



Q. Despite having been in existence for many years, the BIMSTEC grouping had been largely ignored. Comment (150 words).

BIMSTEC referred as Bay of Bengal initiative for multi sectoral technical and economic cooperation was established in 1997. It is a regional organisation which was established with the signing of Bangkok Declaration.

Significance of BIMSTEC :

- Bridge b/w South Asia and Southeast Asia.
- Acts as platform for intra Regional Cooperation.
- Importance for 3 major India's foreign policies
 - Neighbourhood policy
 - Act East policy
 - SAGAR Project
- Have a potential to be epicentre of Indo Pacific.
- majority sea route is through BOB region.

Challenges of BIMSTEC :

- Inconsistencies in the Meetings
- It is not the 1st choice for member countries (for Myanmar & Thailand - 1st choice - ASEAN)
- Bilateral issues b/w Member nations (Rohingya issue b/w Bangladesh & Myanmar)
- BIMSTEC decision making is very slow because it is based on Consensus Building
- Hence, low level of implementation
- Overall, Ocean governance is neglected.
- Military coup in Myanmar.



WAY FORWARD :

- A paradigm shift is required at the level of cooperation and regional integration.
- Improve the capacity of the secretariat in terms of manpower and funding.
- Create a regional supply chain that can be an alternative to global supply chain.
- Empowering BIMSTEC to the platform for dispute resolution.
- BIMSTEC should focus on sector specific & specific problems areas.
- BIMSTEC countries should focus and enhance the tourism, connectivity, Education, Health facilities among them.

The BIMSTEC grouping had been largely ignored because in contemporary world, the nations and countries have come up with many other organisation, which are highly active and reliable to them. And coming across them as the helpful and convenient hand.