

“ACT EAST: NORTH-EASTERN REGION PLUNKS IN THE LEXICON OF INTERNATIONAL MILIEU”

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Abstract

This article discourses the espousal of the ‘North-Eastern Region’ in the strategic mileage and finds reasonable counters for the region- why did the North-Eastern region kept behind in the scene? How could it be revived? What does it surprisingly mean to represent? The geographical location as a bridge to the East occupies a unique strategic position; no other part of the country has any pretence so much. It is identifying strategically significant in the lexicon of international relations-will determine in ‘Act East Policy.’ So, without embracing it, reap of act and engagement towards eastwards countries may not be feasible; hence it should be appreciated as a complementary partner rather than a mere chicken’s neck corridor. Since Independence, the area exclaims for uplifting, intensifying cooperation in progress, and many more, so it the opportunities to the glaze underway in the policy. Concisely, there is the expanse to unite in linking the strategic advancement prospect to the Eastern world through the North-Eastern Region.

Keywords : *Act East Policy, North-Eastern Region, Eastward, Strategic, Engagement, Development*

Introduction

The ‘North-Eastern Region’ (NER) implements a freakish staging the germination possibilities extend by knitting the precinct amidst acquaintance realms Eastern Asia. It has the prospect to serve plausible integration by Southeast and East Asia. (Omprasad and Gupta 2107) intend to explore the potentials, opportunities, challenges, and problems for collaboration among India-ASEAN shared and keeping the NER specific. Being a landlocked region, it shares the maximum border shared with International hinterland Asia. The part hunts the advancement and probabilities for trade and investment, and connectivity linking East countries and considers engagement. Feasibility is considerable for the area to edge into reality even if the central government were severe. Earnestly maneuver to venture the Central Government acumen of advancement for a whole and a large section of people entirely. With the metamorphosis of the Look East push from “Look East Policy to Act East Policy” since 2014 under the new dispensation, it is pertinent to analyses why the NER or Northeast India has failed to reap any benefit from the LEP. What policy change is required to make the AEP work for developing the region (Das, Paul, and Mathur 2017). In the contemporary era, as India redefines its relationship with the world under globalisation, international borders are no more portrayed as barriers but as bridgeheads of ushering in economic prosperity. Policy initiatives have been an attempt to actualise this vision (Chakraborty 2016). The Government of India needs to heed under AEP to interest NER to the next echelon. It will determine in Act East Policy (AEP), why it is necessary for NER?

The article looks at the North-Eastern Region is an extendedly crucial part to play in propose policy. Here specifies and greets the region to give full involvement eyeing stimulating cooperation in the central gestations. Undoubtedly, the role has not given many opportunities in the LEP. Still, it is Act East Policy intensifying the multi-precious gifted Northeast. Northeast Indian states imperatively mention potentialities hub of affluent by the Eastern countries. The region serves strapping ties of success of vision turn to East. Now, acting and engaging with Southeast Asia and beyond has become the most decisive feature of economic escalation and strategic mileage. India became earnest when China has deepened its economic, military, political track in Southeast Asia and the ‘Pacific’ precinct. AEP is the right track of participation in Global affairs' new milieu. However, the Northeast Indian States is not trivial in the AEP. Where it viaduct connects to eastwards. In reality, the purpose of India is a measure to reduce the conflicting prospects of acquaintances in the state of affairs. NER has its appreciable wings to fly, but it does not want to operate without policies of the mainstream of India. There is a need for the gentle expandable realistic arrangement of strategy to root in development and advancement for the region. The region necessitates national and international impetus within rationale. Outstanding to this, NER is passionate could forfeit for the success, integration, and meet of AEP to Eastern countries.

Is North-Eastern Region Counting?

The New policy is capturing a shift from Looking to Acting the context of the Northeast of opportunities and limitations it brings with it from an economic and strategic perspective (Thomas & Sarda, 2017). In the lexicon of international relations, the Northeast strategically occupies the right position (Reddy & Thomas, 2019). The search for a new better economic rapport with impressive 'Southeast Asian countries' driven in considerations concerning globalisation plus domestic imperatives of developing Northeast India by increasing its connectivity to the outside world (Surjitkumar, 2018). East Asian countries consider a colossal priority in the AEP. India presents acting and engaging towards the East rather than Looking East the linkages with Southeast and East Asia, regarded as the central part in AEP. Focuses on ASEAN member nations; East Asia; Economic engagement; Security collaboration; Geo-politics and is formally known as Act East Policy. Instant under the AEP, it has revealed and affects much on North-East India.

Eastwards and Standing of NER

Asia has grown stupendously from American and European outsourcing, and now the United States and Europe are being buttressed by the infusion of Asian investment and talent (Khanna, 2019). The geopolitical struggles of the 21st century will be in Asia (Sikri 2014) as fastest-growing at every level, without clashing with Southeast Asia, and East Asia, increased economic confidence (Singh 2015). In this direction, Northeast India is an essential preventive location "against potential threats that may emanate from or through the Southeast Asian archipelago" (Brewster 2013). "Act East Policy" applies all ASEAN, North-East Asia, and covers unexpected areas of Pacific Oceania kept a distance from that of outreach countries (Paik and Kumar 2019). The strategy revives and refreshes the reciprocities with ASEAN and not confine on it but to grow to act and engagement beyond the area to embrace to Korean to Australia in the North-South, farther hinterland "Bangladesh to Fiji and Pacific Island countries in the Far East" (Sajjanhar 2016), and discussing engagement endured by an undecayed impulse (De & Chirathivat, 2017). AEP "focuses on its defence and security dimensions" (Mezard, 2016). India wants to be proactive in maritime security (Karim 2017). The US-Japan-India and the Australia-Japan-India devise enlarging more significant synergies and hugging strength of exercising bolster of the joint in the military inclinations upon the sensed "China threat" (Mishra 2018). As an Asian giant policy, India has been significantly improving reciprocity by large towards East Asia (Jaffrelot, 2010). It believes India not only seeking greater engagement with East countries, more than that several "crisscrossing strategies throughout" the Indo-Pacific in Act East Policy and that is India's interest (Chum 2019). The NER pointed strategic credence towards Act East Policy. It is the arrow potentialities in the fruition of the policy towards Eastern countries.

India and Ten ASEAN Member Countries

The engagement towards East Asia can not be aloof the South East Asian region (Naidu 2010), so "India's vision of a close relationship with ASEAN is to forge a vast 'arc of prosperity' across Asia" (Bora, 2014), and it will "offers enormous growth potential for the Northeast" (Menon, 2007). Especially in the Southeast and East Asian subsystems, they delineate their arrangement in the provision of extending the relationship with the US, China, and even with the condition of India (Anand 2014). "AEP under PM Modi, economic corridors and connectivity projects mooted by forums such as the ASEAN, BIMSTEC, and BCIM, and so on" (Ziipao 2018). The BCIM provides Indian goods more generously access to the international market through Myanmar (Karim and Islam 2018). And "India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway project...could prove to be a game-changer" (Bana and Yhome, 2017).

"The groups of ten ASEAN and China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and India signed of the agreement the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in 2012, and the signing of Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement in New Zealand in 2016, it has become imperative for RCEP members to" (Sajjanhar 2016) decisive further. It provides a new path of opportunity to India in terms of economic integration, balancing in the international interest of safeguards, and the evenhanded arrangement of ambitions and the first step of footprint amidst great far-reaching powers. The "East Asia Summit" as referred to "ASEAN+6" also expanded "ASEAN+3" cooperation mainly in the financial sector, enhancing essential role in the South and Southeast Asian fusion integration. The ASEAN+6 have already established trade relations which lead to the immense benefit of quite possible trade integration through the FTA (Bhattacharyay 2014). Greater focus in ASEAN+6 is standing ASEAN+3 rather. Towards East, the sounding India-ASEAN and India-East Asian countries endeavours to revive the pecuniary and strategic partnership in Act East Policy matter in Indian Foreign Policy profusion. In this stripe, NER does not keep silent for the commercial hub and strategic cover-up of integrating the potentialities.

The Modi Government set the reshape of maritime security strategy, the counter role in the multiple geopolitical scenes projection of "new outward-looking maritime" policy in maritime theatre Southeast Asia as the

"Act East Strategy" (Alatas 2018). India has opened up its maritime security strategy with the joint of the neighbour East (Mezard, 2016). On the maritime security and cooperation front, India is projecting maritime rise with opened up its eastern border a significant engagement with the east part of the world, and in this proceed Northeast India is prominence. Northeast appreciates consolidating the Eastern frontward in India's long-run vision. That is only the region through which is India defies the Chinese maritime encroachment in the eastern region.

Thailand has audibly determined to manoeuvre to magnify its connectivity with India, even though infrastructure ties are still inadequate (Banomyong, Varadejsatitwong, and Phanjan 2011). India and Thailand share the maritime border with them. More than seven decades of historical and cultural ties tightened in building diplomatic relations of one side of acting and engaging to the East and another side of west policy casing diverse enormity and NER prioritised in moderate comradeship. India and Malaysia show the same "strategic safeties". Both interact with mutual benefit in "Straits of Malacca and the Sea of Andaman". The India-Myanmar relationship determines security in India's Northeast region (Gottschlich 2015). China is a major economic investor in Myanmar, but in military relations, anxiety in India (Routray 2011). India's maritime cooperation with Myanmar has considerable potential (Vijay 2018). The economic expansion and political and security arrangements Myanmar contributes lots for the NER (Chakrabarti 2017). India's acting east and engagements process is meaningless if not ciao with Myanmar. Myanmar is popularised as a doorway of Act East through the Northeastern States. In it, India's towards the Eastern world starts with Myanmar. India and Indonesia, they steadily building strong defence ties, such example in maritime exercise, through proceeded under CORPAT. SAGAR is ethos crucial supporting investing in the infrastructure gain littoral such as Indonesia. India canister affords to support the financial assistant "to Indonesia's 'sea-toll highway,' aiming to revamp old and vital ports in the islands of Sumatra and Java, by doing so, connectivity with the ports of the 'Aceh' region, 'Kuala Tanjung', and 'Tanjung Priok' can be increased" (Agarwala and Saha 2019). The enthusiasts of the 'Indo-Pacific' perception pretend economic, political, and security cooperation, societal linkages of strong integration (Chacko and Willis 2018). Since the Cold War, Vietnam was sole remained to maintain terms vigorously with India. (Alatas 2018) express rooted in constructive of the imperative way in 'geopolitical and geoeconomic' in a more in-depth approach.

India has fancies strengthening deep persisting diplomatic and strategic ties in Southeast Asia realms (Sial 2017) and looks extremely promising (Panda, 2017). The find appropriate mutual benefits to establishing realise national enthusiasm, India would have fun in the emerging strategic trend with partners (Anand 2014). It would increase the reserves and efficiencies in shaping the right way towards East strategy, trade, and investment, polity to coordinate both within and distant to enhance the diplomatic essence of acting east (Dutta 2017). In 2012 the India-ASEAN strategic partnership established during the "Commemorative Summit" (2012). "The Northeastern Borderlands of South Asia and the Northwestern Borderlands of Southeast Asia, India's Northeastern region is the meeting ground of two sub-continents" (Haokip 2015). NER represents the India-ASEAN connectivity, and recently encouraging connectivity throughout the BCIM (Bhattacharyay 2014). "Without adequate cross-border connectivity, India's Northeastern state would be highly challenging of full reap AEP" (Sajjanhar 2016).

India and 'Northeast Asia'

The highlight of the "Act East policy" is augmentation the scope of "action" to East Asia. In this perspective, the strong economic linkages into East Asia, in which Northeast Asian countries (Japan, China, Korea) play a leading role, India does not want to stay outside this trend (Binh 2015). In the "Great Game" power threats in certainty, it emanates from the different edge (Karim 2017). For India, it's an accurate analysis of opportunity with the East and the Far East of their trust (Yhome 2017). Now, New Delhi has changed "pursued a hedging strategy against China" (Boon 2016). Here the growing relations through Japan, the US, Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan for the greater integration of military-strategic engagements raise the tension to both (Rahul 2018). India further engage security interests will naturally blend with those of the US that Indian policies will be wary of facilitating the growing dominance of China in East Asia" (Katoch 2019) "based on broad US-India shared interests and strategies" (Singh, 2019) "are still proverbially a work in progress" (De Castro 2018). The confidential affinities with the US lift economically sturdy and enduring and gain confidence in dealing with China (Yong and Mun 2009) are implemented in AEP. "Modi's India First and Act East policies" more focus on the economic and maritime strategy to pursue development encouragement to East "following China's footsteps" (Gupta et al. 2019). "India has always adopted a reactive maritime strategy towards China; however, this time around, India needs to act tough as there is little time to lose" (Upadhyaya 2017). "Act East" can sense its desire to protect India's national interests (Khurana, 2017; Garge, 2017). It expands the geostrategic scope mounting accent on the "Indo-Pacific Region." The freakish strategic geography raises China-India's ambitious power projection beyond sub-regional respective in maritime adjustment (Kalita 2018). Whatever it may be, often identify two critical factors of India's strategic pondering regarding East Asia- "a rivalry with China and ambitions to achieve high power status" (Brewster 2011). Now,

India-China bilateral relations are multifaceted that converges and diverges on different sets of issues depending on their world-views (Kumar, 2020). The recent incident between Indian-Chinese soldier in the Galwan river valley in a disputed Himalayan border area is the highest diplomatic winning of India's eastwards and great powers comradeship retort. It is the "North-Eastern Region" position. The activities of China could be capture and stratagems any instant through the eagle-eyed dealings with security and peace, trade and investment, and the counteroffensive.

In recent decades, Japan expanded the geopolitical engagement (Lee 2018). The growing India-Japan nexus has a common interest (Chand and Garcia 2017) especially the securitisation of China. Japan-India has swapped the perception from "mutual apathy to trust and cooperation" (Basu 2014). The growing proximity to the "US, Japan, has emerged as India's most reliable regional ally" (Singh & Yamamoto, 2016). The specific word "trust" is core in a renewed phase of engagement in India-Japan, especially the Northeastern region (Borah, 2019). India-Japan "2+2 ministerial dialogue" provides an opportunity for strengthening defence and security partnership to give more depth flow, "Special Strategic and Global Partnership" in the "Indo-Pacific Vision."¹But it would largely depend on symmetries unfold "how the US-China, US-ASEAN, and China-ASEAN" response (Anand 2014). In Act East, New Delhi-Tokyo engagement increases the odds of the North-Eastern Region as potentialities focus (Basu 2018). India expected long-term trade and investment, improving its economic potential with Japanese companies (Mukherjee 2018). "Japan is ranks 16th as India's trading partner". Investments are splendid in this partnership combine defence cooperation has been formalised (Ganapathi, 2015). In Japanese Prime Minister Abe's pronouncement inside CSIS, "Japan is Back" India compliment a partner.² Both have enhanced economic transformation- ODA, CEPA, TTIP cooperation, especially in NER India, are coming in together. In 2014 New Delhi-Tokyo accomplished "Special Strategic and Global Partnership." Japan actively promoted QUAD and JIMEX trust India-Japan holds a joint naval exercise, which is one of the most significant engagements of India with Japan. Japan has significantly boosted the advancement project, especially in NER.

"Korean Peninsula" has breached the deep strategic disconnect with South Asia developed a robust economic partnership that exhibits many strategic interests shared in them (Brewster 2010). South Korea's focus private sector is more oriented in India, the reputed global brands from South Korean- Samsung Phone, Life's Good (LG) Electronics, Hyundai Motors, converted in-house yields (Paik and Kumar 2019). In reality, it is also true that there are not tangible improvements in two-sided relations as foreseen, (Dhawan 2018). India's relations with South Korea not beyond political and economic rendezvous, but India will not be hesitant and waited for strategic maritime interests. After the relations were restored linking India-China mid-1970s, India became prudent and vestiges so developing more intimate ties with Taiwan (Tripathi & Deepak, 2016) in economic logic from the other dimensions (Singh, 2019). India has an interest in expanding economic and socio-cultural ties with Taiwan (Karackattu 2019). Terming bilateral relations as 'strategic,' it redefines the partnership (Rai 2018). Both raised a comprehensive partnership to a strategic partnership in 2015. In Act East Policy, Mongolia is the imperative intimate for India's rising footprints in North-East Asia. (De, 2020) indicates with deep-rooted history interactions.

India and 'Pacific Oceania'

New Delhi has significantly maneuvered its space (Bhatti 2018) with the Asian high powerful countries. India distant entangled, if it is, hence, the contention is ostensible with China, while weighing with 'Pacific actors', similar to the United States and Japan (Scott 2007) in addition, India "plays a vital role in shaping the future of this dynamic region" (De Castro 2018) of 'US pivot to Asia and rebalancing Asia' in a new conception of Indo-Pacific region. Also to evolve into a multilayered approach with 'Pacific Oceanic' partner Australia (Ollapally 2018) and also with New Zealand and Fiji. Australia perceives India "in the Indo-Pacific region" as an apt economic partner (Potlapalli 2015) and also raised its defence relation (Pandit & Basu 2014). India's strategic partnership of 2009 has been upgraded into a Framework for Security Cooperation in 2014 (Muni & Mishra, 2019). Australia, in "Defence White Paper of May 2013" stated the appearance of India "as an important, diplomatic and economic actor, looking east and becoming more engaged in regional frameworks" (Khurana 2019) given priority. In the eying of recovering friendship with Australia, the 'Quad'(Roy-Chaudhury and de Estrada 2018) guiding notion of a revived partnership concept. Australia and India, their partnership is not mislaid in recent global canvas theatre strategic conceptualisation. In the dynamic geostrategic milieu, Australia observes and assesses the evolving China and India of Asia's giant. Overall the engagement of India with New Zealand bilateral relationship is yet untapped (Sharma, 2014). India is sharing several common interests (Rolls, 2017), so it recognised striking. It is a known fact Fiji occupies a unique and imperative place due to the strong presence of Diaspora (Ganapathi 2015). "Fiji is the most advanced Pacific Islands and desires to be at the forefront of world issues and trends" (Fogleman 2008) India does extent.

Conclusion

NER does challenging now, but it is the 'Act East Policy' freshly fosters a more confidential relationship towards its Eastern (Patgiri and Hazarika 2016) countries. Political and economic elites of the regional and national have poignant crew behind the policies of the 'Central Government' (Ziipao 2018). So, the centre obligation is escorted into a "bottom-up approach and not top-down approach" wherever the requisite capacity is executed (Dubey 2014) in the policy. The prompt challenges require skillful persuasion leaders to decide the festering perplexities the plaque of a long time in NER. As a result, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has remarked that Northeast India has become India's growth engine.³ We must recognise the centrality of NER in AEP (Paul and Das 2017). The can be no Act East without Act North-East (Saran 2016). It acknowledges the advantage of the area for reason that as the first step of Eastern parts and the extended passageway for opportunities, so the event of the development could be a priority within policy. Progress, development, and benefit of the area are at the heart of AEP that could further promote the blending. More excellently, the significance of connectivity and economic assimilation of its eastern acquaintances to be precise of latchkey focuses quarter for expansion of germination, development, and progress of the region. New Delhi, which works for the same speed of steps forward and constant pace in a very balanced manner for the Northeast in India's vision. The partnership for and many relations to Southeast and East Asian countries for the area will traverse towards prosperity.

NER has found itself as the centre of significant economies (Yhome 2015). Psychologically it is apparent the 'Act East Policy' renders much relief of fundamental change (Chaturvedy 2018) and huge the 'Eastern Rainbow.' The area possesses past factual positions. It should make a complementary partner of "India's Act East Policy" of the mainstream rather than a mere corridor of link with Southeast and East Asian. Positively, the Central Government and AEP, which need a clear cut vision, is necessary to make a valuable. It is the challenges among the Central Government, the State Government and the Civil Society should concentrate on incessant exertion, interaction and enthusiasm of togetherness are require to justify more courteous to success for the region. The region is not the exclusion of India's act and engagements towards Eastern countries, but its embrace and realise as precedence without complaining of rubbish part of the countryside.

Notes

1. "However, china's trade with Bangladesh has increased in recent years to exceed India from 2001 onwards. This relation with china has it analyzes why and how, despite the general stable state of and progress in Sino-Indian affairs, Delhi has pursued a hedging strategy against China", Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/Documents/in/India-China_Relations?Page=2 (accessed 29/07/2020).
2. "Japan is Back, Policy Speech by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2013), Retrieved from https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/pm/abe/us_20130222en.html.
3. PM said "The northeast is becoming a growth engine. Great work has been done in so many sectors. Ministers and officials are regularly visiting the region", Retrieved from "<https://www.outlookindia.com/Newsscroll/Northeast-ignored-for-years-now-becoming-growth-enginepm/1727907> (accessed 21/01/2020).

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