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Role of Media in Central and South Asian Connectivity

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“Media plays an important role in establishing and perpetuating social norms”

The President of Uzbekistan, His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has provided a grand initiative of Central and South Asian connectivity. History has marked this great proposal by Uzbek



leadership to revive centuries-old cultural and historical ties between both regions. The historical proximity of the regions of Central and South Asia is important in strengthening it today based on mutual trust and consideration of interests. In the 19th century, the interconnectedness was broken. Many obstacles arose, and the era of cooperation was replaced by a period of confrontation and mistrust. However, in the 21st century, inclusive economic projects provide great opportunity for both regions to cooperate in diverse fields. In this aspect, ten proposals by the visionary leader, His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev, reflect ten different ways to strive for a shared future. Uzbekistan has also been experiencing a third renaissance under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The farsightedness and prudence of this leader have led to the remarkable growth of Uzbekistan in recent times. The open policy structure and enhanced regional footprints have paved the way for the country to acquire a great place under the comity of nations. Therefore, the idea of Central-South Asian regional cooperation holds great significance. In this aspect, the role of media is equally pertinent for creating awareness



on emerging concepts, disseminating facts, projecting soft image, and enhancing people-to-people contacts via cultural diplomacy.

Proactive Role of Media in Promoting Regional Understanding:

“Pen is mightier than sword” , an old proverb, seems to be true even in today’ s context due to the media’ s proactive role in modern society. Media is considered the fifth-pillar of



democracy in any country. Media is the reflection of our society and it depicts what and how society works. Media, either printed, electronic or the web is the only medium, which helps make people informed. It also helps in entertaining the public, educate and make people aware of the current happenings. Media has today become the voice of our society. A variety of media platforms that has stimulated the thoughts of the young generation and other sections of our society, more eloquently.

In this aspect, the media’ s constructive role cannot be negated while creating awareness on South and Central Asia regional cooperation. Media’ s global outreach and constructive part in providing updated information on each event around the globe make it significant for enhancing cultural linkages. The media has become a powerful tool of communication and interaction in the evolving world. During the early age of advancement, media was not only informative but also catered to the



development of a civilized society. Thereby, it has been considered as a mirror of society.

It is a known fact that Central Asia has remained the hub of the world's attention in economic terms. One of the primary reasons for this region's progress was the Old Silk Route that has made it the center of excellence, art, famous cuisine, innovation, spiritual land, and exceptional cultural norms. The wonderful architecture of Tashkent, Samarkand, Khiva, and Bukhara reflect the ancient and varied nature of Central Asian historical heritage. Therefore, to reinvigorate centuries-old cultural and historical ties, media can play a dynamic role in socio-cultural development between Central and South Asia. Changing the geopolitical arena will have multiple advantages for the region. The potential of Media cannot be negated in contemporary times. It helps people educate, persuade, interpret, socialize, disseminate factual news, share information, entertain, and create awareness.

A Vision of Connectivity: South-Central Asia

Uzbekistan has been playing a dynamic role in interregional cooperation. Uzbek and Pakistani media have shown great credibility and responsibility in bridging communication barriers in present times. The freedom of media is a blessing, and it has been clear from the abovementioned role of media that it will facilitate to enhance people-to-people contacts, regional connectedness, projecting the soft image, and promoting common norms and culture. With increased media and internet outreach, more avenues of information have been created, i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and



different social media applications. Thereby, it has become conducive for people to attain information via credible sources. The media of Central-South Asia must foster their cooperation in creating awareness, linking people, and reviving old-cultural and religious ties. The positive role of media would add constructively to the nation's progress and disseminating the true picture of a country. The ten-point agenda proposed by the Uzbek president in the 15th-16 July international conference holds immense importance. Now, it is a joint responsibility of media to disseminate information regarding this grand initiative of connectivity so that countries and people can strive for a better shared future. Media has to play a more positive role in bridging the communication gaps between South-Central Asia, eradicating differences and help to attain common goals.