

EDITORIAL

The South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) came into existence in 1980 as a joint venture of eight Asian countries Bangladesh, India, Bhutan, Pakistan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan with the avowed purpose of promoting collaboration and mutual assistance for economic, cultural and scientific development. Committed to the welfare of South Asian Countries, it envisioned to foster the spirit of friendship, trust and mutual understanding. While all these countries had a complex multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic identities, they did inherit a rich social and cultural heritage and cherished a certain value system against all odds of political upheavals. Since the most striking feature of all these SAARC countries was their multi-linguism and multi-culturalism, that makes their studies almost impossible on the basis of one culture or one language, it is also significant that each one of them has a social and political history of struggle against the agencies of power which segregate humanity on the basis of colour, caste, religion and gender. Each one of them has consistently fought against the problems of poverty, illiteracy and inequitable distribution of the means of production that have incessantly given rise to sectarian violence and terrorism. SAARC Literature in English best represents these contours of this social reality and makes a strong plea for a peaceful and humane world, free from extremities.

If Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Intizaar Husain's *Basti* represent the generation of writers who have realistically portrayed the trauma of partition and the plight of women in the orthodox society, the creative zeal of women writers like Bapsi Sidhwa (Pakistan) in *Ice Candy Man*, Tehmina Durrani (Pakistan) in *My Feudal Lord*, Kunzang Choden (Bhutan) in *The Circle of Karma*, Mahashweta Devi, Bama and Arundhati Roy in India have highlighted the exploitations of women in the male dominated societies, exposing the shams of religion, their artistic works have given momentum to re-thinking and re-building social structures, taking care of the marginalised sections of the society.

Dialogue's present issue is just a glimpse of the various themes and concerns of SAARC Literature. The growth and development of SAARC Literature is synonymous of a political move turning into a social campaign that has a common humanitarian agenda across borders of nation and religion. Hope the readers would like the issue and send their critical observations on the e-mail of the journal.

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