

Original Paper

Revisiting the India's Southeast Asia policy: An Outlook of the Comparative Study about India's NDA-UPA Governments

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Abstract

From the end of Cold War India has been accelerated to review her foreign policy and also learned specially to revive neighbourhood thinking around her territories. We know, India's Look East Policy has been accessed now as Act East Policy towards Southeast Asia to East Asia. Now here arises a question why did India need to join with Southeast Asian Association? To explain this paper, we have three objectives like: a) to investigate the roles of different government of India about foreign policy; b) try to search the different approaches from different government if any; c) to draw a layout of India's Southeast Asian policy. So the research paper will be further search the sufficient role and strategy of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government from then to till now.

Keywords: India's Neighbourhood Thinking, Look East Policy, Act East Policy, UPA, NDA

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1. Introduction

After the cold war India's foreign policy has been more realistic. Even it felt its pure theoretical aspects and seeked The Look East Policy (LEP), which was inducted in 1991 by the Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. Significance and importance of this policy has got a geo-political reconfiguration during Post-cold war, though it was a foreign repercussion of Indian Government to unbound the global power equation during Post-Cold war era. The primary sign of development was made to look forward with South East Asian countries in regional autonomy.

Apart from making an effort like Bandung Conference (1954) and next attempt from Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) India had not made any serious exertion to look eastward. From the very beginning, the entire issue of the Eastern Gate of India pertinently made a question about Northeast India, whose geographical area is small, but has not played any role for India to reach out ASEAN countries (shares border with five international territories). It may be in terms of trade or strategic concerns. The Look East policy itself signifies five terms, these are India's desire in a large scale competition, withhold of china, 'let's go Bangladesh to go ASEAN,' collaborate with Southeast Asia and consummately Asia-Pacific province (Hanjabam, 2014).

Presently our effort is to collaborate with Look East Policy and to make Northeast India as a watershed. This study discusses, India's plan to establish a transactional connection with ASEAN Countries. In this circumstance, it may exist as an access strip between India and Southeast Asia. It finds to join a network with trans-Asia corridor through its passageway of geographical contiguity. So the target of our study is to examine whether the look east policies of different regimes of the government of India are similar or not.

India and Southeast Asia Relations: A Brief Searching of Historical Background

According to the historical background Southeast Asia had a unique bondage with India from an early period. As a result, Indian culture has been extended in this province (Chihara, 1996). Thus there are high cultural impacts of India over Southeast Asian countries:

Cultural Linkages and Future Prospects

The cultural kinship between any country helps to stimulate collaboration among more people each other, along with establishing a soft power like art, architecture, accomplishment art, etc. Once, every single nation in Southeast and East Asia had shared a unique cultural relationship with India, which had build few remarkable similarities between India's culture and South East Asia (Saharan, 2015). The Indian Council of Cultural Relations had also established the Jawaharlal Nehru Indian cultural centre (JNICC) in Jakarta in 1989 to conduct cultural rituals in Jakarta (Shekhar, 2007). Just few before in 2015 Indonesia has celebrated the viperous affiliation with India by 'Sahabat India' or the "Festival between India and Indonesia". It was launched by India on her 66th Republic day ceremony to celebrate past relationship between the two countries. The term 'sahabat' stands for 'faithful, loyal, and true friends.'

Vietnam also has an ancient cultural relation with India. The Champa kingdom had throne in Central and South Vietnam. This dynasty had very much influenced by India (Varghese, 2017). In the academy there are the statue of Shiva and Vishnu in the posture of dancing, sleeping, and fighting (Varghese, 2017). The Archeological Survey of India (ASI) helps to aid in the renovation of Vietnamese Temple (Hall, 2011). The Vietnamese Government had also sought facilitation ASI to restore a part of My Son Sanctuary. The largest collection of World Heritage site the Hindu Temple and mountain of Southeast Asia one of them (Deccan Herald, 2015).

India also collaborate an ancient relation with Thailand. The relations between India and Thailand can be looked back to almost 2000 years when India was ruled by the king Asoka. During his time Buddhist pilgrims traveled to Suvarnabhumi (Thailand-Subarnabhumi, 2022). The cultural treaty was signed between India and Thailand in 1997 (Thailand-Subarnabhumi, 2022). The Thai epic Ramakien had greatly influenced by Indian literary epic Ramayana. It has a great impact on to flourished Thai drama, music, and art. Cultural collaboration played an important role within a framework Cultural Exchange Program (CEP) between the two Governments. An Indian Cultural Center was established in Bangkok in September 2009. The ancient relations with Cambodia were set up by the temple complex in the 12 century by the throne Suryavaraman. Now a day's which is known as 'Angkor' (Nag, 2017). The king was allied in posterity of Cholas, now a day's who ruled in Tamil Nadu. There dwell Cultural Exchange Program (CEP) signed between two nation in February 2000 (India-Cambodia Relation, 2017). India had been exchanged a seat of the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) on Preah Vihear. It is one of the oldest temple of Lord Shiva and foremost world heritage site. India had also received it willingly to bring out reconstruction and conservation work of Gopura-5 and some segment of Gopura-1 of the Preah

Vihear (India-Cambodia Relation, 2017).

The oldest Filipino folklore and literature had been influenced by the Indian traditional culture. A treaty on Cultural Exchanges (2016-18) had signed between two Nations in October 2015. Also the regular interchanges used to take place by ICCR (India-Philippines Relations, 2016). Even Myanmar is the most familiar to India. The Government of India is re-establishment Ananda Temple in Bagan. Government of India is also given a 16th foot statue of Sarnath Buddha. It had been fitted at the promises of Shwedagon pagoda in Yangon (India-Myanmar Relations, 2016). MOU was signed Ministry of Information and Culture in May 2007 to fix as the UNESCO world heritage site at Vat Phu an ancient Shiva Temple. Myanmar also gives Buddhist and Hindu Circuit relation with India (India-Philippines Relations, 2016).

Buddhism and Ramayana: Mythological Prospects for India-ASEAN Relations

Buddhist diplomacy is one of the foremost perspectives for an advantageous collaboration between India and ASEAN. Not only Buddhism has exhibited religious perspective, but also it has cultural significance in the Southeast Asian province and even the rest of Asia. Prime Minister Modi has also recognized that Buddhism can still be beneficial for India in the 21st century. We know, Buddhism is one of the foremost religions in the South East Asia. It surely collaborates Buddhist amplitude pilgrimage, exchange of Buddhist literature, and developing tourism would surely play a biggest role to flourish India's soft power in that province (Aurora, 2015). Religion tourism has developed a soft major diplomacy in current years. In India Buddhist pilgrimages site like Rajgir, Bodhi Gaya, Sarnath, Sravasti, Nalanda, Vaishali, Kausambi, Kushinagar, etc. have also arisen a major aspects for the tourists from all over the world (Bhonsale, 2019). Also another area is flourished and admired by our epic Ramayana. The Ramayana is celebrated in different form in all over the Southeast Asian countries, (Lao Ramayana, Ramkien etc) beginning from architecture to the art music, culture, and literature to disguise dance, puppetry etc. It is also influenced by our foreign policy in many times. The Government of India also intended to create a group of Ramayana nations for observing soft power diplomacy (Shukla, 2020). Basically a lot of collaboration is still necessary to flourish this idea recruiting people and literature from both India and ASEAN.

Indian Diaspora: A Study on contribution in Far hood Neighbour

Southeast Asia is the home of a large number of Indian migrant. The migration to Southeast Asia had been set up during the British rule in their overseas colonies. The migrant people in Southeast Asian countries had contributed to the integration of Indian culture in Southeast Asia. A large number of migrant people also contribute to flourish cultural linkage between India and Southeast Asia. The Kali Amman Temple and Perumal temple in Myanmar demarcates the Tamil migrant in Myanmar. There are also lots of Indian temples situated in Jakarta and Medan city of Indonesia. There is a large number of non-resident Indian and Indian in different part of Malaysia. The foremost architecture of the Dravidian sculpture is shown in this temple.

The artistic assimilation and modern sculpture are clearly shown in Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam Brunei, Laos, Cambodia. India's communications with Fiji commenced in 1879 when Indian people were brought here under a covenant scheme to work on sugarcane plantations. Thus, between 1879 and 1916 around 60,553 Indian brought from Fiji (Nandy, 2019). An Indian network of school is well-known in the main cities of this Nations. Most of the inhabitants has involved in commerce and service sector industries. Few people are definitely looking for new occupations or jobs in concerned countries. In Myanmar, these groups are involved in miscellaneous occupation like plowing to administration. They also practice Indian culture in inviter countries and play key characters of the policy making for the Government. Lots of Indian's home land is Fiji near about 1400. Basically they are holding various type of occupation like banking, management, educational, IT, medical, finance, hotel sector, etc. It is notified that non-resident Indian occupied near about 1/3 of the total population 884,887 in Fiji. Though Hindi is widely spoken in Fiji (Fiji Population and Housing Census, 2017). The strongest networking with Southeast Asia, the Govt. is likely push up the work on actively from Meghalaya to Myanmar as the part of India-Myanmar-Thailand regional pact (MGC, 2017).

2. Method

The study follows and generally suggests relational development method. It could be with ecologically, economically, culturally, sociologically, politically or historically intrinsic ways that have enhanced or diminished their potentials of connectivity framework also. Our study is based on the data comprised of the secondary data collection and informal discussion through personal interviews with various persons joined conferences in Tripura Central University, S. Kula Women's College, Manipur, University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya (by Indian Political Science Association).

3. Results

India's Outlook and Neighbourhood Policy: Phases of India's Southeast Asia Network

Here after giving an assurance in 1947 to promote Asia's reprocession India played a little role in Asia for thirty years (1962-1992) (Charak, 2017). In all respect in this Look East Policy section in the 1990s, Indian commentators were sensible about the successive flourishing policy and several economic opportunities with ASEAN nations and others. With the successive improvement of Look East Policy and organization with ASEAN, India reestablished her historical, strategic and economic possession in 2005 when it formed East Asia Summit (Charak, 2017). It is successively raising a voice in regional forums. India wishes to act as a Pan-Asian commander with a new starting. From this point of view, the picture is to break into four main phases which replicate various trends of India's LEP that is:

- Look East (Economic Interactions), the Roots of P. V. Narasimha Rao mainly (1991-1996),
- Link East (Bilateral Relations), Atal Bihari Bajpayee under NDA mostly (1998-2004),
- Far East Linkage (Strategic Co-operation), Dr. Manmohan Singh under UPA ultimately (2004-2014) and
- Act East (Diplomatic and Cultural Dimensions), ongoing Modi Regime under sort of NDA (2014-Till now)

P. V. Narasimha Rao: Period of India's First Post-Cold War Govt. (1991-96)

However the entire approach was in fact introduced with the announcement of its economic policy in 1991, with affection of different worldwide order. Hereafter the LEP was a result of the Government of India's taken strategy of foreign scheme. With the introducing of the LEP, India has made a remarkable development of flourishing a comprehensive rapport with ASEAN and its co-related states separately. The LEP develop economic ties between India and the ASEAN member states in the financial domain which further escalated the financial exchange with the adoption of a number of intuitional instruments. These affiliations were:

- 1992: ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partner;
- 1995: ASEAN Full Dialogue Partner;
- 1996: Dialogue Partner; ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

As the effect the former join Trade Committees with the ASEAN states reformed as Joint Business Commissions and an ASEAN-Indian Joint Management Committee and Indian ASEAN Business Council were formed. There is an interlinking and geographically approximate market by India and ASEAN. However both the Indian and ASEAN utterly comprehended escalation export as much as higher rates than the rest of the world. And also the imports from other countries have achieved fluent improvement compared with ASEAN. Therefore extension in bilateral trade between India and SEA region is evidently showing financial vicinity of this Nations with each other (Charak, 2017).

Table No. 1: India's Import-Exports with ASEAN (Value in Bn. USD) in Look East Phase

India's Trade with South East Asia	Imports (Bn. USD)	Exports (Bn. USD)
1990-91	1.47	0.75
1991-92	1.27	1.02
1992-93	2.23	1.50

1993-94	1.95	1.98
1994-95	3.06	2.32
1995-96	3.88	3.17
1996-97	2.93	2.90

Note. From “A Shift in Indias Policy Towards Southeast Asia in the Post Cold War Period,” by Charak Pooja, 2017, (<http://hdl.handle.net/10603/209417>, p-129); From “Overview of India-ASEAN Relations,” by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, May 09, 2022, (https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/ASEAN_India_Brief_May_2022.pdf)

In a large scale producing goods which India imports from ASEAN has been much more than that of what it exports to this region. Therefore with the approaches of economic liberalization, tread in ASEAN make it very easy for foreign direct investment gradually set up in India crucial infrastructure sector like heavy industry, fertilizers, fuels, textiles, telecommunications, Chemicals, hotel and tourism services, paper and pulp and food processing. In 1996, India takes a membership of ARF at the first stage of LEP. The ARF stands for an important authority, which means India has endeavored a strongest political strategic linking with the ASEAN members through the skill of technology. Also India holds a close relation with these countries when compared with adjoining Nations in South Asia.

Most of the ASEAN state has been accepted India’s military defense strategic collaboration offered by India. India offered MILAN, a multilateral naval practice that cares about key of Malacca littoral states like Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore in the Andaman Sea. Not only above, India’s outsider strategic goals in SEA and the Asia’s pacific province tiled the way bilateral and multilateral agreement with the ASEAN states. Therefore, there grows the attention of USA to India.

4. Discussion and Benefits

ASEAN Economic crisis and its effect:

The ASEAN financial crisis started in Thailand in July 1997 and it spread rapidly to South Korea, Indonesia and Malaysia. The World Bank estimate put the median currency devaluation in the above mentioned economies in 1997, close to 80%. A very notable and important point about this crisis is the affected countries had balance of payments surplus.

Indian Economy has almost successfully escaped this financial crisis face by the five Southeast Asian crisis. Most of the economists gives credit to the strict financial control, a responsible monetary policy and an increasing but stable trade imbalances. In spite of all these measures Indian economy did not fully recovered from balance of payments crisis and structural adjustments programs of 1991 and economists like Parchure (1998) and Kulkarni (1997) prescribed recommended devaluation to be decided by the market forces rather than any central policy making authorities. According to Rishi and Kulkarni(2000) & Bhalla and Nachane (2001) There has been attempts by the authorities to keep away the possible contagion from the south east Asian countries in the form of currency depreciation and tightening of macroeconomic knob by restricting liquidity, but squeezing liquidity could have put an upward pressure on interest rates which could have slowed down economic growth ,so a choice has to be made between heavy currency depreciation and rise in interest rates. Currency depreciation cannot be continued for long as at some time point contractionary policies have to be taken and the sooner they are, less is the adjustment cost for the economy, so keeping this in mind Reserve Bank of India in the first half of 1998 opted for rising interest rate rather than currency depreciation. We can mention here the case of China which followed a policy of monetary expansion contrary to India’s policy of tightening monetary policy to combat this financial crisis. China has been following the contractionary policies and an austerity

program since 1993 and in 1998 this austerity program gave way to expansion and spending in order to accelerate growth.

a) Atal Bihari Vajpayee: Period of First NDA Govt. (1998-2004)

Same as, the former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had confidence, that Northeast India will turn into the bridgehead to SEA. It is a part that geographically shares around 1,900 km with Bangladesh and more than near about 1,600 km with Myanmar, the two states which play an important role to fulfil of the Northeast's future economic goals. As well as it has a faith in combined cultural, ethnic and historical relation with SEA could be swing for better trade and tourism. It is mostly said that the Northeast culture shows the footsteps of SEA. The LEP played an important character to promoting its strategic junction with the nearest neighbors. Northeast is aware about its safety in an equal process (Myint U, 2011). It contemplates the instant border with Myanmar and Bangladesh, to hold border supremacy welfare instead of border conflict, insecurity, smuggling and drug trafficking. When Myanmar take membership in the ASEAN the NER play an important role an exchanging India's LEP (Ladwig III, 2009), while the ancient culture art break out into the ASEAN region and India. North-Eastern states of India such as Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland share an International border with Myanmar. In addition to extent of establishment constructions in Myanmar incorporates the building of inland waterways, railways, ports and roads. In this period, India and ASEAN took some initiatives to get joint roles:

- 1998: Endorsement of the Treaty on Southeast Asia as a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone;
- 2002: ASEAN Summit Level Partner;
- 2003: i. ASEAN-India framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation (CECA); ii. ASEAN'S Treaty for Amity and Co-operation (TAC);
- 2004: India ASEAN Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (3P).

A geographical linking connecting India and SEA who also build the Trilateral Highway Trite and Trans Asian Railway proposal under the Asian land Transport Infrastructure Development (ALTID) policy. Some of the important schemes which are underway in this phase are elaborate below:

Mapping of Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Route

The Kaladan multi-modal project was intended to payoff land from Northeast India to far away Southeast Asia. Hereafter to make accessible substituted conveyance linking between India and Northeast states. The distance between important cities of India such as Kolkata and northeastern states of India are connected because of the Kaladan project. It contains three important points mentioning in below:

- Firstly initiation of the Sittwe port to smooth the progress of transportation between Kolkata and Sittwe (539 km);
- the second element is the building of a 225 km long inland waterway transport system between Sittwe and Setpyitpyin (Kaletwa) and
- Thirdly, development of about 62 km long border road transportation system between Setpyitpyin to India-Myanmar border.

Planning of Friendship Highway

Through the policy of Trilateral Highway including three countries by concerning Morch (India) with the Mae Sot (Thailand) and Bagan (Myanmar) on the basis of estimation in 2002. India had decided established up to 78km traceless road network in phase-I, while looking for extending 132km extra and also create a policy to build up a walk way, a bridge over the Irrawaddy River. On the Myanmar tour in May, 2012 Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced that 71 bridges would be reconstruct by India on the Tamu-Kalewa friendship road. Two routes have been proposed for this highway, one bypassing Mandalay and the other through the city. The routes are: (1) from India to Thailand through Moreh (Tengnoupal district of the Indian state of Manipur)–Tamu–Kalewa–Chaungma–Yinmabin–Pale–Kyadet–Lingadaw–Pakokku–Bagan–Jyaukpadaung–Meiktila bypass–Taungoo–Oktwin–Payaghi–Theinzayat–Thaton–Hpaan–Kawareik–Myawaddy (Myanmar)–Mae Sot (Thailand). (2) Moreh (India)–Tamu–Kelewa–Yagyi–

Chaungma–Monywa–Mandalay– Meiktila bypass to Taungoo–Oktwin–Payagyi–Theinzayat–Thaton–Hpaan– Kawkareik–Myawaddy (Myanmar)–Mae Sot (Thailand). Myanmar has requested India to accept route (2), which passes through Mandalay, as the proposed bus service between Imphal (Manipur, India) and Strategic Analysis 481 Mandalay (Myanmar) has been inaugurated. Economically this would be advantageous for both countries in terms of trade, apart from benefitting the trans-border ethnic communities who have a shared history and lived experience (Ziipao, 2018).

Come back to Historical Stilwell Road

The Stilwell Road (a strategic military route) project was one of the main schemes concerning to linking between India and Myanmar. The road attaches Ledo (Pangsau Pass of the Patkai Range in Arunachal Pradesh) with Kunming in the Yunnan which is situated in China. And it was established during Second World War called Chiang Kai-shek then renamed the highway in honour of the U.S. general Joseph W. Stilwell. Another scheme added to concern about a region Mogaung in Myanmar (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2022), which is captured by the disloyal groups and the road passing through these areas. Moreover, re-captured of the road from the disloyal groups might be benefited to adding fund for this operation. The road can be a conduit for trade and understanding for the Asian continent (BBC NEWS).

Reform of Flight Connectivity

Through the road linking policy both the countries, India and Myanmar have faced many security threats which need to discuss from time to time. On the other hand air transportations are far safer. However many private airline companies offer air transportation service from India to Yangon (Asian Development Bank, 2011). In the year 1997 to 2005 India's co-operation with ASEAN escalated very fast when comparing with any other province. From the beginning India plays a major spirit with the older ASEAN member like Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

The major regions are famous for maintaining relationship with tourism and trade which were aimed for the improvement of various sectors such as health, investment, infrastructure, transport, small and medium-scale enterprises, science & technology and communication, which were developed through cultural and professional exchanges. By the compeering first phase the trade and commerce India and SEA countries has developed as shown in the table below:

Table No. 2: India's Import-Exports with ASEAN (Value in Bn. USD) in Link East Phase

India's Trade with South east Asia	Imports (Bn. USD)	Exports (Bn. USD)
1997-98	2.98	5.17
1998-99	2.09	5.86
1999-2000	2.72	6.28
2000-01	3.36	5.21
2001-02	3.94	5.76
2002-03	5.22	6.56
2003-04	6.49	10.05

Note. From "Overview of India-ASEAN Relations," by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, May 09, 2022, (https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/ASEAN_India_Brief_May_2022.pdf)

India slowly gained a developed relationship in the ASEAN. By this policy India-ASEAN CECA worked on various sector such as agriculture, customs cooperation, forestry and fisheries, Public resource improvement , information and communication technology (ICT), manufacturing, mining and energy, trade facilitation, trade financing, services, transport and infrastructure and science and technology, increased people-to-people contacts, pharmaceuticals and health, research

and development, science and technology, small and medium-sized enterprises, trade and investment and tourism and culture.

b) Dr. Manmohan Singh: Period of UPA I & II Govt. (2004 - 2014)

At the first visit of Manmohan Singh to Malaysia as a Prime Minister was a milestone to reinforce rich cultural and historical interchanges between India and Malaysia. This tour will be remarked as the talks of economic cooperation, integration in terms of infrastructure development, information technology, bio-technology, defense, railways, energy cooperation and greater-people-to-people linkages. This conference would be mention as the inauguration of the India-Malaysia CEO summit and also restoration of highway treaty between India and Malaysia, which has been delayed long. India also excepting to accomplish the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) with Malaysia it has been in discussing since 2008 and Kuala Lumpur delaying to appear. It required remaining that out of the 10 ASEAN countries, only Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore have endorse the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement with India. Actually this period was called UPA government in India, there was the journey on:

- 2005: East Asia Summit;
- 2006: i. India ASEAN Technology Summit; ii. ASEAN Defense Minister Meeting (ADMS);
- 2008: ASEAN-India Aviation Cooperation framework;
- 2008-10: Free Trade Agreement with ASEAN (AIFTA);
- 2009: ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (TGA);
- 2010: i. ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBS); ii. ASEAN-India Tourism Cooperation Agreement (TCA);
- 2011: i. ASEAN Trade and Industrial Exhibition (TIE);
ii. ASEAN-India Air Transport Agreement (ATA);
- 2012: i. ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit; ii. Strategic Partner;
- 2013: ASEAN-India Trade and Investment Centre.

Table No. 3: India's Import-Exports with ASEAN (Value in Bn. USD) in Far East Linkage Phase

India's Trade with South east Asia	Imports (Bn. USD)	Exports (Bn. USD)
2004-05	3.23	4.60
2005-06	11.13	10.41
2006-07	17.83	12.60
2007-08	22.67	16.38
2008-09	26.20	19.14
2009-10	25.79	18.11
2010-11	30.60	27.27
2011-12	42.74	32.30
2012-13	42.31	37.89
2013-14	44.46	31.29

Note. From "Overview of India-ASEAN Relations," by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, May 09, 2022, (https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/ASEAN_India_Brief_May_2022.pdf); From "Trade and Investment Facilitation Services (TIFS), by PHD Research Bureau, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2018, (<http://www.phdcci.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TIFS-Newsletter-October-2018.pdf>)

All of these have implemented for the South China Sea clashes and show that India is taking a greater interest in security matters in the province. India suggested for constructing a new rail networks between Jiribam-Imphal-Moreh which are in India and Tamu-Kalay-Segyi which are in Myanmar. The deadline to finish of the scheme was to set in the year 2018. And also these railway networks will maintain in the future trans-Asian railway project, which will connect Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. For India and Myanmar has turn out to be cooperated in three ways: a) It proposes at eastern sea shore along with the Bay of Bengal, that play role to check insurgency in the Indian state and the sub-continent route offered by Myanmar to connect with the SEA for its LEP (Asian Development Bank, 2011); b) Where as the fore most determination for Singh's is economic collaboration, India also needs to recognize various other aspects. For that India should recover on its regional agreement through the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation and with other provincial policy like BIMSTEC, as well as extend more assistance with the ADB, World Bank, and IMF that will help in providing assistance in enabling trade and promoting expansion in the country; c) At a time India should promoting to pursue bilateral FTAs with each ASEAN nation (Saikia, 2010).

P.M. Singh mentioned that India sees the East Asia forum as a "spring board" to provincial collaboration, and combination and contributing in the consultations for the Regional Comprehensive Economic membership among the ASEAN and its FTA partners, which will help create an economic community in the region. In this period, Govt. of India expressed her expectation that ASEAN should elaborate its supportive hand to India's entry to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and also in the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM), an instrument created in March 2010 to help for maintaining future regional economic crises.

The significance of the visit of Manmohan Singh, India is looking for Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on services and investments by the end in the year 2013 with ASEAN and FICCI was taken great initiatives for early implementation (The Economic Times, 2013).

c) Narendra Modi: Period of 2nd & ongoing 3rd NDA Govt.

In different kinds of strategic reasons, to reach of the LEP has been widened by India. An important fact is that India's LEP would be explained of India's compassion for the smaller countries of SEA - coming to power, it was the very sensible looking for India's Southeast Asia policy from Modi Govt. Modi is trying to get a new thrust in regional cooperation to set up economic, strategic, and diplomatic relations with concerned countries that boost common planning with India on China's evolving economic and military arrangement. In this perspective, NDA Govt. wanna apply the Act East policy in Southeast and East Asia strategy, and its primary manifestation, 'Look East' are not different; rather, they are two sides of a coin, representing two different with modified outlook (Kesavan, 2020). The fruitful strategy of India's Southeast Asia Policy and its multi-dimensional approaches which are mentioned below:

- 2014: ASEAN-India Investment Agreement (AIIA);
- 2015: i. ASEAN-India Free Trade Area in Goods, Services, and Investment (FTA); ii. Indo-ASEAN Business Council;
- 2016: ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2nd Term);
- 2017: i. 25th Anniversary of India-ASEAN Partnership (1992-2017); ii. 14th ASEAN Defence Minister Summit (ADMS);
- 2019: i. ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA); ii. G-2-G ASEAN-India Cyber Dialogue;
- 2020: i. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP); ii. ASEAN-India Economic Ministers Consultation Meet (EMCM);
- 2021: ASEAN-India Institutional Mechanism, called ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) 10+1
- 2022: ASEAN-India Friendship Year

Vision of Economic Dimension

India has made an advance progression for constructing multilateral links with SEA from the very beginning of LEP. A massive push has been given by the LEP for developing the monetary bonding between India and SEA partner states as a result of promoting of monetary interactions in their relevant economic circle. And also, the progressive results of bilateral trade relation between India and SEA remained outstanding. The contract will empower to establish a linkage among these states in the field of air, land transport and digital technology. The FTA in Services and Investment which was signed on September 9, 2014, was definite to put into an action at Commemorative Summit. In the world many countries have been benefitted from the ASEAN as it links both provincial and provincial powers (See, 2010). The goal is clear to focus on understanding the ASEAN-India FTA with a joint business sector. The achievement of the economic collaboration between ASEAN and India will perhaps affect in the flourishing of India's provincial power.

Table No. 4: India's Import-Exports with ASEAN (Value in Bn. USD) in Current Act East Phase

India's trade with ASEAN	Export (Bn.USD)	Import (Bn. USD)
2014-15	31.81	44.71
2015-16	25.13	39.91
2016-17	30.96	40.62
2017-18	34.20	47.13
2018-19	37.47	59.32
2019-20	31.55	55.37
2020-21	31.49	47.42
2021-22(till Feb. 2022)	38.29	60.10

Note. From "Overview of India-ASEAN Relations," by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, May 09, 2022, (https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/ASEAN_India_Brief_May_2022.pdf)

Mission of Strategic Dimension

India's Act East Policy has been provided an opportunity to magnifying on its security benefits in Malacca. Due to India's expansion strategic and monetary impact, in the numerous zone India consider to be a potential patron in the regional solidarity in a booming campaign further to include the EAS. A far ASEAN-India collaboration, ASEAN and India are also part of the provincial planning in the Asia-Pacific, which is generally accepted as undertaking alteration. Various issues add to the dynamics of the alteration:

- Firstly, the rise of China as a significant global economic and political power a country that is also a Strategic Partner of ASEAN.
- Secondly, the rebalancing policy of the United States in the Asia-Pacific a country with which ASEAN is seeking to develop a strategic partnership;
- Thirdly, the rising tension in some maritime areas which can potentially affect regional security and, as a consequence, the Asia-Pacific's role as a key engine of the global economy.

At this phase i.e. Act East Policy, India has not bound into SEA alone rather it extends its possibility from SEA to Asia-Pacific with Indo-Pacific as its major interests to contains the closest bonding with the countries in the region of counter China's hegemonic ambition. According to India, the existing summit and mechanisms like the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) and today it is known as IORA, ASEAN+1, EAS, ARF, ADMM+, Expanded Maritime Forum, Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) played an important role in India's vision of a stable, safe and flourishing Asia and its adjoining Indian Ocean and Pacific regions.

Actually, the third phase of Act East policy is also known as the application phase of LEP. In this phase, India's monetary as well as strategic relations improved and move in the direction of the Asia-Pacific region. Due to monetary principal India signed number of economic scheme like FTAs in goods, services and investments and also becoming a member of other provincial groupings like RCEP. In the phase of Act East policy, India also elaborate the idea of Indo-Pacific QUAD, which collaborates with the countries like Japan, Australia, USA and South Korea to counter Chinese hegemonic nature in the province because China is the obstruct for India to stand the status of global power in the international domain while using its assertive policy in the province.

Comparison of the India's Different Governments: A search of Innovative Thinking to prove the vision of a New Geopolitical Paradigm

India's Look East Policy, rechristened as the Act East Policy by the present Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA Government. India's 'Act East' policy is applicable for diplomatic enterprise to advance economic, strategic and cultural dealings with the vast Asia-Pacific region at diverse levels. It has been proclaimed as the country's most victorious foreign policy scheme adopted in the past two decades. Narendra Modi extended its chances and attention after detecting the Phase I to Phase III of the LEP could not achieve their fullest potential, despite being success stories. India's contribution in these multilateral forums such as IORA, EAS, ARF, ADMM, Expanded Maritime Forum, Indian Naval Symposium and joint multilateral naval movements has played an important role in realizing India's dream of a unchanging, safe and affluent in Asia and its adjoining provinces like the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean regions.

1. In the phase-I of the LEP was marked by establishing trade and investment acquaintances. It was also intended to remove mistrust of past and to built a 'new economic interaction.'
2. The phase-II was categorized by geographical linkages between India and SEA states through different of shame as talk about in the text before. The connections between the Northeastern province of India and SEA, which were buildup through the architectural improvements, have further flourished the chance of LEP in the whole continent called 'Link East' to make strong 'bilateral relations.'
3. In Phase-III have been allocated of free trade and forming to set up a new monetary framework conjuring between the SEA and India, and also applied Linkage Theory through 'far-east linkage with strategic co-operation.'
4. The current phase has been run as a regime of modification ('Modi'-fication) called 'Act East.' It has no bound for ongoing 'diplomatic and cultural dimensions.' It could be explained as new non-alignment, and also define the Southeast Asia policy of India from non-alignment to multi-alignment.

The evolution from phase-1 of India's LEP to phase-IV, and seemingly to the Act East Policy is an efficient example. As India is making for the Act East Policy, to move forward itself will have numerous indications in both implicit and explicit forms. Projecting the picture of the dependable major power, India has been playing a major role to proactive, proficient and widespread role in the province at all stages since the 1990s. India's constant conflict with the Indian with the neighboring countries has significantly affected its foreign relations in a negative way. India possibly is in a better state and can use its position to improve its monetary and strategic gains in this region. India's 'Make in India policy', a movement by Modi Government has infused a new staring force into this strategy (Charak, 2017). Eventually, the fruit is cut by Modi government; the Vientiane treaty was a little issue according to ASEAN-India's point of view in 2020.

5. Conclusion

Current Status of India's Southeast Asia Outlook

There have many positive signs in India-Southeast Asia relations which have been identified in economic, historical, cultural, trade and investment, strategic cooperation, International forums, institutional approach and also reciprocal ethnic-diasporas mentality, etc. But this study wants to find out about some negative indicators, which prove that different govt. in India could not solve

or has ignored the followings: a) Road transportation (passenger bus services) is limited between India and Bangladesh (Kolkata – Dhaka – Agartala). To go Myanmar no link is so far; Mandalay road is in infrastructure from Manipur to Tamu (Northeast India and Northwest Myanmar). b) On rail transportation (passenger train services) India and Myanmar no link so far. c) International flight connection is around India – ASEAN5 (Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore). Many India and Southeast Asia's countries flight is weekly. Even most have no direct connection from seven sister states. d) Poor links in regional infrastructure from waterways (cargo). e) Moreover, the ASEAN countries that have their consular offices at Kolkata, has no their Visa offices to Northeast India's state capitals to facilitate greater people-to-people contact. There is a need to guarantee activity in the visa services for the students of the Southeast Asian countries. f) Student exchange is supported for some specific disciplines like English language, Economics and also specially science and technology. But any others subject in social sciences are not forwarded for more closed Tract II diplomacy.

Limitation of the Study

- a) The present study didn't search India's position in regional trade and investments;
- b) The paper tries to make a comparison among different periods of Indian governments but didn't able to present the shift during the pre and post-ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement (AIFTA) superbly.

Confusion and Implication

Due to demise of socialist thought in Europe and collapse of Soviet Union after the Cold War, India's future of Mixed Economy Policy of Nehruvian legacy had fallen. As a result, India had changed her outlook in foreign affairs and there was a paradigm shift. India has started her Southeast Asia policy as or called Look East policy just after the cold war, but this policy cannot be called a paradigm shift rather a modification. Indian Diplomacy took a fresh look at its Southeast Asia policy. Since 1992 when Prime Minister P V Narshima Rao enunciated a "Look East Policy" reaching out to Southeast Asia, India has engaged the region on all fronts – diplomatic and security, economic and people-to-people. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh laid the foundation of Narasimha Rao and built a strong relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Above all, it is in the Northeast of India where India's Act East policy and Japan's 'free and open Indo-Pacific strategy' have come together and both countries are keen to expand their cooperation in the wider Indo-Pacific region. This includes the continent of Africa. In May 2016, Modi announced a proposal to develop an Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) in support of Japan. It is a proposal to create a "free and open Indo-Pacific region" that will create a series of sea corridors connecting India and other countries in South and Southeast Asia. One of the main objectives of the proposal is to bring greater integration in the Indo-Pacific region through the adoption of infrastructure. But some confusion may create barriers on the active motion; as examples are shown:

- Lack in connectivity will slow down the integration process;
- Presence of regional infrastructure is negligible;
- Big gaps are between announcement and reality;
- From day one, to implement the action plan has been delayed and further extended the timing to fulfill the previous plan of action;
- Required time is over without reaching goals means breaking commitment.

However, all governments of India have an individual thought in political appearance in internal politics, but they always maintain similar, authentic and sometimes innovative thinking for International Perspective from India's traditional foreign policy. This spirit has been also proved from Covid period. It should be noted that Look East Policy is a paradigm shift from 1991 by the government of Narashina Rao but from then it has been an evolving period. So, any interpretation can't prove another paradigm shift in the regime of India's Look East Policy beyond a new trajectory (from Look East to Act East) towards Southeast Asia and also East Asia till now.

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