



Bangladesh in South Asia: The Dilemmas of the Weak States

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Abstract

The very complex environment of regional and extra-regional politics in South Asia makes the region more susceptible to economically and militarily weak nations. This study examines the dilemmas faced by Bangladesh as a weak nation in the South Asia region. Being a small state but significantly important for both regional and global powers, Bangladesh faces numerous challenges that constrain its desire to hold and maintain a truly independent and non-aligned foreign policy approach. To understand the policy approach towards the dilemmas, in-depth expert interviews have been conducted, and recent literature has been reviewed. The study explores the complexities arising from its history, geographical location, geopolitical stance, regional power rivalries, and the influence of key powers. It also assesses the policy implications of the dilemmas by analysing the strategies taken by Bangladesh and other weak states in the region. The study concludes that regional power rivalries, instability, and security concerns with each other's nations may lead to a more brittle region in the near future. Ultimately, the study recommends that the small and weak countries in South Asia must be united and work closer to navigate the dilemmas and challenges in pursuit of their national interests, territorial integrity, and regional stability and security.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Weak States, Dilemmas, Foreign Policy, Geopolitics