

II and III are solely based on quantitative results and their interpretations. The chapters also have important lessons for India, especially Chapters 6, 8 and 9, that cover issues related to the national innovation system in India, technological capability of its industry, industrial development and access to technology.

One general observation in the context of this volume, while the topics are carefully selected, the contexts appear to be slightly more scattered. This might lead to generating only selective interest about this book. This, however, does little to bring down the relevance of this very important volume. The chapters in this volume contain rich analysis of key issues with sharp focus on systemic challenges. This should not only guide future researchers in their choice of hypothesis, parameters and variables but would also offer serious insights and interpretations. An abridged version of the conclusions should send out clear policy lessons. Implementation of the SDGs requires mitigating systemic challenges and reforming global and national institutions. The analysis and evidence presented in this volume would be important and informative to the development and public policy community in this regard.

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Gurudas Das and C. Joshua Thomas (Eds), *Look East to Act East Policy: Implications for India's Northeast*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2016, pp. 252, ₹895, ISBN: 978-1-138-66756-3, 978-1-315-65766-0.

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The book is a timely edition to the ongoing discourse on India's engagement with its eastern neighbours. In the past two years, there has been significant upgradation of India's engagement with various Southeast Asian and East Asian countries under the rubric of Look East policy (LEP) and Act East policy (AEP). Today, India is proactively connecting with distant countries such as Fiji and Mongolia. In this context, Gurudas Das and C. Joshua Thomas edited volume titled 'Look East to Act East: Implications for India's Northeast' is a welcome publication.

The book is broadly divided into two parts—the first part takes an overarching approach to understand India's LEP. In the process, it examines India's economic relations with ASEAN; sustainability of the Burma, China, India and Myanmar (BCIM) forum; India's policies towards its immediate neighbours, such as China and Myanmar; energy security and connectivity issues. In the second part, the authors critically examine India's LEP from the perspective of Northeast India.

An important dimension of the book is not only the space provided for Indian scholars from diverse backgrounds, but it also provides perspectives from scholars belonging to other countries, such as Vietnam and China. The book offers viewpoints from various sectors, such as academicians, researchers, diplomats

and others. An important argument of the book is laid out in the introduction by the editors. They state that while the coastal states on the east coast of India have been the principal beneficiaries of the LEP, the Northeast India has failed to emerge as an important trading space. In order to integrate Northeast India into LEP, the authors call for promoting sub-regional cooperation such as BCIM and BIMSTEC.

In their chapter, Gurudas Das, Subodh Chandra Das and Ujjwal Paul provide a very comprehensive and data-driven analysis of India's economic engagement under the framework of LEP. They state that the LEP is characterized by a twin dynamic: (a) receiving investments and technology from countries such as Japan, Singapore and South Korea and (b) simultaneously assisting Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) countries with official development assistance and technology. Gurudas Das, Subodh Chandra Das and Ujjwal Paul note that there is significant potential to further scale up trade relations between India and its eastern neighbours. It is well known that China is one of the largest trade partners of India. However, Yang Xiaoping states that India has demonstrated cautious reluctance to engage China in the economic realm. In the chapter titled 'Rethinking India's Look East Policy: Why to Engage China?', Yang Xiaoping examines the LEP in three phases. According to Yang Xiaoping, the trust deficit between the two countries, specifically the unresolved border dispute, has thwarted the progress on economic front. Yang Xiaoping calls for cementing China at the centre of the LEP, as it would enable India to access China's capital, technology and market.

Rahul Mishra in his chapter titled 'India-ASEAN Trade and Economic Relations: Ties that Bind' critically evaluates India's free trade with ASEAN and Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) with Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. Rahul Mishra makes a strong case for India's participation in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and adds that proper implementation of the FTAs in services and investments will be a boon for India. In terms of sub-regional cooperation, Patricia Uberoi examines the origins and evolution of the BCIM forum in the chapter 'The BCIM Forum: Is It Sustainable?' Patricia Uberoi raises four pertinent questions: First, what constitutes an economic corridor? Second, how to ensure that people of northeast are assured of 'benefit-sharing' and not merely 'risk-sharing'? Third, will sub-regional development ensure inclusive growth or exacerbate social tensions? Finally, in what format can the North-eastern states script their transnational destiny? These four questions will define the discussion on the Northeast India's transnational engagement in the coming years. An important node of LEP engagement is through regional frameworks. However, given multiple frameworks of regional cooperation, prioritization becomes a challenge. In order to surmount such challenges, Kishan S. Rana observes, 'We need to work along different trajectories in our regional and subregional cooperation, using each cluster as feasible, without relying on any one of them on an exclusive basis'.

The chapter titled 'India's Myanmar Policy: Implications for India's Northeast' by Gurudas Das provides a detailed assessment of road connectivity projects involving Northeast India and Myanmar. The author suggests that India can

follow the Chinese strategy (South–western development) vis-à-vis Myanmar to bring in economic growth in the Northeast and to break the connectivity bottlenecks. On a similar theme, C. Joshua Thomas calls for re-examining the current approach towards the Stilwell Road. C. Joshua Thomas makes a significant observation by stating that the Stilwell Road ‘should not only be viewed as a trade route but also as a passage for cultural interactions between the two oldest civilisations in Asia’.

The final chapter, ‘Making “Act East Policy” to Work for the Development of North-eastern Region of India’, by Gurudas Das, Ujjwal Paul and Tanuj Mathur calls for a three-pronged strategy—opening up the Bangladesh Corridor for the Northeast India, promotion of sub-regional development cooperation and space for the frontier states in making of India’s neighbourhood policy—to be the core of AEP. In addition, the volume has interesting chapters on connectivity with Mekong region, energy security, examination of Northeast India as a ‘space’, a comprehensive evaluation of the BIMSTEC and various policy options to plug North-eastern region into LEP more effectively. Moreover, the chapters provide very useful statistics as well. The volume could have examined the departure points between LEP and AEP in a greater detail. However, given the fact that AEP has been initiated only recently and is still in the early stages of its evolution, it is difficult to provide a detailed analysis at this stage. For students, journalists and scholars interested in understanding the north-eastern region and LEP, this book is a must read. The book will also be of immense interest to scholars working in the domains of international relations, economics and politics.

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Mustafizur Rahman (Ed.), *Towards Regional Integration in South Asia: Promoting Trade Facilitation and Connectivity*, Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue, 2015, pp. 194, US\$ 50, ISBN: 978-984-33-9903-8.

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The final report of the ninth South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit, held in Maldives in the year 1997, framed by the Group of Eminent Persons, reflected the vision of SAARC transforming into a South Asian Economic Union (SAEU) by the end of year 2020. However, during all these years, this vision was far from turning into reality. However, this does not mean that regional cooperation among SAARC member countries has faded out. Lack of evidence of strong cooperation at the regional level the economic and trade coherence has definitely increased on bilateral and sub-regional levels as an