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EMERGING ISSUES OF INDIA'S ACT EAST POLICY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTH EASTERN REGION

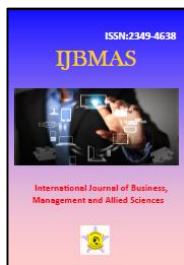
SAMAR DEB^{1*}, L. JOY CHANDRA SINGHA²

¹Department of Commerce, Gurucharan College, Silchar, Assam, India.

²Department of Geology, Gurucharan College, Silchar, Assam, India.

*Corresponding author: akashdeb1900@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Regional integration arrangements in this age of liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG) era are a popular phenomenon of global economic order. This fact is highly acknowledged now in international scene. Taking this point seriously, it is observed that Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is today a dynamic, rapidly growing regional group that strives to effectively manage both its diversity and growth. However, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the new Government of India has made its relations with East Asian neighbors by giving foreign policy priority at a time when the United States has engaged in a "pivot to Asia". In consequent of this, the then Foreign Minister of India, Sushma Swaraj in her recent visit to Hanoi, Vietnam has stressed the need for an Act East Policy (AEP). She said that the AEP should replace India's over two decades old Look East Policy emphasizing a more proactive role for India in this region.

So, India's Act East Policy focuses mainly on the extended neighborhood in the Asia-Pacific region. To promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, and thereby to provide enhanced connectivity to the states of North Eastern Region with other countries in our neighborhood, this paper laudably discusses in sparkling manner some emerging issues of the proactive AEP measures of the Government of India with special reference to the North Eastern Region (NER). Hence, this empirical research study could be implemented as a useful tool for the policy makers, planners and administrators to deliver the desired results in promoting India's interests in areas of strategic, security, economic and cultural spheres in the region and beyond.

Key Words: ASEAN, Ease of Doing Business, Economic Cooperation, International Solar Alliance (ISA), Make in India, Regional Integration, Smart Cities.

Introduction

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has reason perhaps to be satisfied with the progress of the Act East Policy (AEP) announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the East Asia and India-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summits at Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, in November 2014¹. The AEP is the progress of India's new governance agenda: "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikash and Sabka Vishwas", which is considered to be one step forward to the previous 'Look East Policy' (LEP) launched in 1992. Hence, the AEP is the central pillar of ASEAN, in so far as it relates to India's cooperation with neighboring countries, strategic alliances, and our domestic agenda on infrastructure, manufacturing, trade, skills, urban renewal, smart cities, Make in India and other initiatives. It is therefore true to mention here that connectivity projects, cooperation in space, science and technology (S&T) and people-to-people exchanges could become a springboard for regional integration and prosperity. Thus, the policy which was originally conceived as an economic initiative, has gained political, strategic and cultural dimensions including establishment of institutional mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation. In consequence of such incidences, India has upgraded its relations to strategic partnership with Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, Republic of Korea (ROK), Australia, Singapore and ASEAN and forged close ties with all countries in the Asia-Pacific region².

Objectives of the Study

The objective of 'AEP' is to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, and providing thereby enhanced connectivity to the States of North Eastern Region (NER) with other countries in our neighborhood. So, the North East (NE) of India has been a priority in our AEP, which provides an interface between North East India (NEI) and the ASEAN region. Accordingly, various plans at bilateral and regional levels include steady efforts to develop and strengthen connectivity of NE with the ASEAN region through trade, culture, people-to-people contracts and physical infrastructure (road, airport, telecommunication, power, etc.). Some of the major projects include Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP), the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project (IMTTHP), Rhi-Tiddim Road Project (RTRP), Border Haats, etc³.

Methodology

The data used in this empirical study is collected from various secondary sources. The collected data is arranged sequentially and tabulated for the purpose of discussion of the research topic in objective manner, so as to find out the conclusion of the overall study and to recommend from the findings of the historical analysis. Other statistical records are compiled and taken into consideration for the purpose of appropriate analysis and illumination of facts to make the overall study relevant to development of Indian economy as well as the NER.

Scope of the Study

The study embraces the fact of the AEP and its relevance to the NER, and therefore, it ranges from the strategic vision of development of the region to the objective mission and goals of the government initiatives in creating India as the investment hub for future growth as well as progress. Thus, the major scope of the study relates to game changing programs of the Central Government with appropriate measures from time-to-time. Also, other issues pertaining to socio-economic development, cultural transformation, political empowerment of the people, skill and knowledge building, modernization of trade and communication network design, establishment of peace, and solution of ethnic problems, among others are the scope of the study of the research endeavors. The study will further suggest measures to the policymakers, planners, administrators for future development in proactive and challenging manner to change the societal pyramid.

Act East Policy (AEP) and India Government's Initiatives

The India-ASEAN Plan of Action for the period 2016-2020 has been adopted in August 2015 which identifies concrete initiatives of the Government of India in areas of cooperation, along with the three pillars: political-security, socio-cultural and economic. India continues with stepped up efforts to forge closer partnership with concerned regional and multilateral organizations such as ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sector Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Again, the India-ASEAN agreements on trade in service and investments have entered into force for India and seven ASEAN countries from July 1, 2015. The India-ASEAN Trade Negotiating Committee has been tasked to undertake a review of the India-ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement. India has also invited ASEAN member states to participate in the International Solar Alliance⁴ (ISA) which it has co-launched with France on November 30, 2015. On the civilization front, the NDA government has energized Buddhist and Hindu links to develop new contacts and connectivity between people as a mark of Sabka Saath. Again, on connectivity sphere, special efforts are being made by the government to develop a coherent strategy, particularly for linking ASEAN with our NE as the agenda of Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas. Consequent on such program, measures for building transport infrastructure, encouraging air lines to enhance connectivity in the region, contacts between academic and cultural institutions are underway. Thus, economic engagement with ASEAN has been stepped up and priorities are given by the Government of India's AEP for regional integration and implementation of projects⁵. Further, the Government of India has taken initiatives for increasing convergence on security interests with key partners both in bilateral and multilateral format. This is a very good example for milestone progress of the NDA government's AEP on strategic issues, which is further extended by means of closer cooperation in combating terrorism, collaborating for peace and stability in the region and promoting of maritime security based on international norms and laws that are being pursued timely, rightly and decisively.

As an initiative of AEP, Modi Government has entered into an agreement with the Government of Vietnam, and accordingly, the then Defense Minister of India, Manohar Parrikar and his Vietnamese counterpart, General Ngo Xuan Lich signed a pact on September 5, 2016 with Hanoi to train the pilots of its Russian-made Sukhoi Su-30 multirole combat fighter pilots starting next year⁶. Other than the past few years significant collaboration between India and Vietnam, such as New Delhi's training Vietnamese submarines, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has further taken steps to boost relations with greater momentum from the Indian sides since his inauguration in May 2014 under the AEP.

Highlights on Some Other Initiatives of AEP

Some other important highlights of NDA Government's initiatives on AEP are reflected:

1. **India-Japan AEP on Maritime Cooperation⁷:** It is pertaining to Japan and India's Act East Policy which reflects on various prospects and challenges regarding maritime cooperation.
2. **India-ASEAN Engagement:** It is not just in terms of trade and commerce, but also there has been strengthening strategic ties. Accordingly, it includes also Singapore in such vibrant partnership engagement.
3. **India's AEP as Improved Access to Gateway Ports:** It has special relevance to Bangladesh and Myanmar. Further, it enjoins value to help unleash the latent potential of agro and forest-based industries in India's NE⁸. So, it has improved relationships among India-Bangladesh-Myanmar.
4. **Inauguration of the Longest River Bridge of India:** It is inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Upper Assam's Tinsukia district. This bridge is called the Dhola-Sadiya Bridge completed as a mark of key role-play model of North East India's AEP⁹.
5. **Accelerated Across-the Board Engagement:** It is in between India and Vietnam, the two growth poles of a vibrant Asia. It is the strongest engagement between India and Vietnam.

6. **India's Bilateral, Regional and Multilateral Level Ties:** Such important ties between Myanmar and India-ASEAN countries have pivotal role as the summit format. Under such circumstances, relations of AEP are headed for a substantive upgrade in both economic and strategic arenas and partnership of both sides, i. e., between India and Myanmar. This engagement partakes in the form of the 2015-2020 action plans.
7. **Enduring Agenda of the India-ASEAN Engagement:** The focal point of such AEP agenda pertains to connectivity and connotes physical, institutional and mental pyramid as the India-ASEAN engagement.
8. **Cultural Connect:** There is also good cultural connect in AEP via India-ASEAN engagements to cement better relationships to neighboring countries in the South, Southeast and Indo-Pacific regions.
9. **The 25th ASEAN Summit:** It has prioritized the NDA Government for engagement in 'strategic partnerships' with many ASEAN countries, and therefore, such engagement has energized AEP¹⁰ to strengthen partnerships among the neighboring countries. It is a vibrant engagement with ASEAN countries.
10. **The AEP Aimed at Finishing the Insurgency Problems of NEI:** It has contributed for finishing insurgency problems in the NEI in terms of opening up of the region to the Southeast Asia. Hence, the India-Myanmar friendship road is considered to be the focal point for such agenda.
11. **Linkages of India-NE with Neighboring Countries:** There are linkages in multidimensional spheres,¹¹ and therefore, it has strengthened the India-ASEAN trade and investment relations as the outcome of the proactive AEP.

Impact of AEP on the NER

The Modi Government announced the AEP soon after coming to power, almost simultaneously with the US declaration of its pivot to Asia¹². However, this policy has been looked as the tool for greater economic engagement with our eastern neighbors, and forging strategic partnerships and security cooperation with the countries of Southeast Asia and Far East, such as Vietnam and Japan. Taking this idea forward, the Modi Government decided to focus more on improving its relation with ASEAN and the East Asian countries. As a backdrop of such thinking, it is permeably said that it is also aimed at eliminating the insurgency problem in the NE once and for all by way of opening up the region to Southeast Asia. In so far as the AEP is concerned with the NER, it can be undoubtedly remarked that this policy has military, political and economic components, by which the region can become free from social, cultural, economic, demographic and political problems. Hence, the NE can become in future a frontier for the eastward thrust, both in terms of political imagination and logistical implications. Over and above, the NE could assume the role of bridging the space between mainland India and other Southeast Asian nations. Accordingly, the AEP can be said to be important for NEI, because of the following issues for which greater emphasis is put on by the Central Government:

- (1) Developing the infrastructure of the region by widening the road, expanding air connectivity, extending railway networks;
- (2) Opening new and reactivating dormant trade routes as well as facilitating border trade and transit points;
- (3) Occasional changes in the composition of the labor market and mobility due to ample scope of profitable utilization of the resources of the region;
- (4) New avenues for creating employment opportunities in various fields and their indirect impact on social clashes, ethnic conflicts, political problems, and also solution of the problems of socio-economic marginalization of the indigenous people from time-to-time;
- (5) Interdependence of NER states population and ethnic classes on each other for peace and stability in the region, prosperity and development and cultural assimilations;
- (6) Besides, there is the scope of solution of the long standing problems of the Inner Lane Permit (ILP) issue in some places of the region, due to massive development in areas of rail-road and

air connectivity in all states, free and liberalized pattern of trade and commerce activities, optimization of more and more banking and insurance facilities and development of other ancillary sectors of the economy in the entire region¹³.

In nutshell, the NER can be a game changer to the overall process of human socio-economic development in terms of its demographic dividend and abundance of natural resources. Thus, the region could progress speedily and go ahead in the mainstream of Indian states with forward looking tendencies, ignoring all types of social clashes, overcoming ethnic problems and solving political instability in future.

Dynamics of India-ASEAN Trade and Impact of AEP

Table 1 reflects commodity profile of India's trade with ASEAN. Petroleum products and meat products share of about 14.9 and 10.5 percent of India's total exports to ASEAN respectively. Other top three India's export items to ASEAN with percent share to total exports during the last decade are mentioned in parenthesis: transport equipment (8.5%), chemicals (6.7%) and mechanical appliances (6.4%). It is therefore clear that there is increase in share of certain high end manufactured exports in India's total exports over the decade despite intense competition. So, it is evident that the AEP has tremendous prospect of increasing India's trade share in neighboring countries in future.

Table 1: India's Exports to ASEAN

Sl. No.	Items	2005-06		2015-16		CAGR 2015-16/2005-06
		U.S.\$ Million	% share in total	U.S.\$ Million	% share in total	
1.	Fresh Vegetables and Fruits	76	0.7	216	0.9	11.0
2.	Meat Products	193	1.9	2649	10.5	29.9
3.	Fish Products	97	0.9	1089	4.3	27.4
4.	Spices	46	0.4	499	2.0	26.9
5.	Sugar	22	0.2	488	1.9	36.3
6.	Oil, Cakes and Fodder	527	5.1	225	0.9	-8.2
7.	Petroleum Products	2463	23.7	3766	14.9	4.3
8.	Chemicals	1071	10.3	1698	6.7	4.7
	(a) Inorganic	84	0.8	130	0.5	4.5
	(b) Organic	834	8.0	1234	4.9	4.0
	(c) Special Chemicals	153	1.5	334	1.3	8.0
9.	Pharmaceuticals	163	1.6	717	2.8	16.0
10.	Plastic & Raw Materials	148	1.4	348	1.4	8.9
11.	Rubber Products	88	0.8	226	0.9	9.9
12.	Precious Stones & Jewelry	1590	15.3	1106	4.4	-3.6
13.	Paper & Pulp	25	0.2	131	0.5	18.0
14.	Cotton	165	1.6	602	2.4	13.8
15.	MM Filaments & Fiber	108	1.0	273	1.1	9.7
16.	Iron & Steel	675	6.5	723	2.9	0.7
17.	Non Ferrous Metals	469	4.5	1322	5.2	10.9
18.	Mechanical Appliances	348	3.3	1617	6.4	16.6
19.	Electrical & Electronics	280	2.7	798	3.2	11.0
20.	Transport Equipment	698	6.7	2150	8.5	11.9

	(a) Rail Equipment	2		7		
	(b) Autos & Component	240	2.3	1051	4.2	15.9
	(c) Aircraft & Parts	3		115	0.4	44.0
	(d) Ships	453	4.4	977	3.9	8.0
21.	Optical/Photo Instrument	78	0.7	356	1.4	16.4
Sub Total 1 to 21		9330	89.6	20999	83.3	8.5
Total ASEAN		10411	10,1*	25195	9.6*	9.2
Total Global		103091		262031		9.8

Source: Import Export Data Bank, Government of India, Department of Commerce.

<http://www.commerce.nic.in/eidb/default.asp>

Note: *Share of Exports to ASEAN in Total Exports; CAGR= Compound Annual Growth Rate.

Table 2 gives a picture of FDI inflows into India from ASEAN and the world. Singapore has been a leader in increasing its direct investment into India every year, up from U. S. \$ 1540 million in 2010-11 to U. S. \$ 5137 million in 2014-15 according to available report. Thus, the implication of the AEP can be said to be in positive direction to boost up our economy and to make speedy growth. The AEP can be favorable for India in terms of investment option for institutional investors, particularly Singapore and ASEAN countries. It can help India in sweeping liberalization of FDI, streamlining government approvals, simplifying investment conditions and opening up new sectors (defense, insurance and retail) to FDI. Moreover, "Make-in-India" campaign launched in September, 2014 which is aimed at attracting companies to use India as a global design and manufacturing hub can be made successful through such investment potentials. Hence, the AEP can be a major investment footprint for both India and the NER to make speedy growth of the overall socio-economy.

Table 2: FDI Inflows into India from ASEAN and the World (U. S. \$ Million)

Items	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Total FDI Inflows	14,939	23,473	18,286	16,054	24,748
FDI Inflows ASEAN	1580 (10.6)	3324 (14.2)	1843 (10.1)	4528 (28.2)	5356 (21.6)
Singapore	1540	3306	1605	4415	5137
Malaysia	40	18	238	113	219

Source: RBI Annual Report 2014-15.

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate share of ASEAN in total FDI inflows.

Table 3 shows the country-wise international passenger flow to and from India. Among the Southeast Asian countries, Singapore and Thailand show the highest passenger movement from and to India, followed by Malaysia. The passenger flow is almost balanced except for the case of Singapore, where passenger from India exceeds with 59,000 passengers. It is therefore suggested that the AEP has good chance for increasing trade and investment of India along with NE states with that of Southeast Asian countries.

Table 3: Country-wise International Passenger Flow in 2015 (in thousands)

Area	Passenger from India	Passenger to India	Surplus/Deficit
South Asia	1928.61	1885.06	43.55
Southeast Asia	3968.07	3913.32	54.76
Myanmar	22.34	22.69	-0.36
Malaysia	980.07	984.15	-4.08
Singapore	1698.48	1639.14	59.34
Thailand	1262.84	1261.07	1.76

Vietnam	4.35	6.27	-1.91
Rest of Asia of which	1219.25	1158.92	60.33
China	252.66	246.52	6.14
Hong Kong	715.65	700.53	15.13
Japan	144.18	128.43	15.75
World	24858.96	23781.64	1077.32

Source: DGCA, MoCA.

Some Other Emerging Issues of AEP Challenges in Asian Countries/Regions

Following tables are highlighted for a broader understanding on some other issues pertaining to AEP challenges in ASEAN countries/regions.

Table 4: Top Ten Asian Trade Partner Countries/Regions, 2015

Trade partner Country/Region ^{1/}	Value (US\$ Million)			% Share of Total ASEAN Trade		
	Exports	Imports	Total Trade	Exports	Imports	Total Trade
ASEAN	305,693	238,059	543,751	25.9	21.9	24.0
China (People's Republic of)	134,249	211,515	345,764	11.4	19.4	15.2
Japan	113,694	124,350	238,044	9.6	11.4	10.5
EU 28	127,584	100,056	227,640	10.8	9.2	10.0
United States	129,171	83,172	212,343	10.9	7.6	9.4
Korea, Republic of	45,809	76,676	122,484	3.9	7.0	5.4
Taiwan	33,077	61,261	94,338	2.8	5.6	4.2
Hong Kong	77,303	14,113	91,416	6.5	1.3	4.0
India	39,101	19,453	58,554	3.3	1.8	2.6
Germany	26,756	28,755	55,512	2.3	2.6	2.4
Total Top Ten Trade Partner Countries	1,032,435	957,411	1,989,847	87.3	88.0	87.6
Others ^{2/}	149,595	130,868	280,463	12.7	12.0	12.4
Total	1,182,031	1,088,279	2,270,310	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ASEAN Secretariat.

Notes: Some figures may not sum up to totals due to rounding off errors.

^{1/} Identified/Ranked based on share of total trade.

^{2/} Includes trade of all other countries and those that could not be attributed to specific countries.

Table 5: Top Ten Export Markets and Import Origins, 2015

Export Markets			Import Origins		
Country of Destination ^{1/}	Value of Exports (US\$ Million)	% Share to Total	Country of Origin ^{1/}	Value of Imports (US\$ Million)	% Share to Total

ASEAN	305,693	25.9	ASEAN	238,059	21.9
China (People's Republic of)	134,249	11.4	China (People's Republic of)	211,515	19.4
United States	129,171	10.9	Japan	124,350	11.4
EU 28	127,584	10.8	EU 28	100,056	9.2
Japan	113,694	9.6	United States	83,172	7.6
Hong Kong	77,303	6.5	Korea, Republic of	76,676	7.0
Korea, Republic of	45,809	3.9	Taiwan	61,261	5.6
India	39,101	3.3	Germany	28,755	2.6
Taiwan	33,077	2.8	United Arab Emirates	21,500	2.0
Australia	32,959	2.8	Saudi Arabia	20,313	1.9
Total Top Ten Destination Countries	1,038,638	87.9	Total Top Ten Origin Countries	965,657	88.7
Others ^{2/}	143,393	12.1	Others ^{2/}	122,622	11.3
Total	1,182,031	100.0	Total	1,088,279	100.0

Source: ASEAN Secretariat

Notes: Some figures may not sum up to totals due to rounding off errors.

^{1/} Identified/Ranked based on share of total ASEAN exports/imports.

^{2/} Includes trade of all other countries and those that could not be attributed to specific countries.

Significant Vision of AEP to NER

NER is the most backward part of the whole country, and therefore, realizing the vision of the AEP from all dimensions remains to be difficult, if the NE states are not developed timely. Hence, the NDA government/Government and/under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi has taken initiatives by announcing much needed projects, including scholarships for students, a national sports university, agricultural colleges, upgraded power, digital connectivity, new railway lines¹⁴, road expansion program and highway projects (AH 48), increasing air connectivity, declaring smart cities, smart villages, establishment of AIIMS in Guwahati, construction of mega bridge in Tinsukia as connectivity to land-locked areas; among others.

Besides, Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) is quite significant for the NE to link with ASEAN countries. The new government has expressed its intention of providing the project with all the necessary resources; so that it can be implemented rapidly¹⁵. Also, the government has brought forth proposal to build the Asian highway Imphal (India)-Tamu (Myanmar) road which is remaining long pending/overdue and natural gas pipeline. It has also proposed Asian road link and a four-lane Asian highway between New Delhi-Singapore linked to Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh city, Phnom Pen, Bangkok, Vientiane, Yangon, Mandalay, Kalemmyo, Tamu, Dhaka and Kolkata. The road construction has already been started from Tamu to Kalemmyo, Myanmar.

From all such incidences, it is noteworthy to mention that Sikkim is being hailed as India's 'brand ambassador' in terms of zero plastic consumption, organic produce and eco-friendly industries. A number of laboratories have also been set up to study the innovative methods of entrepreneurial activity in this area¹⁶. Last but not least, the Prime Minister has taken a serious initiative of developing organic farming for marketing the entire region as a major economic hub¹⁷. Further, there are also proposals for establishing an Indian Institute of Science (IIS), Education and Research Center in Nagaland, Centre of Film Production, Animation and Gaming in Arunachal Pradesh. To initiate a 'Make in NE' in the model of 'Make in India' project various fiscal packages are molded as per the need of the states in the region.

Findings and Recommendations

In making AEP more vibrant, dynamic and result oriented the following findings and recommendations are worth noting:

- Indian government needs to formulate short-term, medium-term and long-term economic policies concentrating on more and more friendly relationship with Southeast Asian countries, to create available opportunities for the people of entire NER.
- India needs to develop trade on the basis of the Maritime Silk route and join as well as study the viability and scope of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), to strengthen the AEP as the facilitating instrument of social change. So, the Tariff liberalization policy also needs further revision (Schedule P).
- Dialogue between Center and the states of the NER should be increased by involving all the stakeholders; so that permanent peace exists in the region. It needs therefore economic and political empowerment of people, change of very age old laws for better integration of the region.
- Speedy mechanism for money exchange and financial transfer should be adopted soon with major inclusion of financial institutions to grow trade transactions. Hence, it also needs improved logistics support system (Schedule R).
- NE states are required to be an integral part of the growth process to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of people and to come out successfully with the Make in India agenda, Smart Cities and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan programs, Skill India and Digital India mission and so on.
- The Government of India should take into consideration the case of the NER for knowledge and capacity building purposes, creating employment opportunities and sustainable development.

Conclusion

The AEP can be a potential game changer for both India and the NER to explore avenues for greater political cooperation, better economic integration and smoother development of the entire socio-economy by creating healthy relationships with the Southeast Asian countries. It has helped for mutual cooperation, bilateral, regional and multilateral transactions with greater political, economic and diplomatic ties and engagements in ASEAN as well as other neighboring countries. Besides, the strategic partnerships role model in Southeast Asia-via-AEP can strengthen overall parameters of the Indian economy and solve the problems of insurgency, ethnicity, geopolitical issues and infrastructural development in the NER. As a whole, the AEP should be conceived as the rejoinder of regional cooperation and nation building activities for stabilizing trade related activities.

Annexure to Study on the Impact of Emerging Issues of AEP and Its Relevance to the NER

Following annexure are given to understand more on the impact of emerging issues of AEP and its relevance to the NER:

Annexure A

Table 6: Size of the ASEAN Economies

Sl. No.	Country	Population 2014	Area	Gross National Income \$ Billions (2014)		Per Capita Income (2014)	
		Million	Sqkm Th	CER	PPP	CER	PPP
1	Brunel	0.4	5.8	15.1	29.3	37320	72190
2	Cambodia	15.3	181.0	15.6	47.2	1020	3080

3	Indonesia	254.5	1910.9	923.7	2592.3	3630	10190
4	Laos	6.7	236.8	11.1	33.8	1660	5060
5	Malaysia	29.9	330.8	332.5	740.8	11120	24770
6	Myanmar	53.4	676.6	68.1	204.3e	1270	N. A.
7	Philippines	99.1	300.0	347.5	837.6	3500	8450
8	Singapore	5.5	0.7	301.6	439.0	55150	80270
9	Thailand	67.7	513.1	391.7	1006.9	5780	14870
10	Vietnam	90.7	331.0	171.9	485.2	1890	5350
11	India	1295.3	3287.3	2028	7292.8	1570	5630
12	Total ASEAN	623.2 (8.6%)	4486.7 (3.3%)	2578.8 (3.3%)	6416.4 (5.9%)	-	-

Source: Table 1: Size of the Economy, World Development Indicators 2016; GNI-Gross

National Income.

Note: CER – Current Exchange Rate; PPP – Purchasing Power Parity; e – Estimate; Th – Thousand.

Figures within Parenthesis Indicate Share of ASEAN in Relevant Global Totals.

Annexure B

Table 7: Composition of ASEAN Trade

Major Export Items, 2014		Major Import Items, 2014	
Product Category	Share in Total Exports	Product Category	Share in Total Imports
Electrical Equipment, Electronics & Parts	18.5	Electrical Equipment, Electronics & Parts	15.1
Mineral Fuels & Oils	9.8	Mineral Fuels & Oils	14.4
Machinery, Mechanical Appliances & Parts	8.2	Machinery, Mechanical Appliances & Parts	9.7
Plastics & Parts	2.3	Plastics & Parts	2.5
Rubber & Articles	2.3	Iron & Steel	3.0
Vehicle Parts	2.2	Vehicle Parts	2.1
Optical Goods	2.2	Optical Goods	1.8
Organic Chemicals	2.0	Organic Chemicals	1.6
Others	52.5	Others	49.8
Total Exports	1292.6	Total Imports	1236.3

Source: ASEAN Secretariat.

Annexure C

Table 8: ASEAN Trade by Selected Partner Country/Region, 2015

Partner Country/Region	Value (US\$ Million)			% Share to Total ASEAN Trade		
	Exports	Imports	Total Trade	Exports	Imports	Total Trade
ASEAN	305,693	238,059	543,751	25.9	21.9	24.0
Australia	32,959	18,784	51,743	2.8	1.7	2.3
Canada	6,927	4,787	11,714	0.6	0.4	0.5
China	134,249	211,515	345,764	11.4	19.4	15.2
EU 28 ^{1/}	127,584	100,056	227,640	10.8	9.2	10.0

India	39,101	19,453	58,554	3.3	1.8	2.6
Japan	113,694	124,350	238,044	9.6	11.4	10.5
Republic of Korea	45,809	76,676	122,484	3.9	7.0	5.4
New Zealand	4,945	3,403	8,348	0.4	0.3	0.4
Pakistan	5,359	999	6,357	0.5	0.1	0.3
Russia	3,989	9,392	13,381	0.3	0.9	0.6
USA	129,171	83,172	212,343	10.9	7.6	9.4
Total Selected Partner Countries/Regions	949,479	890,645	1,840,124	80.3	81.8	81.1
Others ^{2/}	232,552	197,634	430,186	19.7	18.2	18.9
Total ASEAN	1,182,031	1,088,279	2,270,310	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ASEAN Secretariat.

Notes: Symbols used: Data in *Italics* are the latest updated/revised figures from previous posting. Some figures may not add up to totals due to rounding off errors.

^{1/} Includes Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and Croatia and others.

^{2/} Includes of all other countries and those that could not be attributed to specific countries.

Schedules to Study on the Impact of Emerging Issues of AEP and Its Relevance to the NER

Schedule P

Box 1: Tariff Liberalization Schedule of ASEAN-India Framework Trade Agreement (AIFTA)

1. Normal Track: Gradual reduction and subsequent elimination of custom tariffs on 4,000 products that account for 80 percent of traded goods.

1.1 Normal track 1 (January 01, 2010 to December 31, 2013): Tariffs will be eliminated on 3,200 products under 7,788 tariff lines. These are mostly products with 7.5 to 10 percent duties and the average reduction rate will be 1.5 to 2 percent per year;

1.2 Normal Track 2 (January 01, 2010 to December 31, 2016): Tariffs will be eliminated on 800 products under 1,252 tariff lines. These are mostly products with 7.5 to 10 percent duties and the average reduction will be 1 to 1.5 percent per year.

2. Sensitive Track: Tariffs will be reduced on about 560 products that account for 10 percent of traded goods. Applied MFN Tariff rates above 5 percent will be reduced to the level of 5 percent.

2.1 Structure 1 (January 01, 2010 to December 31, 2016): Duties on items with MFN applied tariffs of more than 5 percent will be reduced to 5 percent. This can be maintained up to 50 tariff lines;

2.2 Structure 2 (January 01, 2010 to December 31, 2016): For remaining products from tariff lines beyond 50, duties on products with MFN applied tariff rates higher than 5 percent will be reduced to 4.5 percent and then eventually to 4 percent;

2.3 Structure 3 (January 01, 2010 to December 31, 2019): For products with 4 percent duty rates in the sensitive list (products to be identified), tariffs will be eliminated in a phased manner.

3. Special Products (January 01, 2010 to December 31, 2019): Tariff reduction for products such as crude and refined palm oil, coffee, black tea and pepper phased over ten years for India.

4. Highly Sensitive List: Reduction of tariffs for products in a phased manner for ASEAN countries.

4.1 Category 1: Reduction of applied MFN tariff rates to 50 percent of the base rate;

4.2 Category 2: Reduction of applied MFN tariff rates by 50 percent of the base rate;

4.3 Category 3: Reduction of applied MFN tariff rates by 25 percent of the base rate.

5. Exclusion List: List contains 489 items out of which 302 are from agriculture sector, 81 from textiles, 52 items from machinery and auto, 17 from chemicals and plastics.

Source: Government of India (2009).

Schedule Q

Box 2: ASEAN-India Key Features for the Trade in Services Agreement

The Trade in Services Agreement with the ASEAN contains all features of a modern and comprehensive agreement on services and is in line with the other bilateral agreements that India has signed so far. Some of the important Articles contained in the Agreement are ones on transparency, domestic regulations, recognition, market access and national treatment, increasing participation of developing countries, joint committee on services, review, dispute settlement and denial of benefits.

Both India and ASEAN member states have taken General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) plus commitments in various services and modes of supply. Each ASEAN member state has tabled individual schedule of commitments which are equally applicable for India and other ASEAN member states. India on the other hand has tabled three schedules of commitments one for Philippines, one for Indonesia and one for the remaining eight ASEAN member states. It was also agreed by India that in order to increase participation of the least developed countries no additional requests would be tabled to the CLMV countries (Cambodia, Lao, Myanmar and Vietnam). All the three schedules tabled by India are well within the existing autonomous regime of India.

A brief annex on Movement of Natural persons (one of the key areas of interest for India) has been included in the Agreement. This Annex defines Business Visitors, Intra Corporate Transferees (Managers, Executives and Specialists) and Contractual Service Suppliers. This will help provide commercially meaningful market access in ASEAN for our professionals, including those from the IT/ITES sector. Independent professionals have not been defined in the Annex.

Source: Quoted from the Press Release, "India formally signs Trade in Services and Trade in Investments Agreement with ASEAN, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, September 9, 2014.

http://commerce.nic.in/MOC/press_release.asp?id=3215.

Schedule R

Table 9: International LPI Scores and Rankings of ASEAN Member Nations

Country	Overall	Customs	Infrastructure	International Shipments	Logistics Quality and Competence	Tracking and Tracing	Timelines
ASEAN Member Nations							
Brunel	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.
Cambodia	2.74 (83)	2.67 (71)	2.58 (79)	2.83 (78)	2.67 (89)	2.92 (71)	2.75 (181)
Indonesia	3.08 (53)	2.87 (55)	2.92 (56)	2.87 (74)	3.21 (41)	3.11 (58)	3.53 (50)
Laos	2.39	2.45	2.21	2.50	2.31	2.20	2.65

	(131)	(100)	(128)	(120)	(129)	(146)	(137)
Malaysia	3.59 (25)	3.37 (27)	3.56 (26)	3.64 (10)	3.47 (32)	3.58 (23)	3.92 (31)
Myanmar	2.25 (145)	1.97 (150)	2.14 (137)	2.14 (151)	2.07 (156)	2.36 (130)	2.83 (117)
Philippines	3.00 (57)	3.00 (47)	2.60 (75)	3.33 (35)	2.93 (61)	3.00 (64)	3.07 (90)
Singapore	4.00 (5)	4.01 (3)	4.28 (2)	3.70 (6)	3.97 (8)	3.90 (11)	4.25 (9)
Thailand	3.43 (35)	3.21 (36)	3.40 (30)	3.30 (39)	3.29 (38)	3.45 (33)	3.96 (29)
Vietnam	3.15 (48)	2.86 (56)	3.34 (34)	2.93 (70)	3.11 (48)	3.15 (54)	3.55 (47)
Other Non ASEAN Member Nations							
India	3.08 (54)	2.27 (65)	2.88 (58)	3.20 (44)	3.03 (52)	3.11 (57)	3.51 (51)
China	3.53 (28)	3.21 (38)	3.67 (23)	3.50 (22)	3.46 (35)	3.50 (29)	3.87 (34)
Germany	4.12 (1)	4.10 (2)	4.32 (1)	3.74 (4)	4.12 (3)	4.17 (1)	4.36 (4)

Source: Connecting to Compete 2014: Trade Logistics in the Global Economy, The Logistics Performance Index (LPI) & Its Indicators, The World Bank.

<http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Trade/LPI2014.pdf>

Note: Figures within parenthesis indicate country rank out of 160 countries ranked.

Schedule S

Table 10: Bilateral Air Services Agreement between India and ASEAN

Country	Foreign Entitlements (Number of seats offered per week to major metro cities in India \$)	Indian Entitlements (Number of seats offered per week to respective capital cities in ASEAN \$)	India's offer to ASEAN countries (Unlimited seats offered to 18 additional cities)
Brunel	11200	11200	Yes
Cambodia	11200	11200	Yes
Indonesia	11200	11200	Yes
Malaysia	20670	20670	Yes
Myanmar	11200	11200	Yes
Philippines	11200	11200	Yes
Singapore	29700	29700	Yes
Thailand	23609	23609	Yes
Vietnam	11200	11200	Yes
Lao PDR	Bilateral Air Service Agreement has been signed on July 2015 onwards		

Source: DGCA, MoCA

Note: Bilateral Air Service Agreement has been signed on July 2015 onwards.

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Notes:

1. Sajjanhar A. Taking Stock of India's Act East Policy. Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi, 2016, 142: 1. ORF is a public policy think-tank that aims to influence formulation of policies for building a strong and prosperous India. ORF pursues these goals by providing informed and productive inputs, in-depth research and stimulating discussions. However, it is to be noted that Modi's vision centers on making India a manufacturing hub through the "Make in India" program. So, to show a heightened sense of commitment and initiative, the Modi government has renamed the 'Look East Policy' (LEP) as the 'Act East'. Accordingly, it is observed that Modi government's primary goal is to increase India's engagement with the ASEAN, along with other countries of the world.
2. Bureau PI. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi, 2015. However, other available reports and information reveal the fact that India's AEP focuses on the extended neighborhood in the Asia-Pacific region for prosperity with adequate and timely integration process.
3. Singh VK. The Report of the Minister in the Lok Sabha in Reply to Question. The Minister of State for the External Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi, 2015. Hence, it is clear that the AEP has given priority not only for the economic development of India, but also steady efforts are being made by government to strengthen connectivity with bilateral, multilateral and other levels of negotiations to develop speedily the economy of the NEI.
4. Bureau PI. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi, 2015. This type of project will be helpful for mitigating severe power crisis of our country. Besides, this project is selected from the ground realities of environmental sustainability, and therefore, it needs special attention for the holistic development which our government has taken care with judicious effort as a program of AEP.
5. Singh VK. Statement of Dr. V. K. Singh in the Lok Sabha. The Minister of State for the External Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi, 2015. Thus, it is essential to note that the ASEAN-India Plan of Action for the period 2016-20 which has been adopted in August 2015 concentrates on the concrete initiatives and areas of cooperation, including the major pillars of political security, economic ties and socio-cultural relations. In this way, the AEP has strengthened and forged closer partnership with concerned regional and multilateral organizations.
6. Parameswaran P. Know the Asia-Pacific. The Diplomat, 2016; <http://zeenews.india.com/tamil>. The picture is therefore clear that the agenda of AEP has translated relationship between India and Vietnam for strengthening defense ties with the realities of significant collaboration, and so such an agreement is inked by both the countries. Thus, the ties in areas of defense between the two countries will further boost up relations for future securities with greater momentum.
7. Basu T. India in Japan's Strategic Outlook. Journal of Defence Studies, 2016, 10(3): 41-64. In this connection, it is worthwhile to note that Japan and India relations have come a long way from the Cold War eras to the 21st century (India and Japan ties was at its lowest after India conducted its nuclear tests in Pokhran in 1998). The 21st century has seen major developments and rapprochements between both the nations. However, Prime Minister Modi's visit to Japan in 2014 witnessed the elevation of Japan-India ties to a special status namely as 'Special Strategic Global Partnership', which clearly shows that Japan has been given a unique position.

- India has a special status partnership only with Russia as the relationship has been time tested, and providing the similar status to Japan evidently indicates the importance of Japan to India in its engagement and also future prospect. Also see, Black L. Japan's Maritime Security Strategy: The Japan Coast Guard and Maritime Outlaws. Macmillan, Palgrave, 2014; Cordner L. Rethinking Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region. Journal of the Indian Ocean Region, 2010, 6(1): 67-85.
8. Bureau PI. India's Act East Policy to Boost Connectivity. The Hindu, New Delhi, 2017. Addressing in the South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) meeting the Minister of Finance, Government of India, New Delhi, said that the AEP will help improve connectivity and relations amongst South East and East Asian countries. The SASEC consists of the seven member countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka has its vision called the SASEC vision that aims to expand trade and commerce to regional and global markets, which can generate around \$ 70 billion in incremental GDP annually and 20 million total jobs by 2025. Thus, India has major role playing proactive support base to its neighbors.
 9. Singh B. Northeast will Play Key Role in India's Act East Policy. The Economic Times, New Delhi, 2017. The bridge will enhance all-weather road connectivity between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. This bridge will significantly reduce the time to travel from Guwahati to India's eastern-most state. It is also expected to improve India's defence preparedness, as Arunachal Pradesh shares a long border with China. The bridge is named after legendary Assamese singer Dr. Bhupen Hazarika.
 10. Secretary E. India and ASEAN - An Overview, a Keynote Address. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, 2017. This summit is in the form of the reenergized AEP of the NDA government which has been entered into strategic partnerships for continuing the essence of the LEP. Hence, it has greater direct and indirect impact on India's participation in regional for a apart from the ASEAN such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sector Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). <http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/questionlist.aspx>; ASEAN-India Relations. MEA Report, accessed 5 May 2017; <http://www.mea.gov.in/aseanindia/20-years.htm>; Swaraj S. Time to Change: Look East Policy to Act East Policy. Press Trust of India, New Delhi, 2014.
 11. Goswami N. Act East Policy: Northeast India as a Strategic Catalyst. CLAWS, Journal, 2015. Effective linkage between India and the NER with the neighboring countries will reduce many problems of the NE. This can help in the process of development through building infrastructure which is the key element of physical and social relations. Thus, the linkage is essential for regional cooperation, bilateral trade, multilateral business ties and regional securities. Also, from the view point of religious radicalism, ethnic clashes, terrorism linkage could be helpful for solving such problems which the NEI has been facing for long. http://www.claws.in/images/journals_doc/1548193442_Namrata_Goswami.pdf; North-Eastern Region Vision 2020. Ministry of Development of the North-Eastern Region and North-Eastern Council, Agartala, 2008, p275; Ambassador NS. India's Look East-Act East Policy: A Bridge to the Asian Neighborhood. Symbiosis Institute of International Studies, International Relations Conference , 2014; <http://www.irconference.in/assets/IRC-conference-proceedings.pdf>.
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17. Bureau PI. Northeast can be developed as an Organic Region: PM. The Business Standard, New Delhi, 2016; The Prime Minister of India voiced that northeast can be developed as an organic region. The government has also taken multiple initiatives recently. For developing organic farming in this area serious initiatives are being taken by the government. http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/northeast-can-be-developed-as-an-organic-region-pm-116011901103_1.html.

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