

SUMMARY OF MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT

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SUMMARY

'India's Look East Policy and an Analytical Study of Its Impact on India's Techno-Economical Growth in the Context of Globalization'

National interest is the key concept and starting point of foreign policy and The Look East policy has emerged as an important foreign policy initiative of India in the post-Cold War period. In order to recover from the loss of the strategic partner -USSR (end of the Cold war 1991), India sought to build up a relationship with the USA and allies of the USA in Southeast Asia.

In this pursuit, former Prime minister of India P V Narasimha Rao launched Look East policy in 1991, to give a strategic push to India's engagement with South-East Asia region with the aim of developing political contacts, increasing economic integration and forging security cooperation with countries of Southeast Asia. India's 'Act East' policy is a diplomatic initiative to promote economic, strategic and cultural relations with the vast Asia-Pacific region at different levels. The country's eastward drive since 1992 has underscored the importance of this region in its contemporary international relations. The focus of the "Look East Policy" was to increase economic integration with the South East Asian countries and the area was just confined to South East Asia only. On the other hand the focus of the "Act East Policy" is economic and security integration and focussed area increased to South East Asia plus East Asia. Act East Policy focused on ASEAN countries, Economic Integration, East Asian countries, Security cooperation. The time when India launched Look East Policy in 1992, India's trade with ASEAN was \$2 billion. After signing the Free Trade Agreement in 2010 with ASEAN, the trade has grown

to \$72 billion (2017-18). India is also an active participant in several regional forums like the IORA, the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), etc.

With the forces of globalization gaining momentum, India's larger economic considerations facilitated regional cooperation. Maintaining political stability in the neighbourhood was desirable for the overall preservation of democracy, pluralism and human rights. The steady growth in the political profile of both China and the United States needed India to articulate policies which could help in the preservation of its strategic space in the subcontinent in relation to extra regional powers. In the context of growing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, securing freedom of navigation and India's own role in the Indian Ocean is a key feature of Act East Policy.

China's growing presence and influence in the region, economic and strategic makes diversified relationship with India necessary for Southeast Asia. With the US down-scaling its relations with the region, many believe that India will provide added stability and security to the region. In the immediate future, India and ASEAN countries must intensify their cooperation both at the bilateral and regional levels to combat common threats to security that have the potential of shaking the very foundations of the polity. Since India's north-eastern region is being recognised as the 'corridor to South East Asia, integration with the traditional neighbouring regions like Myanmar, Bangladesh and Thailand should be facilitated through transportation networks and this would contribute to sustained peace and development.