Impact of Globalization on Political Development of SAARC Countries.

by

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Abstract

Globalization has largely played its role in connecting and reshaping the entire world. It has influenced the lifestyles of people and the political cultures and systems as well. Moreover, it has also brought about a revolution in the political systems across the globe at large and especially in the political systems of SAARC countries in particular. In the past, there was a time when monarchial governments were existed and nobody had the right to express his viewpoint or criticize the government policies. Now the entire scenario has changed the political dimensions. Democracy as a political system has been adopted by most of the societies in this digital age. It has become successful where people are well educated and well aware of their fundamental rights. The problem lies in the level of evolution: living standard, human development index and democracy index of the SAARC nations. Smooth political developments can be made only in democratic elected governments. It is slow and gradual but continuous on-going process. This study examines and highlight the impact of globalization on the political development of SAARC countries. The primary study deploys the qualitative research method along with constructivism as philosophical approach. Moreover, the data for this study shall be compiled through content analysis.

Keywords: Globalization, Political Development, Democracy, SAARC countries.

Introduction

Globalization is a debatable subject in the case of Third World countries. Some argue that globalization is undeniably a necessary evil to the third world countries that it can neither be paused nor fully applied to its state policy. However, many others suggest that globalization should be observed from different dimensions in all its appearances. It seems to be a blessing in the disguise for Third World. To put it another way, it provides a wide range of prospects. One of the most important prospects is the orientation of the concept of e-governance. It is somehow considered as a brainchild of globalization. Moreover, globalization has directly or indirectly affected every

sphere of life. It has not only impact developed nations but also influenced the developing democracies. It is significant to understand that political development is the pre-requisite of democracy. Democracy has been a political system of most of the societies in this digital age where people are well educated and well aware of their fundamental rights. In the case of SAARC nations, the problem lies in the level of development: living standard, human development index and democracy index of this region. Smooth political developments can be made effective in democratic tenures by educating people and enhancing their participation. It is slow and gradual but continuous on-going process. Moreover, constitutional monarchy, hybrid democracy and centralized autocratic political systems are recognized within the framework of constitution in the region. The point to note is that political scenario of the region is changing with the changing dynamics of power politics and with impact of globalization at large. However, the system lacks vision for the development of democracy and human index. The region is influencing by the shadow of globalization in the political lens. No political development is imaginable in any other political systems except democracy. It is because democracy only allows people's participation and there is a competition between and among the political parties. It is one of the major reasons that democracy has replaced the great monarchies of the world. Moreover, globalization has strengthened the regionalism which on the other hand, may pose a threat to globalization.

Research Objectives

Following are the objectives of the research study:

    i.   To examine the impact of globalization on the political systems of SAARC countries.

    ii.   To study the hegemony of global powers on South Asian region under the umbrella of globalization.

    iii.   To highlight the structural flaws in the political system of regional states which create hurdles for the political development.

Literature Review

In contemporary world, globalization is very familiar term that even everyone often recalls. This term has a different understanding. In academic circles, scholars also have an understanding of globalization with a different perspective. In accordance with Turner & Khondker (2010), globalization as an extension of the reach of the senses that goes beyond the boundaries of events as far as the other side of the world as if we also feel our physical taste there. Both researchers also presented a unique model which then stressed social relations, not simply a matter of place or geography. This point of view is largely endorsed by Robertson (1992) with the concept of "world

as whole" and Rantanen (2005) who suggests globalization as unity in several ways. In a political viewpoint, we can comprehend globalization as a social link that is in a unity which cannot be unglued by time and space.

Additionally, Political culture is defined as the psychological orientation towards a particular political system. It is the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, behavior and feelings of the people towards the political process. Moreover, it is the mindset of the majority in any society towards its political system. Political development is a pre-requisite of democratic system. For Gabriel Almond (2000) democracy is a culture rather than a process. Right after the Second World War was over the world was bifurcated in two bloc. One was the USA and the other was USSR. Both the powers had their own ideology which they wanted to impose across the globe. It was the time when the concept of globalization emerged. In the late 1991 when the soviet power collapsed the world became uni-polar. Now only single power is ruling the world. With the passage of time, globalization wrapped up the entire globe and world became the global village.

In view of Nayef and Al-Rodhan, (1996), globalization is just like air. As one cannot see it but feel it. Likewise, one cannot see globalization but can feel it everywhere. Globalization has affected every part of life at all. It has also impacted the global and regional politics at different levels in various domains. The point of time where globalization has made ease for the people and for the world at the same time; it has also posed serious threats to global and regional politics. Both scholars consider, the age of simplicity is over. One may say simplicity was ended with the evolution of technology in every field of life.

Rizvi (2019) opines that globalization has greatly influenced the political systems, especially in shaping and reshaping public opinion against the political system and in framing the mind-sets of people globally, nationally and at indigenous level.

The 21st century is an age of connectivity and interdependence. Kathleen Schwartzman (1998) has presented a detailed analysis that presently no single country can bear the price of isolation under the umbrella of nationalism. States at global level are imagined to be losing its identity with the dawn of globalization if they remain isolated. Globalization is a practice which promotes relationships, not merely across nation-states but between and among countries, regions and continents.

Developed democracies and international organizations are giving full attention and concentration in enhancing the political governance of the SAARC countries by economically and technically assisting the region in order to bring about political stabilization.

Karina (2010) writes in her thesis that the European Union's aims comprise robusting its mutual relations with the countries of the region, and joining the regional collaboration process represented by the SAARC. Furthermore, it is difficult to manage South Asia's crisis by simplistic approaches to political development process. As a region, South Asia has distinctive characteristics and many conflicts. It is politically, socially, culturally and economically diverse.

In order to enhance the impact of measures and to encourage greater efficiency in the political systems, the European Commission is focusing to concentrate the scope of its development commitments on three focal areas: human and social development; good governance and political development; and trade and economic development. Unless people are educated, healthy and have skills to deal with globalization in true letter and spirit, there is no possibility of enhancing the political progress and reducing the disparity gap (M. Cini, 2002). According to Cini (2002) findings, the experiences of the western model of governance can play an important role in developing countries in overcoming some of the challenges they face, provided that resources are managed through democratic governance processes.
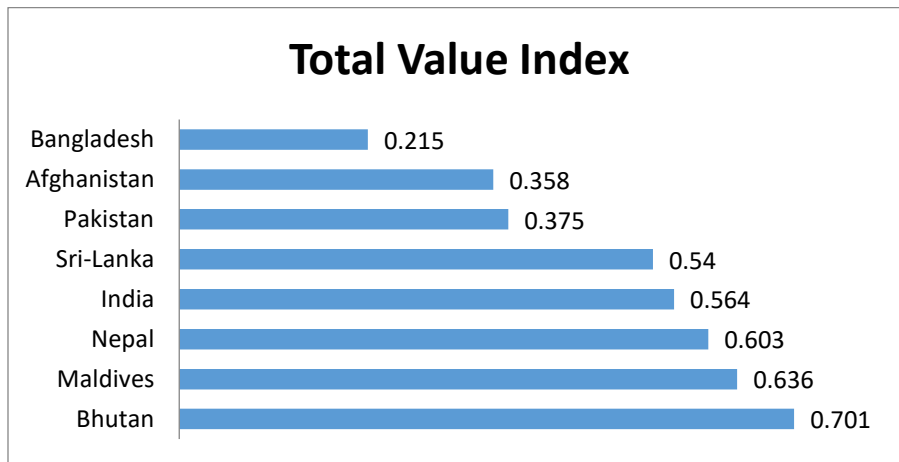
Research Methodology

The primary study deploys the qualitative research method along with constructivism as philosophical approach. The data for this study shall be compiled through content analysis. The constitutional documents of SAARC countries will be analyzed in detail to understand the changing political dynamics and impact of globalization on the political development of SAARC countries. Moreover, this study adopted qualitative method of research that advances from the viewpoint of the focusing and referring to the quality of research sources .This qualitative method encompasses data collection through library research buttressed by printed material such as constitutional documents, books, codified laws, magazines, newspapers, journals, periodicals and reports from many sources and as well as electronic media. Digital media especially the internet is also taken into consideration as a secondary source. These data further analyzed in an encoded theoretical framework that would be able to answer the research question. The data collected will be analyzed using descriptive analysis to better describe impact of Globalization on Political Development of SAARC Countries. To schematize the data gathered, the analysis is furnished through various stages, i.e. data reduction data exposure, description and verification as well as drawing conclusions.

Significance of the study:

The study aims at highlighting political challenges and prospects of globalization on SAARC region. This study will help meaningful understanding of the impact of globalization on political designs and power politics in South Asian region. Moreover, this study also attempts to examine autocratic governments and slow progress of democratic process across the region through a comparative analysis with developed democracies. This study tries to highlight the monopoly of international political community in South Asian region under the umbrella of globalization. This study also attempts to analyze and establish compatibility of globalization with political cultures of SAARC countries.

Impact of globalization on Political Development

The keystone of any fruitful democracy lies on the educational structure, literacy, free and fair timely elections. Efficient and effective institutions are required to bring about the smooth progress in the political, economic and social development. These institutions are mainly valued for binding society together, including minorities and the relegated class. Globalization has changed the entire political system from monarchies, authoritarian, dictatorship, totalitarian rules to democracy. A detailed chart is presented below depicting democracy matrix of SAARC countries:-

Total Value Index

Country	Value
Bangladesh	0.215
Afghanistan	0.358
Pakistan	0.375
Sri-Lanka	0.54
India	0.564
Nepal	0.603
Maldives	0.636
Bhutan	0.701

(Fig 1: Total Value Index, This chart depicts Total value Index of SAARC Counties)

Globalization has successfully proved itself is a key player in changing world paradigm and the entire political system from monarchies, authoritarian, dictatorship, totalitarian rules to democracy. This paradigm shift is undoubtedly is the blessings of globalization. But still it is the

requirement of the time to meet up human development index, and democracy index to further strengthened the political development in South Asia (Democracy Matrix, 2020).

Table 1

Ranking: Total Value Index 2020 (Context Measurement)

(Dataset of the Democracy Matrix V.4)

Sr #	Country Name	Rank	Total Value Index	Classification
1.	Bhutan	56	0.701	Deficient Democracy
2.	Maldives	67	0.636	Deficient Democracy
3.	Nepal	73	0.603	Deficient Democracy
4.	India	85	0.564	Hybrid Regime
5.	Sri-Lanka	93	0.54	Deficient Democracy
6.	Pakistan	123	0.375	Hybrid Regime
7.	Afghanistan	125	0.358	Moderate Autocracy
8.	Bangladesh	149	0.215	Moderate Autocracy

(Source: http[s://www.democracymatrix.com/ranking)

Human Development Index

Political development is directly proportional to human development. It is for that reason in democracies much focus has been made on the living standard, health and education of the people. Most of the South Asian states lack behind the fundamental necessities of life to its people. Every political system in contemporary world especially, the developed democracies take human development as a parameter for progress. It is the foremost duty of states to provide basic commodities of life to its people. Unfortunately, the focus had not been made on human development due to some constraints of third world democracies.

The study is needed to fill up the gaps between the governors and the governed in the region of South Asian politics. The western models are successfully enjoying the fruits of democracy by ensuring principle of democracy in true letter and spirit. The entire focus of modern democracies are their people. Everything starts and end up on people. This is actually the true spirit of democracy which lacks in the case of the countries of developing democracies especially in SAARC states. Following a table is presented which displays illustrative and comparative analysis of various indicators of human development Index.
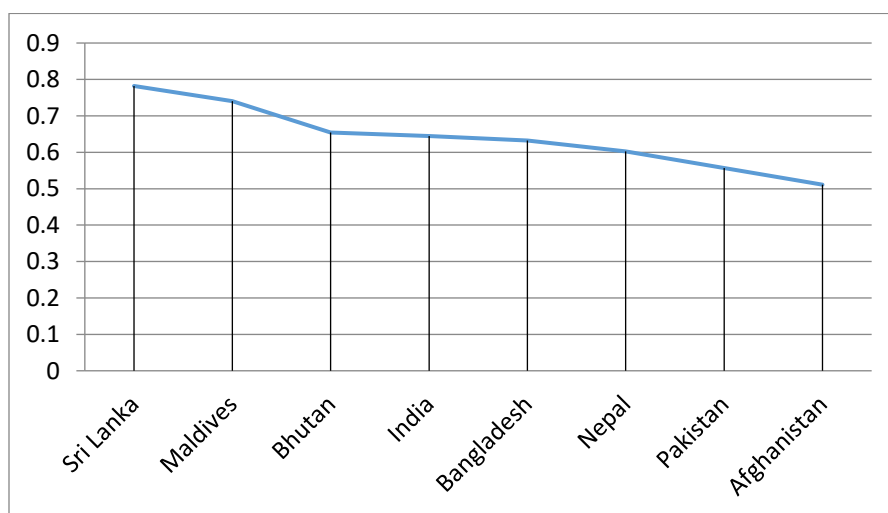
Table 2:

Human Development Index

(SAARC Countries)

Rank	Country Name	HDI Value (2019)	SDG 3	SDG 4.3	SDG 4.6	SDG 8.5
72	Sri Lanka	0.782	77.0	14.1	10.6	12,707
95	Maldives	0.740	78.9	12.2	7.0	17,417
129	Bhutan	0.654	71.8	13.0	4.1	10,746
131	India	0.645	69.7	12.2	6.5	6,681
133	Bangladesh	0.632	72.6	11.6	6.2	4,976
142	Nepal	0.602	70.8	12.8	5.0	3,457
154	Pakistan	0.557	67.3	8.3	5.2	5,005
169	Afghanistan	0.511	64.8	10.2	3.9	2,229

(Source: UN Human Development Index)

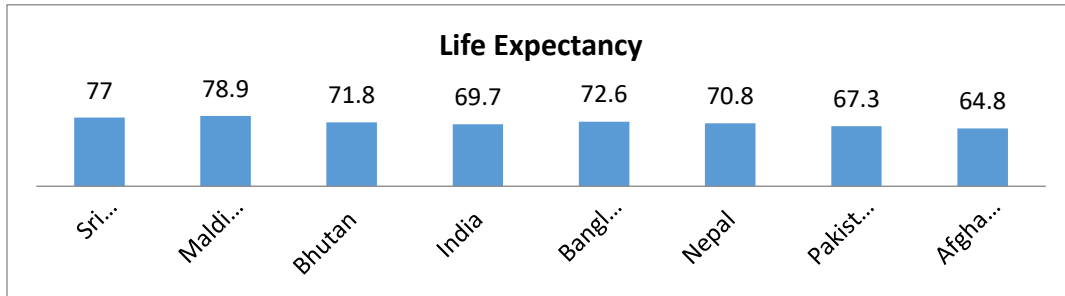**http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/latest-human-development-index-ranking**

Besides one of the most populated region of the world, South Asian countries are lacking behind in many socio-political indicators. SAARC countries' human development index (HDI) are portraying very alarming situation. Sri Lanka and Maldives are leading the region while Pakistan and Afghanistan secured low HDI rankings.

(Fig 2: Human Development Index, This chart depicts HDI of SAARC Counties)

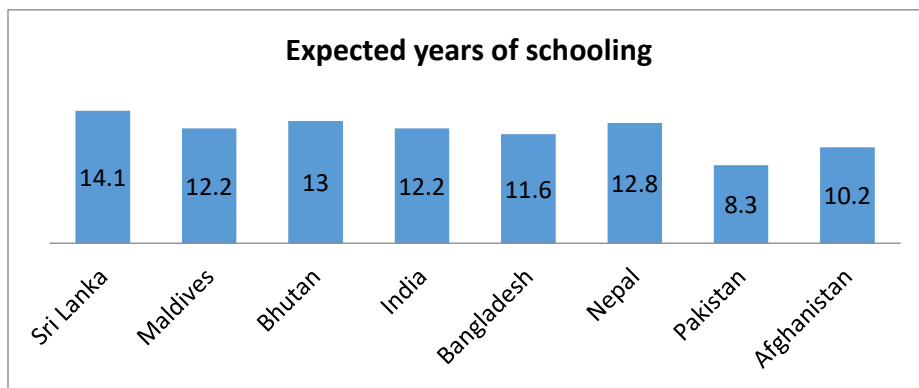**Life expectancy at birth (years)**

In this socio-political indicator Sri Lanka and Maldives are again leading the South Asian countries while Pakistan and Afghanistan again secured low life expectancy rankings.

Life Expectancy

Sri...	Maldi...	Bhutan	India	Bangl...	Nepal	Pakist...	Afgha...
77	78.9	71.8	69.7	72.6	70.8	67.3	64.8

(Fig 3: Life Expectancy Index, This chart depicts LEI of SAARC Counties)
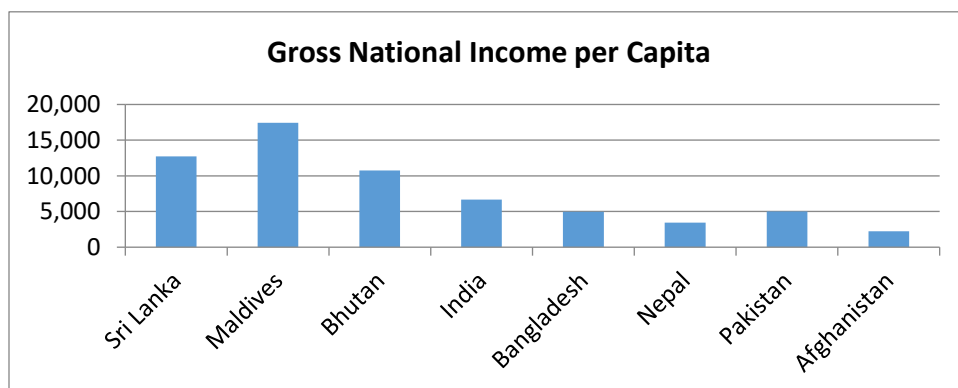
Expected years of schooling (years)

In this socio-political indicator Sri Lanka is leading the South Asian countries while Pakistan and earned lowest rankings.

Expected years of schooling

Sri Lanka	Maldives	Bhutan	India	Bangladesh	Nepal	Pakistan	Afghanistan
14.1	12.2	13	12.2	11.6	12.8	8.3	10.2

(Fig 4: Year of Schooling, This chart depicts EYS of SAARC Counties)

Gross National Income (GNI) per Capita

In this socio-political indicator Maldives is leading the South Asian countries despite its small populace and geographical size, however, war torn Afghanistan ranked last in Gross National Income per capita.

Gross National Income per Capita

(Fig 5: Gross National Income, This chart depicts GNI of SAARC Counties)

The other regional and international organizations can play a critical role in enhancing democracy and safeguarding stability in the SAARC countries. They can provide the platform including civil society, to strengthen accountable democratic systems and institutions. Pragmatic design of the political framework is need of the hour by integrating appropriate elements into the democratic system. (South Asia Partnership International, 2007)

The structural patterns of politics and political parties in order to address the issues of rooted corruption is needed to study why they (politicians) are unable to deliver people in an effective and responsive way. Democratization of the political culture should be taken as the main area of study. Without changing the mindset of the people who are in power it may be challenging to change the tenacious culture of corruption, violence and the power politics in political governance (Rizvi, G. 1994).

The SARRC countries may have to ponder a process of educating people about the value of democracy and the procedures mandatory to modify the culture of politics (Human Development Report, 2020). Political affairs in the South Asian region are commonly considered dirty because it is recognized as a male domain. Power politics expand different forms of violence, whether in the electoral process or acquiring political party positions. The culture of corruption, silence and dependency, thus need to be swapped with the culture of decentralized authority, transparency and participative politics' (Kansal Utkarsh, 2001).

Conclusion

The region of South Asia has distinctive characteristics and many conflicts. This region has politically, socially, culturally and economically diverse in nature and scope. In order to rise the impact and to encourage greater efficiency and effectiveness in the political systems it is significant to concentrate the scope of its development commitments on three focal areas: human and social development; good governance and political development; and trade and economic development. Globalization has helped changing the political cultures as well as influenced systems of SAARC nations. In the past, these nations have limited political choices due to which the member countries have faced several political and governance challenges. Things are improving but it will take time to get through the evolutionary process. Furthermore, globalization has also influenced the political systems of these nations. It has blessed individuals with an opportunity of people's participation in the political system. In the past, such an opportunity had not been available to the people of these nations. Undoubtedly, the SAARC members are facing severe challenges but those can be overcome only by bringing awareness and enhancing public participation. Last but not least, democracy requires people's participation. Unless people are educated, healthy and have skills, it will be perhaps difficult to further enhance the political progress and reducing the disparity gap without paying attentions on such areas.

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