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An impact of terrorism on trade and GDP growth with special reference to SAARC countries

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Abstract---In order to achieve a political or social goal, individuals or subnational groups may use violence or threaten to use violence in order to intimidate a large audience beyond the immediate victim. (Sandler, T., & Enders, W). The *Global Terrorism Index (GTI)* report 2020 states that the *Global Terrorism Database (GTD)* comprises approximately 170,000 terrorist occurrences from 1970 to 2019. In 2019, the economic impact of terrorism was estimated to be \$US 33 billion. Terrorism cost the global economy \$855 billion between 2000 and 2019. The total number of terrorist deaths fell 15% to 13,826 in 2019, marking the sixth consecutive year of reduction. This is a 59% decrease from the high in 2014, when 33,438 individuals were killed in terrorist strikes. South Asia suffered the most damage, followed by Central America and the Caribbean. South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa have both had the highest number of terrorist deaths of any region. South Asia experienced approximately 74,000 deaths between 2002 and 2019. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia had the greatest economic impact in 2019, with \$12.5 billion and \$5.6 billion, respectively. (*GTI Report-2020*). The purpose of this research study is to examine the impact of terrorism on the trade and GDP growth of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries in particular. The research is mostly based on secondary data pertaining to South Asian economic indicators and the Global Terrorism Database pertaining to South Asian countries. Based on the given data, the One Way ANOVA test was used, and it was discovered that terrorism had a substantial impact on trade growth and GDP growth in SAARC countries. The study finishes with suggestions, recommendations.

Keywords---Terrorism, economic impact, GDP losses, Trade losses, SAARC.

Introduction

As a result of terrorist activity, human lives are lost and injuries are inflicted. Individuals and organizations suffer equally as a result of the financial costs of terrorism. Terrorism's immediate economic costs include the loss of lives, the incapacity caused by injuries, and the destruction of private and public property. Beyond the immediate impact, terrorism causes economic disruptions that may not manifest for days, weeks, or months following the terrorist attack. Terrorism has a significant impact on economic growth, investment, consumption, and tourism, depending on the extent and frequency of terrorist incidents in the country. Terrorism's long-term consequences are also influenced by the economy's ability to quickly reallocate resources from the affected areas. (Mohib Iqbal, Harrison Bardwell, 2020)

The term "terrorism" is difficult to define because it has several definitions, many of which are contradictory. The definition of terrorism, on the other hand, is concrete and changes depending on geographical location and historical viewpoint. Furthermore, terrorism, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is defined as "the use of violent acts to attain political goals or force a government to act."

Determining what constitutes terrorism is a difficult task. There is no single universally accepted definition of terrorism, and alternative definitions and typologies abound in the terrorist literature. Terrorism is defined as "*the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a nonstate actor to achieve a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation,*" according to the *GTI Report*, which is produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) using data from the *Global Terrorism Database (GTD) (Global Terrorism Index-2020)*. This definition acknowledges that terrorism encompasses not just the physical act of an assault, but also the psychological influence it has on a society over time. (Shabbir & Malik Shahzad)

Trends in Terrorism

The GTD contains almost 170,000 terrorist occurrences from 1970 to 2019, according to the GTI report 2020. Over a five-year period, the whole GTI score considers not just terrorist-related deaths but also events, injuries, and property damage.

Terrorism-related deaths decreased for the fifth year in a row in 2019, dropping by 15% to 13,826 people. Since the peak in 2014, when 33,438 individuals were killed in terrorist incidents, there has been a 59% decrease. There has been a 13% decrease in the number of attacks year-on-year, which is in line with the decrease in mortality. The World Health Organization (WHO) labelled COVID-19 a global pandemic in March 2020, and preliminary data shows a decrease in both the number of incidences and deaths. The number of terrorism-related deaths has decreased by 59 percent since 2014.

The number of nations where people have died as a result of acts of terrorism has decreased as well, as the overall death toll from terrorism has declined. There were at least one terrorism-related deaths in 63 countries in 2019, which is the lowest amount since 2013. (Global Terrorism Index-2020)

Terrorism in South Asia from historical perspective

South Asia is a part of Asia that includes the Indo-Gangetic Plain and the peninsula of India. Among the countries that make up South Asia are Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Afghanistan and the Maldives are also considered to be part of the region. Terrorist activity has recently been centered in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, with both regions seeing the highest number of terrorism deaths of any region.

Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India have made progress, but the threat of terrorism remains high in South Asia in 2019. For the second year in a row, terrorism-related deaths in South Asia outnumber those in any other region. Afghanistan continues to be the country most adversely affected by terrorism, despite passing Iraq in 2018. Afghanistan is still the most affected by terrorism. For the first time in three years, terrorism-related deaths in the United States decreased this year.

In 2019, Sri Lanka saw the second-largest increase, with the Easter Sunday bombs accounting for the whole increase. On Easter Sunday, eight coordinated suicide assaults around Sri Lanka targeted churches and hotels, killing 266 people and injured at least 500 others, making it the worst incident of the year. Out of the top 20 most deadly terrorist acts worldwide in 2019, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and India are the three South Asian countries that have suffered the most terrorist attacks this year, with a total of nine fatalities.

Impact of Terrorism by Region

Terrorism's economic impact varies significantly by region, as seen in *Table-1*. Terrorism's economic impact was documented in three regions in 2019: Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). With \$12.5 billion and \$5.6 billion in economic effect, respectively, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia led the way, with MENA accounting for an extra \$4.7 billion. The table also shows the world's regions ranked by their average GTI score for 2019, with South Asia topping the list.

Table: 01
The Economic Impact of Terrorism by region, 2019

Average GTI score	Region	Economic Impact of Terrorism (Constant 2019 \$US, millions)	Impact as a Percentage of Global Total
5.829	South Asia	5,649.11	21.40%
5.829	North America	535.52	2.00%
3.95	Middle East and North Africa	4,736.38	17.90%

2.739	Sub-Saharan Africa	12,459.19	47.10%
2.525	South America	511.2	1.90%
2.108	Asia-Pacific	1,663.83	6.30%
1.414	Europe	600.67	2.30%
1.399	Russia and Eurasia	161.99	0.60%
1.099	Central America and the Caribbean	113.22	0.40%
	Total	26,431.11	100%

Source: GTI Report 2020

In 2019, terrorism had the greatest average impact in South Asia. South Asia continued to have the highest average GTI score in 2019, a position it has held since 2002 (*Table-02*). Between 2002 and 2019, MENA had the highest number of terrorism-related deaths, with over 96,000 deaths. During the same time period, 74,000 people died in South Asia.

Table-02
South Asia GTI Score and Rank

Country	GTI Score	GTI Rank
<i>Afghanistan</i>	9.592	1
<i>Pakistan</i>	7.541	7
<i>India</i>	7.353	8
<i>Shri Lanka</i>	6.065	20
<i>Nepal</i>	5.340	27
<i>Bangladesh</i>	4.909	33
<i>Bhutan</i>	0.000	135

Source: GTI Report 2020

Since the GTI's inception in 2002, South Asia has had the highest average GTI score. While terrorism's impact in the region increased from 2018 to 2019, Afghanistan had an improvement in its score and a decline in total terrorism deaths for the first time in five years. Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India are among the 10 countries most affected by terrorism. Out of the seven countries in the region, only Bhutan has a GTI score of zero, signifying no terrorist incidents in the last five years. In Sri Lanka, terrorism-related deaths climbed from one in 2018 to 266 in 2019.

In Pakistan, the number of attacks fell from 369 in 2018 to 279 in 2019. Terrorism-related deaths fell to 300 from 543 last year. This was the lowest number of terrorism-related deaths in a single year since 2006, down 87 percent from 2360 in 2013.

Economic Impact of Terrorism

Terrorism costs a lot of money. Terrorism cost the global economy \$26.4 billion in 2019, down 25% from 2018. In the last five years, terrorism's economic impact has diminished. It is now 77% lower than in 2014. Afghanistan was the hardest

hit, with 16.7% of GDP lost (GDP). Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have the largest regional economic impacts, at \$12.5 billion and \$5.6 billion, respectively. The entire economic impact of terrorism includes the direct expenses of terrorism deaths, injuries, property damage, and GDP losses. Direct costs are also multiplied. Direct expenses are borne by the victim, the perpetrator, and the state. Indirect costs are incurred after the fact and include long-term expenses like lost future earnings and physical and psychological hardship.

Significance of the Study

1. The study will help to comprehend terrorism's traits, concerns, and prospects in relation to South Asian economic growth. The impact of terrorism on commerce, GDP, and other economic indices must also be understood.
2. Terrorism produces widespread difficult development issues. The research will focus on the complex issues that governments face, as well as novel solutions, with a focus on South Asia.
3. Various governments, international organisations, and other groups have spent millions of dollars trying to combat terrorism. This failure wastes their resources. This document might help them identify particular concerns and grey areas where they are wasting resources and make policy adjustments accordingly.

Objectives of the Study

The present research is based on various objectives, as follows:

1. To understand the global terrorism scenario.
2. To know the global economic impact of terrorism.
3. To know the region wise economic impact of terrorism.
4. To analyze the impact of terrorism on trade amongst SAARC countries.
5. To suggest some recommendations for counter terrorism in South Asia.

Hypothesis of the Study

The following related hypotheses provided the basis of this research. On the basis of the results of the literature review, the researchers investigate the following hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (H1) The backwardness of trade in SAARC countries is found due to terrorism.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) The low GDP amongst SAARC countries is found due to terrorism.

Limitations of the Study

The current study focuses solely on how terrorism affects the SAARC countries' trade and GDP. Although numerous factors have an impact on a country's trade and GDP, this article focuses specifically on terrorism as a major issue, with the goal of this study being to investigate the impact of terrorism on SAARC countries. The study's scope was limited to the SAARC countries, with a reference

period spanning the years 2010 to 2019. The current study is based on secondary information.

Review of Literature

Ghulam Akhmat et al., Terrorism is a complex subject involving multiple socioeconomic aspects (Newman 2006). South Asia is the world's largest, most complex, violent, and politically volatile continent. South Asia is home to around a fifth of the world's population and has a diverse ethnic and religious heritage. We, the South Asians and Sri Lankans, have seen the most terrorism. Except for the Maldives and Bhutan, every South Asian country faces terrorism. The necessity of regional planning and cooperation is emphasised in this study report. Instead of focusing on war projects that may easily turn into chaos, more should be done to create and aid local governance mechanisms in South Asia to promote these principles.

Ankara Memorandum (2013). This document outlines how government agencies and civic society can work together to tackle violent extremism (CVE). It was created by the Turkish National Police's International Center for Terrorism and Transnational Crime (UTSAM) in partnership with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This memorandum is enhanced by the Good Practices on Community Engagement and Community-Oriented Policing.

Eric Rosand, et al. (sept. 2008) emphasised the importance and sometimes underestimated role that civil society may play in preventing terrorism without endangering their crucial activities. Terrorism's effect on civil society and the necessity for UN support in achieving the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy are also examined in the report.

Eric Rosand et al. (May 2009) after the November 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, the subcontinent's political instability, economic problems, and violent religious fanaticism became a warning to terrorist groups. As a result of the incident, there is a need for an integrated regional antiterrorism response, as well as a lack of a meaningful geographic approach to direct necessary collaboration. Because of its total impartiality, knowledge, and geographic distance from the region, the UN is well-positioned to support stronger regional integration in counter-terrorism. According to the paper, SAARC leaders should officially support the UN tactic and start the Strategy's planned initiatives to combat terrorist-promoting activities, develop good governance, and optimise a human rights approach to all counterterrorism.

Sudha Ramachandran (July 2015) In her work, she examines the *Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)*, 1958, which is in force in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. Declaring Arunachal a "disturbed area" without consulting the state government was harshly criticised. It highlighted the vagueness around "disturbed areas" and the haphazard way AFSPA is enforced in the region. AFSPA gave troops more power, but they couldn't quell India's uprisings. Its sphere of influence has expanded, and violent conflicts and insurgent groups have spread over the Northeast.

Eric Rosand et al (Dec. 2016) according to him a varied group of governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders, made recommendations on how to overcome difficulties terrorism and help operationalize and maintain whole-of-society. He suggested that the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) widen its financial position by collecting donor investment in various sectors to stimulate long-term commitment while limiting duplication and waste.

Jessica Donati et al. (Aug. 2016) reveals that The Islamic State and the Taliban have formed a patchwork cease-fire spanning most of eastern Afghanistan, which has let both rebellions regroup and confront US-backed efforts to force them out. According to Afghan authorities, the two militant factions have agreed to halt their rivalry and focus on governance. With this new strategic advantage in Kunar, the Taliban and al Qaeda have been able to shift their focus away from fighting US-backed Afghan forces in Nangarhar province.

Malik Shahzad Shabbir et al. (June 2019) explained that the terrorism is the largest economic threat to India. Capital flight outnumbers capital inflows in the country, making terrorism a trade factor. Terrorism is also affecting the Indian economy's trade flows, with a downward trend in exports. The aggregate of all of these effects has a considerable impact on the economy. The unit root test shows that interest rates and net trade are level, while GDP, terrorism, underemployment, and capital inflows are stationary at first difference. In this investigation, the unit root results revealed a combination of both levels. However, F-test findings suggest that the overall model is significant at all levels (1 %, 5 %, and 10 %). Terrorism has a substantial negative link with economic growth, while interest rates and underemployment have a moderate but significant negative relationship.

Harrison Bardwell et al (2020), Terrorism has a major economic impact globally. Terrorism is predicted to have cost the world economy 33 billion dollars in 2018 and 855 billion dollars since 2000. Terrorism has escalated considerably since the September 11, 2001 assaults. After the Arab Spring uprisings in Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Egypt, the surge was most dramatic between 2011 and 2014. The advent of the Islamic State terrorist group in the Middle East intensified tensions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. This article uses the bottom-up cost accounting method to determine the worldwide economic impact of terrorism. The model accounts for terrorism-related deaths, injuries, vandalism, and GDP losses. From 2000 to 2018, the global terrorism database examined terrorism's expenses.

Research Methodology

The research relied heavily on secondary data. The information was gathered from SAARC Annual Reports, SAARC Nations publications, the DGCIS database, RBI Handbooks, World Bank and IMF publications for trade and economic indicators data, the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), and a variety of trade journals. Terrorism data is gathered from the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), which is published by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland collects and collates data for the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).

In light of the aims and hypotheses, the acquired data was categorized and tallied. After tabulating the data, simple statistical methods such as average, percentage, ratio, deviation, and the One-Way ANOVA Test were used to make conclusions. These statistical methods were employed in accordance with the study's requirements. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made based on the analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation

The Global Terrorism Database (GTD-2020) lists ten countries most affected by terrorism. According to this statistic, about half of all terrorist acts happened in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India are three of the ten most affected countries in South Asia. The region saw the second-highest number of attacks and deaths. In South Asia, 32% of explosives are used in bombings, whereas 51% are used in gun attacks. Throughout the last 48 years, most terrorist activities have happened in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (1970-2017). A assessment of global terrorism occurrences from 1970 to 2020 ranked South Asia second. The ANOVA test was used to derive the results in Table-03.

Table: 03
Impact of terrorism on SAARC Countries

	2010			2014			2019		
Countries	No of Terrorist Incidences	GDP Growth Rate (%)	Trade Growth (%)	No of Terrorist Incidences	GDP Growth Rate (%)	Trade Growth (%)	No of Terrorist Incidences	GDP Growth Rate (%)	Trade Growth (%)
<i>Afghanistan</i>	542	8.4	-3.44	1824	2.7	0.19	1414	3.9	0.15
<i>Bangladesh</i>	22	6	37.24	130	6.3	6.33	41	8.2	-3.88
<i>Bhutan</i>	0	5.7	38.83	0	4	-4.71	2	5.7	-2.44
<i>India</i>	663	8.5	32.64	860	7.4	-0.81	966	4	-9.66
<i>Maldives</i>	0	7.1	57.52	0	7.3	42.4	2	6.8	-3.86
<i>Nepal</i>	38	4.8	35.02	7	6	26.11	247	6.6	-2.1
<i>Pakistan</i>	713	2.6	28.26	2151	4.1	-12.82	730	1.1	3.2
<i>Sri Lanka</i>	3	8	55.38	16	5	43.42	41	2.2	2.9
SAARC Trade Growth Rate	28.06			23.25			38.92%		
(GDP %)	9.1			6.9			4%		

Sources: Calculated from

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG> ,
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/620990/gross-domestic-product-growth-rate-in-south-asia-2017/>
<https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/SA>

The above data has been processed in three different segments which are mentioned as follows:

1. Impact of terrorism on growth of trade amongst SAARC Countries (2010) by applying One Way ANOVA test.
2. Impact of terrorism on growth of trade amongst SAARC Countries (2014) by applying One Way ANOVA test.
3. Impact of terrorism on growth of trade amongst SAARC Countries (2019) by applying One Way ANOVA test.

The above results have been bought by applying following One-Way ANOVA tests.

Table: 04
Impact of terrorism on growth of trade amongst SAARC Countries (2010) by applying One Way ANOVA test

<i>Summary of Data</i>				
	<i>Treatments</i>			
	No of Terrorist Incidences	GDP Growth Rate (%)	Trade Growth (%)	Total
<i>N</i>	8	8	8	24
$\sum X$	1981	51.1	281.45	2313.55
<i>Mean</i>	247.625	6.3875	35.1813	96.398
$\sum X^2$	1243639	355.51	12372.3125	1256366.8225
<i>Std.Dev.</i>	328.0013	2.0392	18.7866	211.9624
<i>Result Details</i>				
<i>Source</i>	<i>SS (Sum of Squares)</i>	<i>DF (Degree of Freedom)</i>	<i>MS (Mean Square)</i>	
<i>Between-treatments</i>	277751.889	2	138875.9445	<i>F</i> = 3.85974
<i>Within-treatments</i>	755593.5334	21	35980.6444	
<i>Total</i>	1033345.4224	23		

Source: Compiled by researcher from data.

In the year 2010, an impact of terrorism on the growth of trade of SAARC countries indicated that there was growth of 28.6% in the SAARC trade which was lower than the year 2004 (33.91%) whereas the GDP growth rate in this year was 9.1%. The statistical test of the One Way ANOVA brought *f-ratio* value is 3.85974, the *p-value* is 0.037364. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

Table: 05
Impact of terrorism on growth of trade amongst SAARC Countries (2014) by
applying One Way ANOVA test

<i>Summary of Data</i>				
	<i>Treatments</i>			
	No of Terrorist Incidences	GDP Growth Rate (%)	Trade Growth (%)	<i>Total</i>
<i>N</i>	8	8	8	24
$\sum X$	4988	42.8	100.11	5130.91
<i>Mean</i>	623.5	5.35	12.5138	213.788
$\sum X^2$	8710582	248.84	4592.0861	8715422.9261
<i>Std.Dev.</i>	894.4722	1.6844	21.8414	575.5336
<i>Result Details</i>				
<i>Source</i>	<i>SS (Sum of Squares)</i>	<i>DF (Degree of Freedom)</i>	<i>MS (Mean Square)</i>	
<i>Between-treatments</i>	2014573.172	2	1007286.586	$F = 3.77468$
<i>Within-treatments</i>	5603923.1946	21	266853.4855	
<i>Total</i>	7618496.3666	23		

Source: Compiled by researcher from data.

As compare to the years 2010; the year 2014 shown the impact of terrorism on the growth of trade among SAARC countries was declined to 6.9% to the GDP and the growth rate of SAARC trade was only 23.25% which was lowest since 2004 and the same has been proved with the One Way ANOVA test with the *f-ratio* value is 3.77468 and the *p-value* is 0.039769. The result is found significant at $p < .05$.

Table: 06
Impact of terrorism on growth of trade amongst SAARC Countries (2019) by
applying One Way ANOVA test

<i>Summary of Data</i>				
	<i>Treatments</i>			
	No of Terrorist Incidences	GDP Growth Rate (%)	Trade Growth (%)	Total
<i>N</i>	8	8	8	24
$\sum X$	3443	38.5	-15.69	3465.81
<i>Mean</i>	430.375	4.8125	-1.9613	144.409
$\sum X^2$	3529831	226.79	152.3057	3530210.09
<i>Std.Dev.</i>	540.9053	2.4351	4.1668	362.9419
<i>Result Details</i>				
<i>Source</i>	<i>SS (Sum of Squares)</i>	<i>DF (Degree of Freedom)</i>	<i>MS (Mean Square)</i>	
<i>Between-treatments</i>	981503.8884	2	490751.94	<i>F</i> = 5.0316
<i>Within-treatments</i>	2048212.917	21	97533.94	
<i>Total</i>	3029716.80	23		

Source: Compiled by researcher from data.

In the year 2019: it can be seen that the growth of trade among SAARC countries was declined to 4% to the GDP and the trade growth rate was recorded 15.92% which is the lowest since 2010. The f-ratio value of ANOVA test is 5.0316 and the *p-value* is 0.016395, this result is found significant at $p < .05$.

When determining if the data are significant enough to reject the null hypothesis, the F value should always be used in conjunction with the p value. A high f value indicates that something is significant, but a low p value indicates that all of your results are significant. The F statistic simply compares the combined effect of all variables. Simply put, only reject the null hypothesis if your alpha level exceeds your p value (Mohammad Mahbobi and Thomas K. Tiemann)

The f-value and p value in these three phases also proves that there is less difference or high significance between terrorism and negative impact on trade and GDP of SAARC nations. Hence it is proved that both the hypothesis that the backwardness of trade and GDP in SAARC countries is found due to terrorism is accepted. Thus, from the above analysis *Hypothesis 1 (H1)* The backwardness of trade in SAARC countries is found due to terrorism and *Hypothesis 2 (H2)* The low GDP amongst SAARC countries is found due to terrorism both has been proved.

Recommendations and Suggestions

SAARC countries have recently taken a number of steps to address the common menace of terrorism. This has sparked a lot of hope, but more work remains to be done to adequately address this issue. In the framework of India-Pakistan relations, it is necessary to engage Pakistan's civilian institutions and aid the democratic transition process. (Brigitte L. Nacos, 2002)

It has been argued that the relationship between the moderates in both countries should be improved. Through improved regional relationships, SAARC countries should strive to prevent, protect, prepare, respond, and establish plans to combat terrorism. This article, based on the current research, makes the following recommendations and suggestions:

1. To deepen cooperation between the UN and South Asia, as well as within the region, the UN should draw on growing acknowledgment of the importance of combating terrorism, conflict, and political violence in the region.
2. SAARC leaders should affirm their commitment for the UN Strategy and accept the entire attitude to executing the Strategy's suggestions for preventing and combating terrorism, strengthening state capacity, and streamlining all antiterrorism actions.
3. The SAARC region has to adopt a counter-terrorist mindset. Members of the SAARC must move beyond reciprocal legal structures and take joint action. They must enhance links in other areas, like as economic, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people contacts, in addition to counter-terrorism collaboration.
4. Regional cooperation is essential to implement political, economic, and social actions beside military actions
5. Implementing national, regional, and international counterterrorism policies and efforts, such as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. A similar tool could help SAARC's counter-terrorism efforts.
6. Commercial and educational partnerships should be enhanced to develop locally relevant messaging to oppose violent extremist narratives and promote peace and social cohesion through sports, arts, and culture.
7. Encourage the use of evidence-based research to strengthen counter-terrorism policies and operations. SAARC should focus on building a regional database for intelligence exchange.
8. The media can help fight terrorism. Terrorism and the media go hand in hand. Terrorism is a way of thinking. These are common misconceptions in media reporting, such as glorifying terrorists, dramatizing the environment,

and labelling events, which frequently intensifies the media-public relationship. With the advent of new media, terrorists created their own propaganda space. As a result, the media must recognize that instead of promoting terrorism, it must actively combat it.

9. SAARC leaders should invite all Human Rights Council special rapporteurs and independent experts to the region, especially the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while combating terrorism.

Conclusion

Terrorism is a complicated phenomenon that stems from the combination of numerous socioeconomic elements. South Asia is the world's most complicated, turbulent, and politically explosive region, as well as the most intriguing and perplexing. Because of the prevalence of terrorism in South Asia, GDP and trade growth have slowed dramatically. Terrorism has been identified as the most critical threat facing the countries of South Asia by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and its eradication is now a major priority. Various proposals have been made in this direction, including the formation of the SAARC Police and the SAARC Anti-Terrorism Task Force, among others (Eric Rosand, Naureen Chowdhury Fink, and Jason, 2009). A variety of bilateral and multilateral structures have also been established to encourage improved international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

India, as a rising power and the region's largest country, should play a leading role in the war against terrorism. Many of the SAARC countries had bilateral cooperation arrangements with India; but, for successful counterterrorism cooperation in South Asia, India and Pakistan required to work together. To combat Cross Border Terrorism (CBT), India needed international collaboration because of its experience dealing with terrorism and abilities to address internal problems. In terms of regional cooperation in combating the common threat of terrorism, most of the participants acknowledged that while there is a political consensus among SAARC countries on this, the organization as a whole has failed to take significant steps to address the problem.

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