

The look east policy history essay



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1. The Look East policy was a strategic shift on Indian foreign policy. With the change in balance of power after the down fall of her strategic ally Soviet Union, India was desperately searching for new economic and strategic support base. This coincides with rapidly growing economies of Asia-Pacific. The growing interest of India towards Asia-Pacific gave birth to Look East policy as one of the prominent Indian foreign policy initiative. It was adopted in the early 1990s by then Narasimha Rao Government with the aim of developing political contacts, economic integration and security cooperation with Southeast Asian countries. As a result of the Look East policy India has got many benefits and supports in her economic transformation and growth including closer strategic contacts between India and Southeast Asian countries.

2. To analyze India's Look East policy and its strategies towards East Asian and Asia-Pacific countries Debamitra Mitra and Madhuchanda Ghosh have co-edited the book, India's Look East Policy: The Emerging Trends.

Debamitra Mitra is a M. Phil of International Relations and Doctorate of History. With her vast working experiences in academics and media, she has authored a book ' End of Communist Rule in Europe, Poland: A Case Study'. She has also co-authored a book ' Environmental Science' in two volumes and has edited two books titled ' Resurgent Asia in the 21st Century' and ' Human Resource Management: A Changing Paradigm'. Currently she is working as a Senior Faculty Member at Icfai Business School Research Centre, Kolkata.

3. Madhuchanda Ghosh has done her Ph. D in International Relations from Jadavpur University. She is a regular columnist in various journals. Her latest

publication is from the 'Journal of Asian Survey' of University of California, Berkeley. She has presented papers in various conferences in India and Japan. Presently she is working as Faculty Associate at Icfai Business School Research Centre, Kolkata.

4. This book is published by the Icfai University Press, Hyderabad, India to give an overview on India's Look East policy and its emerging trends. This book is merely a collection of various thought provoking articles written by various experts. To make the reading continuous these articles are arranged in a sequential and logical order under two sections.

5. First section 'Look East Policy: An Overview' contains the collection of seven different articles. In the first article of the first section 'India's Look East Policy: An Overview', Madhuchanda Ghosh attempts to describe the evolution of India's Look East Policy as a result of India's search for new strategic ally due to the change in world balance of power after the down fall of Soviet Union. She considered this policy is part of India's grand strategy of emerging as an important actor in Asia and world affairs. The article tries to establish the growing importance of India's northeastern region (China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar) in India's Look East policy because of its strategic location. In the article China factor is identified as a major factor in shaping India's Look East policy.

6. In the articles 'The Politics of India's Look East Policy', and 'India's Cultural Relations with the Asia Pacific' by Debamitra Mitra, the author attempts to discuss the changing political dynamics of India's relationship with Asia-Pacific and emerging relationship with Southeast Asian region as a

whole. The article tries to articulate the Look East policy as a means to project India's legitimate power that may resist China's growing dominance in the region. The article also explores the India's existing socio-economic, ethnic and religious linkage with countries in Asia-Pacific region which play a major role in framing Look East policy.

7. Article four ' India's Place in East Asia Integration - Emerging Scenario' by D S Rajan explains the design of US, Japan and ASEAN countries to project India as a balancing means against rising China. Similarly in the following article ' India in ASEAN: Underlying security Interests', Sreemoyi Ghosh analyzes the India's progressive relationship with ASEAN, the common security interest between Indian and ASEAN, and rational behind those common interests.

8. In the article ' India and BIMSTEC: Emerging Economic Partners' by Debamita Nath tries to trace the emergence of BIMSTEC, its aims and objectives. The article explains the emerging economical relationship between India and BIMSTEC and suggests some of the measures to strengthen this relation. And in the last article of the first section ' From Land Locked to Land Linked: India's Northeast in the Look East Policy' by Sulagna Maitra highlights the importance of India's Northeast region as a corridor to link with Southeast Asia as it connects five neighboring countries.

9. Second section ' Country Specific Policy Initiatives' has the collection of five articles. In the first article ' Politics of Economic Engagement in Sino-India Relations' Sreya Maitra gives the brief overview of Sino-India relation in the past. The article highlights the growing bilateral relationship between

China and India, and its future course. In the next article ' India and Japan: Redefining Relations in the New Millennium' by Madhuchanda Ghosh highlights the difference in opinion was the main reason behind the low intensity relationship between India and Japan. The article also explains relation between two countries is based on two areas, strategic convergence and economic interest. The article tries to establish the strategic convergence as the most important dimension of the relationship and China factor as the common strategic concern of both the countries.

10. Gaurav Dasgupta in his article ' Southeast Asia in India's Look East Policy: Emerging trends' critically analyses the growing Indian bilateral relation with Southeastern countries especially after the end of cold war. The article also tries to establish the fact that the China factor has been one of the principle underlying factors with regard to ASEAN's tilt towards India. In the following article ' India-Singapore Relations: A Perspective Analysis' by Nabanita Choudhary critically analyses the Indian economic and politico-security engagement with Singapore. The article also explains that the Singapore assumes a high degree of significance among ASEAN countries due to her high economic growth rate, strategic location in the Malacca Strait and being the largest investor and trading partner of India among the ASEAN member countries. In the last article ' India-Malaysia Relations: The Road Ahead' by Gaurav Dasgupta critically analyses India-Malaysia relation on economic, politico-security, academic, defence and cultural ground. Malaysia, being 9th largest trading partner and 18th largest investor to India, assumes greater importance within the frame work of Look East policy.

11. The book gives fairly good idea of India's emerging relationship with Asia-pacific in the field of economic, politics, security, energy and culture. The book tries to establish that the Look East Policy remains as a major element of Indian's foreign policy in the 21st century.

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