that the characteristics, which were present in the case of Indo-Pak Kashmir conflict, were absent in the case of Indo-Bangladesh conflict. The notable features in both the conflicts were not the similar. Therefore, the real value of conflict resolution measures as seen in the Indo-Bangladesh case seems to be difficult to achieve in the case of the Indo-Pak conflict. In Indo-Bangladesh case bilateral negotiations have been able to make the two adversaries change their behaviour, redefine their goal with a view to reach a compromise and solution. Whereas the bilateralism is very limited in the case of Indo-Pak conflicts. Thus, all the efforts at conflict resolution in Indo-Pak conflict failed to resolve the Kashmir issue even though the list of confidence building and conflict resolution measures has been pretty long.
In the absence of factors, which were present in the Indo-Bangladesh case, the conflict resolution approach in Indo-Pak conflict cannot produce the desired results. Though this approach could not resolve the Indo-Pak conflict, but it will certainly strengthen the viewpoint that cooperation and mutual understanding facilitate peaceful resolution of the conflicts without making use of violence and war. Thus it shows that continuous efforts in the direction of conflict resolution would bring the issue towards permanent solution. The India-Bangladesh water conflict was also not resolved overnight. It remained simmering for over two decades before its final resolution in 1997. Experience gained in the successful resolution of Indo-Bangladesh conflict shows that an evolutionary step-by-step approach seems to work the best. This approach helped in bringing peace through converting the volatile nature of the issue into normal one. It paved the way for further steps towards the permanent resolution of the conflict. However in the case of Indo-Pak conflict the Kashmir issue turned out to be a hard nut. Pakistan identifies Kashmir as the “core” issue that must first be settled before the bilateral conflict resolution process can evolve. India, for its part, favour a multipronged approach in which Kashmir issue finds inclusion within a broad agenda pertaining to other bilateral contentions. Besides, Pakistan would like external mediation to resolve the issue, while India wishes to proceed on the basis of strict bilateralism.

Conflict resolution approach draws conclusion from the study of the causes of war, issues of disarmament and arms control as conflict dynamics. This involves quantitative and qualitative studies. Conflict resolution with its ambition to understand the causes of violence finds ways to reduce/remove violence. Since in South Asia conflict between India and Pakistan flares up for a variety of reasons (i) pre and post-colonial border alignments, the legacies of which are fiercely defended by their inheritors; (2) ethnic and religious conflicts and the employment of terrorism and fundamentalism (which ignore boundaries) as a means to resolve them; (3) large scale migrations of populations and refugees across boundaries that are difficult to guard because of rugged of open terrain; and (4) competing claims
on land and maritime territories that are rich in natural resources or have political or socio-cultural importance. Factors such as organised crime, the drug trade, political instability and interference by other nations tend to exacerbate such conflicts.

Thus, conflict resolution approach does not concern itself only with the issues that divide the main parties but also with the social, psychological and political changes that are necessary to address root causes, the intra party conflicts that may inhibit acceptance of a settlement, the context that affects the incentives of the parties, and the social and institutional capacity that determines whether a settlement can be made acceptable and workable. In other words, a multi track approach is necessary, relying on interventions by different actors at different levels. It emphasis on the role of the parties in conflict. Because they are the one who knows the conflict most intimately. In the same way, in the case of Indo-Pak it aims at understanding why conflict occurs between India and Pakistan, and how they can be terminated.

Detailed case studies of long-standing conflicts need to be prepared and studied to identify “break through” factors that would help understand how and why these factors became effective. The Ganges water sharing treaty between India and Bangladesh, which took 19 years to finalise, can be a useful case study. The clues of Indo-Bangladesh dialogue, the single most important success story of conflict resolution in the region would function as a reference point for the peaceful resolution of the Indo-Pak conflict. Although in the ultimate analysis, the core of Indo-Pak conflict has to be settled by the two countries, the conflict resolution approach does not negate the importance of various other peaceful measures. Both countries previously have resorted to settlement of disputes through conflict resolution measures. No doubt, in the case of the Kashmir issue earlier steps were unable to bring the permanent resolution of the conflict. But it does not mean that conflict resolution approach have no relevance at all in this very case. Conflict resolution approach would ultimately be helpful in bringing the permanent resolution of the conflict.