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THE EU DEVELOPMENT POLICY AS A MODEL: AN IMPLICATION FOR SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES

The European Union (EU) development policy is a model planning framework for partner countries, the foundation of which can be traced back to the 1957 Treaty of Rome. This study is an investigation of the EU's policy development, tracing its beginning as a model and its implication with partner countries. Moreover, this article assesses the EU's development ties with South Asian countries. Qualitative and empirical methods are applied in order to generate answers to questions about the literature gaps in research on the EU's developmental role in South Asia. This article's initial findings suggest that the EU is a leading aid donor and it is even bringing a significant change to South Asia in the following areas: awareness for human rights, the promotion of democracy, sustainable development, poverty, and other SDGs goals.

Keywords: European Union, Development Policy, South Asia, Development Diplomacy, Aid.

1. INTRODUCTION

The EU emerged as a model of development within transformation in Europe, and this article argued to prove that even the EU posed an agenda and designed effective development diplomacy. Development diplomacy evolved within economic diplomacy after the emergence of a new economic player that shaped as an effective trade negotiator in the international political economy. The Treaty of Lisbon formed an independent identity in economic diplomacy. The combination of economic and political influence has transcended the old national divide into a uniformed regional one. Even in the time of recession and COVID-19, the EU emerged as a global economic player and effective regional player in terms of crisis management; in fact, the Union is still dealing with it (Bouyala-Imbert, 2017). The EU has geopolitical interest and it has spread aid significantly in several areas of soft power resources to address developmental challenges. The EU influences regional integration, which is part of the strategy for comprehensive and strategic partnership, e.g., ASEAN. The main aim of this article is to trace the implication of the EU development policy model in South Asia whether countries in the region are learning or still behind the goals of the regional integration of the Indian subcontinent.

The qualitative content and empirical approaches are applied here to analyse the EU development policy and its role in developing countries in special reference to South Asia.

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These are analytical tools that supports to conduct a realistic and particular analysis of a specific phenomenon or debate rather than a theory. The study tried to explore EU development policy as a model through systematic observation and experimentation of different success stories of the European Union. To generate an argument and fill the literature gaps, primary data sources include official reports, briefing, EUR-Lex data, and other governmental and EU institutions coverage. For the secondary sources of data, there are study book and book chapters, articles, magazines, publication by think tanks, and newspaper coverages.

2. EUROPEAN UNION'S DEVELOPMENT DIPLOMACY

The European Union is currently a top aid contributor to the Official Development Assistance (ODA) which aims at assisting developing countries with a special focus on the least developed countries (LDCs). The key aim of the EU is to support developing countries for economic development in special reference to ensure 'economic growth and reducing the scale of poverty' (Zajączkowski, 2010). The EU supports third countries in the following ways: 1) aid directly to the national budget of a country for their national development strategies (financial supports), 2) technological cooperation by sharing knowledge and experiences (technical supports), 3) aid support to multilateral institutions like the United Nations's institutions and programme e.g., Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 4) funding to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) and 5) emergency supports (humanitarian aid).

Historically, the Treaty of Rome formed the EU development policy, when the European Union was founded as the European Economic Community (EEC) on the 25 March 1957. The Treaty also reserved for the 'associate status' for the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs). Because the three-member states (Denmark, France and Netherlands) were associated with their former colonies in Africa. These member states still wanted a close relationship with these OCTs and they were constitutionally linked. The purpose of the Treaty was an association with them to promote the economic and social development in OCTs. Therefore, the EEC could establish a close economic relation with the whole of the Union. For these OCTs, the European Commission (EC) granted unilateral trade preferences (European Commission, 2022). Therefore, this is a story how the EEC development policy evolved during the foundation of the economic union within Europe. Later, the EEC development policy was shaped and strengthened with African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP) which had less concern towards South Asia until 1990 (Jain, 2015; Tripathi, 2011; Birochhi, 1999).

The EU's international development policy became possible only after the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty and the EEC was renamed as the European Union (present-day name) in 1992. The Treaty on the European Union came into force and formally development policy (originally known as development cooperation policy) became an integral part of the EU under the Title XVII. Later, the Amsterdam Treaty accommodated as renumbering as title XX TEC (Zajączkowski, 2010). In 1994, the EU adopted a strategy paper for Asia and where South Asia was recognised as the sub-region. The Asia Strategy was updated in 2001.

However, development diplomacy has been developed as a new form of public diplomacy in order to pursue foreign policy goals through an expression of goodwill with partner countries via donating aid. This kind of diplomacy promotes a positive image of the donor state as a 'form of new markets or an intervention' in the receiver of aid countries.

Now, development diplomacy emerged as the new form of international political communication with North and South as the enhanced two-way dialogue. Mainly, development diplomacy helps a donor country to create a positive image abroad by influencing media, SCOs and NGOs in the form of public opinion (Zielińska, 2016). Therefore, the European Commission emerged as the leading donor in supplying development diplomacy in developing countries. 'Development cooperation policy is one of the key pillars of the EU's external action along with foreign, security and trade policies'. The EU is a development actor by 'providing over half of all global development aid'. The EU's effort brought significant contributions by investing in peace and security across the world. After 2015, the EU is involved in developing countries to target SDGs 2030 alongside development diplomacy (European Commission, 2022).

3. THE EUROPEAN UNION DEVELOPMENT POLICY AS A MODEL

The development policy of the European Union is guided by the principles of good governance, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, the key objective is to reduce poverty. This is also one of the main soft power resources as the EU's development policy. Development policy has emerged as one of the main instruments for the EU, and it helped to a new face of Europe in international relations. The EU's development diplomacy has evolved past over the decade in order to persuade external action outcomes such as trade negotiation, political, geostrategic, developmental and environmental. However, this is guided by the principles-based objectives of the EU and its norms. The EU's non-trade policy has been more 'effective in pursuing the policy objectives' that is related to 'standards, values, sustainability and development' (Bilal, Hoekmano, 2019).

There is a model of the EU development policy as soft power that helps to play a more vital role in the world under the universally applied 2030 Agenda on sustainable development. Fraser Cameron argued that the EU model of integration also influenced the world to create common policies and establishment of common institutions. Today, 'the EU has become a more influential actor in dealing with humanitarian and peacekeeping missions'. Next, Cameron added that "While the EU cannot claim the degree of military and political power of the United States in the international system, it has an increasing degree of influence as a result of its soft power". He referred to EU soft power as "economic and technical assistance, its culture and its approach to international relations" (Cameron, 2005).

The European Union is itself a model of development policies, which are of course a success across the globe; and Europe united to share the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights in respect of minorities. The European Union and the Eastern Partnership are successful examples of its development policy. "The partnership is a manifestation of the EU's soft power approach to foreign policy; an approach that achieves desired outcomes by attracting foreign governments to join your side through peaceful diplomatic strategies such as offering economic aid, or appealing to shared values" (Centre for the European Studies [CES], 2020).' As discussed above, the EU's development policy is developed and materialised for developing countries from its relationship with ACP countries. The EU encourages ACP countries to promote institutional reform and develop policies in order to fulfil objectives that were set in the Maastricht Treaty. The fundamental idea of its development policy was developed through the earlier conventions.

After European integration, development policy started to spread the successful practical model of development to other regions and parts of the world. In the context of developing countries, it was started even simultaneously with the European Union accession process with the ACP states and even with enlargement policy, neighbourhood policy, the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkan. These are examples of the fruitful success of its development policy. The Eastern Partnership is a joint policy initiative that aims at deepening and strengthening relations among following members such as the European Union, its member states, and its six Eastern neighbours are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. They are successfully following a more results-oriented approach towards aims. It is about to achieve four main priority areas of the Eastern Partnership as 1) Stronger Economy: it focused on economic development and market opportunities, 2) Stronger governance such as strengthening institutions and good governance, 3) Stronger Connectivity: this is an emphasis on connectivity, energy efficiency, environment, and climate, and 4) Stronger Society: it focused on mobility and people to people contacts (European Commission, 2020). In the case of “stronger society”, the EU has been conducted successfully talks on “Visa Liberalisation Dialogues” with three Eastern Partnership countries are Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. Through these dialogues, the EU has taken a gradual step towards the long-term goal of visa-free travel. It has provided a basis on a case-by-case basis, and it is quite successful in that well-managed and secure mobility (European Commission, 2018).

The former Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström also appreciated the EU development policy and cited that “ten years ago, Sweden, together with Poland, initiated the EU’s Eastern Partnership. Now, The EU Eastern Partnership has been a success as the partnership and now it enters its second decade; it is an excellent time to highlight three priorities for its future development” (Wallström, 2019). The EU has a comprehensive approach, such as the “European Neighbourhood Instrument” towards Eastern partners and other neighbouring countries. The Association Agreements and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (AA/DCFTAs) have been concluded in 2014, which have brought relations to a new level between the EU and Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Furthermore, agreements are aimed at strengthening political association and economic integration. The relations with these countries have come closer to the EU in the context of aligning their legalisation and standards as per the EU one. These have tangibly been improving the lives of citizens for some last some years. Visa legalisation has been entered into force for Moldova in 2014 and for Georgia and Ukraine in 2017. Next, Armenia is very close to it and the EU’s negotiating process is ongoing within a new framework with Azerbaijan and Belarus. The Eastern Partnership was celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2019 (EEAS, 2020).

The European Union Enlargement Policy is an essential part of the very beginning of European integration, and every enlargement round has been achieved. There is a factor that is a key success behind every time as economic and technical assistance as an instrument of EU development policies. As a result, the 10 Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs), as well as Cyprus and Malta, joined in the expansion of the European Union. According to Eli Gateva, “it was unprecedented in scope and scale, which presented the Union with the opportunity to develop a multifaceted set of instruments and transformed enlargement into one of the EU’s most successful policies” (Gateva, 2018). After the fifth enlargement, the impact of the EU enlargement policy shaped in more comprehensive on development of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) that influences its effectiveness across the world. There is the impact of the European Union in the context of ‘political and

economic transformation in Central and Eastern Europe' (Ibid.). The EU development policy is incorporated with ENP and the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) supports reforms, which is assisting with financial and technical help in the engaged countries. The EU has dedicated 11.7 billion euros from 2014 to 2020, and it is focussing on 1) public administration reform, 2) the rule of law, 3) sustainable economy, 4) people and, 5) agriculture and rural development.

4. TRACING THE HISTORY OF EU DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN SOUTH ASIA DURING EVOLVING PHASES

The EU's priority in South Asia includes economic cooperation with a focus on regional stability, human rights, poverty alleviation, sustainable development, human rights, labour rights, and good governance. This section of the study focuses on development cooperation from the perspective of bilateral relations. India is the first country from South Asia to establish diplomatic relations with Brussels in 1962 and it was followed by Pakistan. The EU-Pakistan relations started in 1962 with major development and aid donors, as well as supports the promotion of democracy and institution building. The EC-Pakistan development cooperation initially prioritizes poverty alleviation and social sector development, mainly primary education. More than EUR 300 million of development assistance have been allotted since 1976. However, EU-Pakistan relations deepen date back to 1976, and it was signed for ten years and was regarded as a commercial cooperation agreement under the EC trade promotion programme for South Asia. The programme initiated with Pakistan to develop its exports and items including leather, light engineering goods, and jewellery, as well as duty-free or reduced rates of agricultural products. The EC donated to Pakistan between 1976 and 1985 nearly EUR 140 million, including an estimated EUR 75 million for project aid and EUR 58 million for food aid. The EC provided another aid to Afghan refugees almost worth EUR 110 million for the period of 1980 to 1985 (European Commission, 1986).

Moreover, the 1986 development cooperation agreement was reinforced in the field of trade and extended in economic and development cooperation. The industrial cooperation was undertaken to encourage the transfer of technology and to promote science and technological cooperation to support Pakistan's development programme. In 1986, the EC approved two-project co-financing with other agencies, the first project included 11 new vocational training centres in North-West Pakistan, and the second project was for the electrification of 176 villages. The EC commitment is estimated for both projects, respectively EUR 17 and 7 million 1985 (Ibid.). The third-generation cooperation agreement was signed in November 2001 between EC and Pakistan, but due to concern of the European Parliament towards the serious political situation in Pakistan, it has not been confirmed yet.

But the initial development policy of the EC towards Bangladesh traced date back to 1973 as diplomatic relations and food aid, just after its foundation. While EC's development assistance was limited in Asia at that time, they were one of the largest recipients of aid and soon became the largest trading partner. Both parties signed the Commercial Cooperation Agreement (CCA) in 1974 and it culminated as a Joint Commission on Trade and Economic cooperation in 1976. The 1976 cooperation agreement was replaced by a new cooperation agreement, which was signed on the 22 May 2000 and came into force in March 2001. The European Union's development assistance has been aimed at reducing poverty, food

security, health, and primary education. The EU has provided total humanitarian assistance, and the co-financed NGOs in Bangladesh was EUR 1,500 million (Soutullo, 2019). In the 1980s, the EC-Bangladesh Agreement on Trade and Jute Products was signed to remove all quantitative restrictions on textile imports from Bangladesh and it came into force from the 1 January 1984. Another treaty was signed on the 'Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement' in 1988 to strengthen research capabilities in focus on agriculture and water resource management (Munna, 2022).

The EU-Sri Lanka diplomatic relationship established dates back to 1971, but official relations as development cooperation was concluded with a Commercial Cooperation Agreement in 1975. During the period, development cooperation changed according to the requirement of Sri Lanka, and the initial development policy focused only on poverty alleviation and agricultural development through the rural development programme. The EU has inaugurated a Delegation Office in Colombo in 1995 that is also accredited to the Maldives. The contemporary comprehensive 'Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development' came into force in April 1995, and the Re-admission Agreement comes into force since 2005. The 1995 development cooperation also focussed on human rights and democracy. In the EU-Sri Lanka development cooperation, the total is approximately EUR 760 million assistance provided in the six different areas of cooperation, such as bilateral programs, regional programmes, global programmes, humanitarian aid, European investment bank, and post-tsunami reconstruction assistance (European Union, 2016).

The established relations between the EU and Nepal date back to 1973 in the field of politics and economics; the fundamental principles were guided to achieve peace, stability, democracy, human rights, and prosperity (Delegation of the European Union to Nepal, 2016). However, Nepal established diplomatic relations with the EU in 1975, and the EEC has joined the Nepal Aid group in 1982. Initially, the EU has taken an interest in Nepal's problems related to Bhutanese refugees. The EU-Nepal Cooperation Agreement came into force in 1996 in the area of concern for peace and stability, development, human rights, and trade (Government of Nepal, 2017). However, the EU assistance to Nepal started to be materialised by 1977 and until 2006 that was totalled EUR 240 million. In 1986, 220,000 ECU were sanctioned to Nepal to promote tourism and they were also part of food aid. The European Community allocated another assistance for trade promotion, and the total allocated money was ECU 757,000 from 1980 to 1986 (Tripathi, 2011, p. 209-210).

The EU started assisting Bhutan in 1982, and they have given a total of about EUR 46 million from 1982–2000. But the EU and the Royal Government of Bhutan established diplomatic relations in 1985. The focus of development assistance was rural development and poverty reduction. Furthermore, the EU allocated an estimated EUR 15 million during the period 2002–2006 (EEAS, 2016). But the EU and the Maldives have a very close relationship and, over the past few decades, they have maintained very close development cooperation. Likewise, the EC established diplomatic ties with the Maldives in 1983, as we know, the 'Commission Head of Delegation' accredited as a non-resident Ambassador to the Maldives in Colombo. But the EU has engaged with the Maldives to provide development assistance since 1981. The development policy has prioritised the archipelago's unique set of development issues in the archipelago, and the Commission focuses mainly on their environmental imperatives.

Table 1. Projects Financed by the EEC in Nepal (1978–1986)

Year	Project Details
1978	The Integrated Rural Development Project for Sagarmatha zone of 3098 US dollars is 1978 co-financed by EC.
1982	The EEC co-financed 3.7 million ECU for the Rural Water and Sanitation project with UNICEF.
1983	The EEC agreed to finance the supply of fertilizers for 5.3 million ECU.
1984	The EEC provided 5 million ECU for the construction of Nepal Administrative Staff College.
1985	Financed Arjun Khola irrigation project also financed the study on the hill and Mountain crops.
1986	Finance rural development project in hill farming. The EEC also has then made the supply of 15,000 tons of cereal.

Source: (Tripathi, 2011).

In addition, Afghanistan is one of the most volatile countries in the world and the country is facing extremism and terrorism in the region. However, the Commission has continued to support Afghanistan in the 1990s. Still, before 9/11, the EC allocated more than EUR 500 million and it was the largest single donor to the country at that time. The EU wanted a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan, as well as the vital stability and development of South Asia. The EU and its member states have been contributing to international efforts to combat extremism and terrorism in Afghanistan since 2001 (Soutullo, 2019; Bharti, 2022). The 9/11 was one of the main reasons why the EU updated its Asia Strategy. Because the 9/11 United States attacks is linked to Afghanistan, which suddenly became the world's security stake, heightened the suspicion over South Asia. The EU's prosperity is also linked to South Asia. After that, South Asia initiated a geostrategic competition among the great powers. Immediately, the EU was interested in the region and realised and recognised development challenges. The comparison of the EU models of development and security became significant for South Asia (Bharti, 2020; Bharti, 2021).

5. CONCLUSIONS: ASSESSMENT OF THE EU DEVELOPMENT ROLE IN SOUTH ASIA

The main objective of the study was to find the EU's development policy as a model of development for developing countries and regions such as South Asia. The EU was itself established as an example of regional integration. The EU's eastward or neighbourhood policy seems to be very successful and many post-Soviet countries have integrated with the Union such as the Baltic states, Central Europe, and some Eastern European countries. The EU's regional integration model played an important role in the geopolitics and geoeconomics of Europe. The European model of regional integration also influenced South Asia. In the past, the former Indian Prime Minister Gandhi initiated the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) but it was completed after her. But the EU model of development of the region was mainly the economic integration, which also influenced Ukraine and decided to join the NATO and the Union in 2014, which resulted as the Ukrainian crisis of the decade after the Cold War period. But the South Asian Union has no work and success like the EU. South Asian states have been not very successful to

solve their territorial disputes that is mainly a concerning point between India and Pakistan over Kashmir disputes.

On the other hand, the EU has become a peacemaker and conflict solver across Europe and the world, but SAARC states are still engaged in conflicts and constant instability. On the 31 August 2021, the United States and its allies left Afghanistan in fragile and chaos, which run under the undemocratic regime (Aryal & Bharti, 2021, p. 5). After this episode, the development and security stakes of South Asia are under threat where the COVID-19 pandemic makes it worse. The EU developmental role has even some successful contributions and achievement while promoting democracy in Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal. South Asia has unique characteristics due to its geography and natural resources, adding a population that consists of the largest consumer market in the world. These characteristics of South Asia attract the economic powers of the world for economic and social engagement. The EU is one of the core economic unions, so they are looking for a free trade agreement with South Asia. In 2014, all International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank has uplifted India by financing, freeing up other concessional IDA instruments. After that, the EU-India became development partners for the implementation of development policy in developing countries. India is already the main trading and investment partner of the EU, and both partners have already signed strategic partnerships. But South Asian states need to refocus and rework on the SAARC and the EU is the best example of development and security models for regional integration. It's true and sincere involvement in South Asians is easily visible and praiseworthy. The EU is adapted to such kind of development model and regional integration for the prosperity of the region.

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