



A Critical Analysis of the Structure and History of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

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Keywords	Abstract
SCO, Pakistan, India, Economics, Security, Geography.	<i>The 17th Meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) took place in Astana, Kazakhstan, in June 2017, which was attended by all of the organization's member countries. Pakistan and India were accepted as full members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization at the Astana Summit. Two of the region's most populated countries joined the SCO, which was a significant change for the region. These two nations, along with Iran, first attended an SCO meeting as observers at the Astana Summit in 2005. It is the organization's first but significant expansion since its founding, particularly in terms of economics, security, and geography. The two most powerful countries in South Asia are Pakistan and India. With the inclusion of the two states, the SCO now has twice the coverage and features. The SCO will gain new momentum in terms of economic, security, and other aspects with the addition of both new members. This means that the SCO's long-term growth plan has come to fruition and that the organization's internal development is nearly complete.</i>

INTRODUCTION

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was established in 2001 to combat regional challenges like terrorism, extremism, and separatism. It is a rapidly expanding regional organization. Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and China were formerly recognized as the Shanghai Five. Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and China established the Shanghai Five in 1996 to settle border disputes (Nizamani, 2018). The SCO was established through the signing of the 'Treaty on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions' and the 'Treaty on Reduction of Military Forces in Border Regions' (McClellan, 2013). These treaties aimed to reduce tensions and promote cooperation among the member states, particularly in areas of border security and military trust (McClellan, 2013). The inclusion of Uzbekistan in 2001 transformed the Shanghai Five into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Initially, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was known for emphasizing security cooperation among its member nations (Matveeva & Giustozzi, 2008). The SCO's founders were interested in establishing a mechanism for achieving peace and stability in the region. The war against terrorism has risen to the top of the SCO's priority list when it comes to foreign issues. All SCO member states signed the Shanghai Convention on Combating the "Three Evils" and pledged to fight terrorism, populism, and separatism at the organization's inaugural summits

(Panda, 2012). The permanent members of the SCO include India, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Belarus, Afghanistan, Iran, and Mongolia are all mentioned as observers in the party. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and Nepal are the six SCO dialogue partners.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology and an interpretative philosophical approach. To study social phenomena, several qualitative methodologies might be used. The current study used a method of literature research. The "non-contact method" is a term used to describe the literature research approach, which differs from other qualitative research methods in that it relies on prior studies and their findings to comprehend a phenomenon (Khan et al., 2021). This study used a narrative approach to draw its conclusions after reviewing the literature that is currently available. In order to conduct a systematic review of the literature, the researcher looked at several papers that were pertinent to the topic and reported them under various areas. The researchers divided the literature into categories under distinct titles based on the various aspects of SCO history and structure. These literature reviews are followed by a summary of the main findings from the research in the rest of the article. The researchers offered a conclusion and a discussion of the findings at the end.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS

Here is a presentation of the literature this study analyzed. In order to present these studies in an organized manner, they are divided into different headings.

Economic Joint Ventures: By holding relevant ministerial-level meetings, the SCO had already identified the direction of joint ventures in communication, economics, and trade and had created an atmosphere conducive to the development of economic mechanisms and trade cooperation (Huasheng, 2006). The Shanghai Cooperation Organization Charter, which was signed in 2002, aims to strengthen mutual confidence and neighborliness among member countries, as well as promote cooperation in areas such as politics, economics, commerce, energy, transportation, tourism, education, science, advanced technology, culture, and environmental protection. In addition, the Charter provides for joint struggles to maintain regional peace and stability (Denisov & Safranchuk, 2019).

The Heads of State Council (HSC) of SCO: The Heads of State Council (HSC) is the central decision-making body of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). On all major SCO topics, the council meets once a year to make suggestions and approve proposals. The Heads of Government Council (HGC) is the second-most powerful body. This council meets once a year. The Council adopts its annual budget, addresses joint partnership strategy, and debunks major economic myths. Ministers for foreign affairs, legislative affairs, security, economy and trade, transportation, culture, education, and health, as well as heads of law enforcement and attorneys general, all attended SCO meetings. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is made up of two permanent bodies: the Secretariat in Beijing and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure in Tashkent (RATS) (Malik et al., 2019). The SCO Secretary General and the Director of the RATS Executive Committee are appointed by the Heads of State Council for terms of three years each. Rashid Alimov of Tajikistan serves as the Secretary-General of the

SCO, and Yevgeny Sysoyev serves as the Director of the RATS Executive Committee (Russia). The official languages of the SCO are Russian and Chinese.

India and Pakistan Strategic Advantages: Pakistan and India were recognized as full SCO members during the Ufa summit in Russia in 2015. It is a big move forward from a South Asian viewpoint, as Pakistan and India are both heavily populated and nuclear-armed countries in the region. With Pakistan and India joining the SCO, the organization will now represent 25% of global GDP and 44% of the global population, as well as expanding its geographical scope into South Asia. It will be more important for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which covers about 3/5 of Eurasian territory, to contribute to regional stability and the strengthening of the world order. Furthermore, the most direct effect of the SCO's growth would be the addition of new regional developments. The member countries of the SCO recognize the need for regional security and economic cooperation from the start of the organization. Under the ravages of the 9/11 events, intelligence cooperation against the three evils has emerged (Javaid & Khan, 2015). The roots of terrorism still exist in Central Asia, and the region's current deteriorating security situation is concerning for regional stability despite the fact that anti-terrorism military exercises and knowledge exchanges among SCO member states have proven to be very effective in controlling the three evils (Berdibaevich et al., 2015). Since Chechen Muslims are fighting for independence from Russia, Russia is concerned about the existence of Daesh (ISIS) in Afghanistan. On the other hand, China is concerned about the turmoil in Afghanistan because it has already spent a significant amount of money in the country, and China's One Belt One Road initiative will not be able to achieve its objectives without stability in the country. With India and Pakistan joining the SCO, regional issues will be addressed, especially Afghanistan's security situation. The SCO's security operations in the region are strengthened by both members' involvement in the security cooperation (Cheng, 2018).

Daesh (ISIS) in Afghanistan: The Middle East crises have aided Daesh's (ISIS) expansion in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Additionally, a power vacuum has emerged in Afghanistan as a result of the withdrawal of American troops (Imran & Xiaochuan, 2015). It could lead to high-level conflicts between the Taliban party and the Afghan government. Despite the fact that Moscow has provided army training and advanced military weapons to the Afghan government, Russian confidence in their capacity to defeat the Taliban is low (Khalid & Roy, 2016). SCO hopes that their new full members, Pakistan and India, will play an important role in regional political stability (Khalid & Roy, 2016). This enlargement boosts its own stature while also increasing its political and security obligations, making it a more powerful bloc. On the other side, Pakistan is regarded as a mastermind when it comes to starting anti-terrorist operations and has carried out numerous oppressions against the "Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan" (Siddiq, 2016). One concrete example is the "Zarb-e-Azb" oppression carried out against the "Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan" in 2014 (Abiden et al., 2019). As a result, Russia and China are well aware that Pakistan can be extremely helpful in the fight against extremism and terrorism. The addition of India as a large economy and military power boosts the value of the SCO, making it more visible, well-balanced, and efficient. India is also a key player in the Afghan peace process and has been at the forefront of the fight against global terrorism. And India has a strong relationship with the Afghan government and has invested a significant amount of money in the country's infrastructure growth. On the SCO platform, where all of Afghanistan's neighbors, including Pakistan and India, will establish a comprehensive regional political, economic, and security roadmap to promote peace and stability in the world (Siddiq, 2016).

SCO Members' Access to South Asia and the Arabian Sea: Pakistan and India, on the other hand, would provide Shanghai Cooperation Organization member countries with economic access to South Asia and the Arabian Sea. India is the second-most populous nation in the world and Asia's emerging economic powerhouse. India wants to expand its regional trade, commerce, and economic markets by entering Central Asia. China's government is also able to collaborate with India and provide mutual support. China is also optimistic that new members India and Pakistan will be able to participate (Cooper & Farooq, 2017) effectively in the "one belt, one path" initiative. India, on the other hand, has reservations about OBOR. India believes that China's One Belt, One Road initiative puts them head-to-head in the economic race. Second, India believes that joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will strengthen bilateral trust and collaboration between China and India while weakening India's longstanding hegemony in South Asia. The "One Belt, One Road" plan, in China's view, is a call to action for all nations to cooperate (Hong, 2016). It benefits Iran, Afghanistan, India, the Central Asian Republic, China, and Pakistan in addition to China and Pakistan. Iran has already expressed interest in taking part in the CPEC (Sial, 2014). Pakistan would be able to connect Central Asia, West Asia, and Eurasia to South Asia and China via the CPEC (Rafay et al., 2020). The Central Asian Republic's economic and trade growth would benefit greatly from this connectivity.

SCO Platform Impact on India and Pakistan Future Relation: The founding members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) anticipate cordial relations between Pakistan and India, which would undoubtedly advance regional stability and strengthen integration in South Asia. According to Hua Chunying, a spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's spirit, which includes the idea of good neighbourliness, will be promoted by Pakistan and India. It has always been expected that the two nations will improve their relationships and contribute to the growth of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Rehman & Faisal, 2015). As we all know, the bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan has been tense for decades. The Kashmir issue had grown into a major source of instability and armed conflict in South Asia in addition to being a direct source of conflict between the two parties (Behera, 2016). Particularly the people of Pakistan and India do not want to see this. They all wish for a safe and healthy world. India and Pakistan will now have access to such a forum through the SCO (Rehman & Faisal, 2015). One of the active diplomatic platforms is thought to be the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This diplomatic platform has a number of such features. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is, first and foremost, a forum for shared cooperation. The SCO has reached a new level of complete cooperation among its members in the fields of oil, finance, transportation, education, and humanities (Song, 2014). The SCO's center and necessary two wheels are economic and security cooperation. This mutual cooperation could pave the way for India and Pakistan, as well as other member countries, to begin cooperating. Nawaz Sharif, a former prime minister of Pakistan, claimed in a media interview that the India and Pakistan's membership in the SCO will boost their bilateral relations and promote cooperation between the two nations (Hilal, 2016). The smoothly running of the dialogue between Pakistan and India is ensured by the annual meeting of the leaders of state, administration and various ministries.

Furthermore, this type of contact and discourse has always been a subject of discussion among the parties in order to share constructive viewpoints. Even if there are gaps and variances between member nations in some areas, there is no discussion of them on this forum. Finally, the SCO Charter prohibits targeting third parties, reflecting the concept of non-alignment. The major

aim of the organization is “Strengthening mutual confidence, friendship, and good neighborliness between member countries,” according to Article 1 of the SCO Charter (Baizakova, 2013). The SCO, on the other hand, is open to collaboration with foreign organizations and does not specifically target third parties (Baizakova, 2013). Furthermore, several organizations have been invited to participate in the SCO summit of heads of state. On the other hand, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has four observer countries and six dialogue partners. As a result, this platform is always accessible. The Shanghai Five were the founders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which was established on the basis of a dialogue system among its first five members. But, because of its rapid institutional growth, such as the Secretariat, RATS, and others, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is made up of platforms at various stages of development, and the continuous new development of institutions makes the Shanghai Cooperation Organization a larger platform. All of the SCO's platforms provide India and Pakistan with a strong forum and ability to address their issues (Ahmed, Ahmed & Bhatnagar, 2019). Moreover, such issues will have no bearing on the SCO's ongoing growth (Jackson & Lopez, 2017). The "Shanghai Spirit," which is focused on mutual benefit, mutual confidence, equality, respect, negotiation, and a desire for shared growth, is becoming immensely important owing to these SCO platforms. This value principle is not only the Shanghai Cooperation Organization platform's philosophy, but it has also become a key concept for forging new interstate relationships (Rehman & Faisal, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Pakistan and India have made a number of diplomatic measures within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) that may help both countries put an end to long-standing tensions and violence between the two neighbours. This success by the SCO will be a significant milestone, and it will also allow many others to consult the organization about their issues, making the SCO a highly influential participant in the global political arena alongside the UN. Furthermore, India and Pakistan expand their opportunities and build much more constructive aspects rather than complexities for both parties. Economic and trade cooperation, military cooperation, energy cooperation, cultural cooperation, and communication cooperation with SCO member countries are likely to help both countries. The SCO's positive impact in this area is undeniable. It had been sixteen years since it was extended. It demonstrated that, as a post-Cold War international body, it was a philosophy followed by non-alignment, mutual confidence, mutual benefit, and equitable consultation. As a consequence, it has a positive impact on stability and economic cooperation. Without the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Central Asia's stability and prosperity would be jeopardized, and the region could become as unstable as the Middle East. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has the ability to preserve regional stability in this regard. After Pakistan and India join, this ability will be strengthened rather than diminished, our power will grow even further, and the prospects for economic cooperation will be very promising. Furthermore, the newly admitted members, Pakistan and India, in terms of infrastructure and connectivity, bring South Asia closer to Central Asia and provide more options for connecting to Europe. The region's growth has been hampered by limited access to land connectivity. The two South Asian superpowers, Pakistan and India, should close the gap and create a cooperative relationship.

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