Preface

South Asia region is a group of eight countries Afghanistan, Bhutan Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This region shows lot of cultural similarities but there are differences at geo political level. Geo political differences are not only affecting the economic growth and prosperity of the region but also making it politically unstable, vulnerable and increasing socio-cultural differences.

This geographically diverse area has lots of socio-cultural similarities. People to people connection are the strength of this area. Inter regional cultural exchange, marriage relations is in the practice. Education and scholarly exchange, similar food habits, art, literature, people’s faith in different religions, similarity in different religions connects South Asian countries very strongly.

All South Asian countries have their political, economic, socio-cultural, problems. They are facing conflicts and riots at home, tension at border and global threats like terrorism and war. In globalized world, South Asia is going through a transition period of regional differences and pressure created by global powers for their own geo-political and economic interests in the region.

Inter regional political differences between South Asian countries creates dilemma and tension among people of these countries and responsible for internal security threats, border tension and conflicts. There is lack of confidence building measures at state and local level. If something happens at border, in cities, or in communities people look at government, local administration and media to get proper information and to know what exactly is happening. At many times Government, local administration and media do not provide proper information and leaves people to live with the dilemma, confusion, fear and tension. Today when there are multiple sources of information are available; people are getting information from both authentic and non-authentic sources, which further create confusion in the society.

Culturally bonded societies are more sensitive towards their families, culture, faith, belief and customs. Politically incorrect information easily creates panic and chaos in such societies. This fear of loss - loss of family members, land, property, identity, faith, culture, belief sows the seeds of differences and hatred amongst the people. Moreover, in such situation if they are not getting proper directions from
the state and information from the media they feel helpless. Sometimes it is a political agenda to support such situation of uncertainty, loss, fear, tension and hatred. Sometimes media organizations are used to provoke people’s feelings and sentiments to increase tension, riots and chaos and to disturb social harmony.

In such situation, it is necessary to analyse India’s cultural relations in South Asian countries in changing perspectives of war and conflicts and role of media and new communication technology. It is necessary to evaluate how historical and cultural similarities and relations of South Asian countries can be a source to maintain bilateral, diplomatic relations and to secure border issues? what new tectics of war and conflicts are in use in South Asian region? What role media is playing in reporting riot, conflict and war and in building confidence and trust between the people and governments?

This book focuses on all above-mentioned issues. In this book editor tried to get a collection of chapters to evaluate intercultural relations in south Asian countries, changing geopolitical situation in the region and its effect on intercultural relations, changing patterns of war in the region, media’s role in enhancing socio cultural relations, building confidence and trust and in reporting conflict, tension and war.

This book is for scholars, academicians and students of bilateral relations and international affairs. This book is also for scholars, academicians and students of culture, politics, sociology, journalism and communication.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK**

The book is organized into twelve chapters. A brief description of each of the chapters follows:

Chapter 1 identifies South Asian region as a region of association and turbulence. In particular, the chapter identifies the area in and around the Indian subcontinent as a mixture of various defined and undefined flows of love, tolerance, religious affiliation along with the prevalence of emotions of mistrust and hatred. The region shares an affinity, which in today’s times has lead to the various transnational forces causing instability in the region due to the shared geographical shared proximity and the porous borders that prevail between these nations. The end of the Cold war highlighted the new threats, which had emerged, not bonded in the notions of safeguarding the integrity and sovereignty; they were way beyond territorial demarcations. This article highlights historical linkages and cultural affiliations, which binds the area of Afghanistan, Pakistan and India into a deeper relationship. Along with dwelling into the political scenario defined by bilateral and diplomatic ties which has taken up an important place in the times of changing perspectives of war and conflict.
Chapter 2 establishes that Indian diversity is a result of generations of co-mingling and the delicate social fabric faces challenge of the ever-growing threat of communalism. To understand the challenge of communalism it is imperative for us to define and recognize its manifestations. This chapter defines communalism, its changing form from pre to post independence, how the contemporary political scenario has promoted communal passions of the masses, that is often manifested in the communal violence, how it has made history central to their communal program; and finally the repercussions of the communal hate mongering on the Indian social fabric. It is through communal interpretation of history and its propagation through all possible means that pits one community against the other. This chapter analyzes the communal interpretation of history and the need for the promotion of counter narrative.

Chapter 3 presents an analysis of linkages between religion and politics, which have engaged the interest of scholars for centuries. Two thinkers, whose works are central to these inter-linkages, are Jamaluddin al-Afghani and Syed Ahmed Khan. Both were Islamic modernists in the late nineteenth century who sought to reform religion by engaging with modernity. They have also contributed significantly to shaping the nationalist movements in West Asia and India respectively. This chapter examines their ideas on important issues like religious and educational reform, nationalism and pan-Islamism, differences and contrasts in their ideologies and their contributions to Islamic modernism. Through this examination, this chapter highlights the relevance of their contributions to the study of contemporary political Islam.

Chapter 4 reviews the security threats posed by “Islamic State of Iraq. Author argues about the real threat and its projection by media. By rising questions such as is ISIS really coming? What is it? Why the world is so scared from it? Is it a new terror organization? Alternatively, it is just the same terror group under a different name? Is it as big as it claims or it is just a fake projection by media? This chapter cover it all using the available resources in the open source.

Chapter 5 is a historical study of the mutual exchanges in the religious and cultural traditions, in the context of Buddhism between India and Sri Lanka. As a powerful medium of trans-acculturation, Buddhism enriched several countries especially of South and South-East Asia. Though Asoka used Buddhism as a unifying instrument of royal power, he was considered as the ruler par excellence who ruled as per dhamma and righteousness ensuring peace and harmony in the kingdom. Several rulers in the Buddhist world including Sri Lanka emulated him. Royal patronage of the Buddhist Sangha in Sri Lanka was reciprocated by support for the institution of kingship. Kingship played an important role in the political unification of the country, whereas Buddhism provided the ground for ideological consolidation. The Indian impact is clearly visible in all aspects of Sri Lankan life and identity-religion (Buddhism), art architecture, literature, language. However, the culture and civiliza-
tion, which developed in the island nation, had its own distinctive variant despite retaining the Indian flavor.

Chapter 6 reviews South Asia continent as vast and as densely populated where regional cooperation and friendship is rooted in the people. People-to-people ties determine the extent of economic and social progress in the region. The chapter focuses on attitudes, opinions and expectations of Asian community to monitor the state of mutual understanding and trust among countries in Asia. It is an attempt to acquire realistic understanding of the nature and determinants of public attitudes and opinions in the Asian region. Besides studying the impressions/views of Asians about each other, the chapter also intends to investigate the reasons behind these impressions and provide recommendations based on the observations.

Chapter 7 reviews that warfare has evolved rapidly in the first few years of the 21st century. There are stark differences with conventional mode of warfare, which was the defacto mode for much of 20th century, and today’s asymmetric warfare. In the conventional mode of warfare, if winning and losing a war could be defined by the traditional yard sticks of number of enemy dead, how much area of land occupied and number of prisoners taken, today these yardsticks no longer us get a clear picture of who is winning or losing it.

Chapter 8 analyzes the impact of new media on society. With the rise of technology, there has been tremendous change in the reporting of news. The citizen journalism has gained momentum especially through social media such as blogs, Facebook, twitter etc. It is very difficult to assess whether the citizen journalism is significant in the society. This paper analyses these concepts with the help of case studies.