



Research Paper

India's Act East Policy: Pros and cons for Manipur

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ABSTRACT This paper is to portray the historical background of India's Act East Policy (AEP); likewise scrupulously stresses the likelihood prospects and challenges of India's northeastern state Manipur particularly within the framework of India's Act East Policy. Encompassed by blue hills with an oval molded valley, wealthy in art and nature's perfect wonder the state Manipur (India) is rich by its natural resources too, yet the state suffers from the myriads of problem, Since Act East Policy claims to enhance the condition of Northeastern region of India in amble ways by further ameliorating economic, political, and strategic relations with Southeast Asian nations, this is the explanation which makes this policy the crucial place of discussion. The paper additionally accompanies the conclusion that until and unless the socio-political circumstances of Manipur is improved and assuming the AEP isn't executed efficiently, the dynamic AEP of India can hold back at some point if not obliterate.

KEYWORDS Northeast India, Manipur, Southeast Asia, Act East Policy, ASEAN

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I. INTRODUCTION

Look East Policy (LEP) mirrors the advent of significant foreign policy initiatives of India since the end of the Cold War. India's Look East Policy was launched in the year 1991; PV Narasimha Rao was an ardent apostle later it followed the successive administrations such as of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh. LEP intended to revolutionize and harmonize links with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other East Asian nations with economic and strategic spheres being its core. Success was incremental as India became a Sectoral Dialogue Partner with ASEAN in 1992, Advisor in 1995, member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and member of Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia -Pacific in 1996, later subsequently India became a Summit level partner high in 2002 and was acceded to the ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation Southeast Asia in 2003. India's maneuver towards the East is an obvious harbinger of the fact that the nation went from being an oversight to edification towards the eastern neighbors and this was seen for the first time at the times of Rajiv Gandhi; as the Prime Minister of India who visited several capitals of the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) after three decades; it was a testament to India's fascination for gathering the missing links to establish affinity with Southeast Asian countries. India's looking towards the East is an outcome of its quest for redemption of missed opportunities. Prolonged, the Indian mind was habituated towards the Western countries and it denied ameliorating rapport with the Eastern countries, later incrementally, acquaintance towards the East dawned; perceived lethargic relation over these years had unfruitful potential. Thusly, the charm of East allured and convinced India that it was ill-fatedly secluded from the east only to incur losses in diverse aspects. India's policy of looking at the East took definite shape during the tenure of P.V. Narasimha Rao from 1991 onwards. Narasimha Rao accompanying the help of the Finance Minister commenced refashioning for the transformation of the Indian economic system. These economic reforms broadened the procedures in terms of investment, imports, and exports of goods. The economic reforms of India were effortlessly appreciated by the ASEAN which granted India a Sectoral Dialogue Partnership in 1992, which manifests the invitation of India to get economically integrated with that of Southeast Asian countries.

India's wide-awake endeavor to get close to ASEAN was embraced, correspondingly ASEAN championed India along with the accord of 1996 Dialogue Partner, eloquently licensed India to make its mark in the dialogue partner not only with ASEAN but with three Asian countries- China, Japan, and South Korea (ASEAN+3). India's foreign policy and relations with the ASEAN was apparent amidst Look East Policy to get

integrated politically, economically, culturally, and strategically. India via bilateral, sub-regional, and regional cooperation pursued to enrich its trade and investment relationship with the ASEAN member countries. The Free Trade Area (FTA) Agreements that India signed at various levels exhibits India's impulse to get its economic integration with the ASEAN. Extended ASEAN + India summits held on November 2002 and October 2003 respectively nurtured ASEAN and India's relations to elaborate dialogue on the FTA also the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation concord signed at Bali in October 2003 furnished the trajectory for the upcoming economic cooperation between India and ASEAN. The indispensable role played between India and ASEAN to enhance economic relationship received turbocharge; later led to the inauguration of the sub-regional organizations such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) in the year 1997 and 2000 correspondingly. India's Look East Policy also focused on the Northeastern region of India and has claimed to benefit the region. The region comprises eight states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim and it holds about 8 percent of the total geographical size and 3.1 percent of the total population of India. This population has been diversified into many ethnic and linguistic groups with their own distinct cultures and traditions. It should be needlessly emphasized that India's Look East policy has always claimed to benefit the Northeast region of India as the region has the potential in terms of geographical location as it can act as the gateway to Southeast Asia via Myanmar likewise the region which holds over 2.6 lakh sq km of land territory has immense concoction on its natural resources as of oil and gas, agro-horticultural resources along with drastic hydroelectric potentials etc.

India's Look East Policy lasted until the formation of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government at the center in 2014 wherein Prime Minister Narendra Modi rechristened Look East Policy which is been alluded to as Act East Policy contemporarily. Be the Look East Policy or the Act East Policy it must be crucially stressed that it has professed to profit the Northeastern region of India.

II. MANIPUR AND INDIA'S ACT EAST POLICY

Manipur meaning "A jeweled land" settled with profound ambiance within a lavish green corner of North East India appears to be much similar to an exquisite work of art executed by magnificent hands of Nature and is without a doubt a condition of lovely characteristic magnificence and qualities with wealthy in art and nature's perfect wonder. Manipur lies on a mixture of cultures; this is where Rajashree Bhagyachandra gave birth to the well known Raas Lila, the classical dance of Manipur. Embroiled at the Anglo-Manipuri War of 1891, Manipur however went under British Rule as a Princely State. After the autonomy of India in 1947, the Princely State of Manipur was converged in the Indian Union on October 15, 1949, and turned into the full-fledged State of India on the 21st January 1972. Manipur with the capital Imphal holds 16 districts; it is bounded by Nagaland toward the North, Mizoram toward the south and Assam toward the west, Myanmar lies to its east.

The topographical size stretches to about 22,327 sq km and the populace estimate is 2,721,756 as of 2011 including the Meitie, naga, and Kuki people, and so forth with Meitei ethnic group representing approx 53 percent of the number of inhabitants in Manipur state. The major language of the state is Meitei (known as Manipuri) likewise has distinct languages notably Thadou and dialects of the Kuki and Naga tribes. Comprising about 40 percent of the state's population is discerned by their respective dialects and cultures that are village-based. Manipur's ethnic group practices a variety of religions. As stated by the 2011 census, Hinduism is the core religion in the state, intently followed by Christianity. Different religions such as Islam, Sanamahism and Judaism, etc also exist therein.

Like other northeastern states, it is to a great extent secluded from the remainder of India; regardless of seclusion has an imperative role to play in India's Act East policy as a large aliquot of the land transaction on the land surface happens through Moreh (Manipur) and handles about 99 percent of formal overland trade among India and its quick neighbor Myanmar, the Asian Highway No 1, India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highways, Trans-Asian Railway Network (TARN) passes through Moreh(Manipur), which betokens Manipur as a passage towards ASEAN member nations. Most notably, the populations possessing in the border areas (Indo-Myanmar) are of homogenous ethnic communities that share analogy in terms of history, culture, and customs.

The inhabitants of Manipur eloquently Meitie are traditionally and culturally associated with the eastern direction. In most cultural and religious rituals, Meitie uses to turn east; most houses are traditionally built, even now as well built with the main entrance turning east. There is also optimism of opening the Nongpok Thong Hangba (Eastern Door) in Manipur in the future. With the initiation of LEP, the prophecy in Puya (ancient Manipur scriptures) that Nongpok Tong Hangba (Eastern Door) will open was metaphorically fulfilled in this sense. However, rejuvenates hopes and visions that peace and prosperity will prevail in society by building relationships with their ethnic cousins in neighboring countries. Improving infrastructure and economic health is a dream even after two decades of LEP, meanwhile, people of Manipur especially intelligentsia and academicians, are very skeptical about AEP chiefly due to the lack of policy implementation

in Manipur. The archetypal concern has been whether if the state will act only as a passage to Southeast Asia or will the AEP truly benefit the state?

However when it comes to AEP the Government of India (GOI) has been relying on 3c's formula that is Culture, connectivity, and Commerce. Henceforth the aim behind implementation of the AEP were the physical connectivity between India and its neighboring countries in the east to facilitate trade, people to people contacts, tourism, etc. The trilateral highway known as India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway that connects Moreh (Manipur) to Mae Sot in Thailand via Myanmar with a total length of 1360 km has been rejuvenated and are apropos for all weather conditions and is at numerous stages of enhancement. With the culmination of Trilateral Highway expectations for the locomotion of goods for international trade, both forward and backward uniformly can be fulfilled meticulously between Manipur (India) and Southeast Asian Nations via Myanmar. Further, it will also stimulate the movement of people for both tourism and business intentions. In the light of India's AEP, the two countries India and Myanmar incepted international entry and exit points at the Moreh (Manipur) and Tamu (Myanmar) and have actualized a historic cross-border concord signed on May 11, 2018. The inauguration of these checkpoints will invigorate travel on both sides for multiple reasons.

Also the novel Imphal-Kangchup-Tamenglong road under South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) is most relevant to connect Tousem (Manipur) to east-west corridor nigh to Halflong in Assam and likewise expansion to Imphal-Moreh highway has also being remolded and the Lilong-Wangjing road is also augmented along with Wangjing to Khongkhang augmented to four-lane and two-lanes respectively at a cost of rupees 16.3 billion funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). With the culmination of these highways, the association of northeastern states meticulously Manipur with other regions of India will be of a different class. Therefore the physical connectivity has the imperative task to carry out in India's Act East Policy for the development of the State Manipur in particular and India in general; as the exporting of Manipur's local products be it agricultural products, handloom products or be it the purpose of travelling for tourism, business or medical purposes; the physical connectivity is significant for such exercises to be conducted. However, the conversion of LEP to AEP leads to spectacular changes in the psyche of the Manipuri people. The Manipur Government has adopted the principle of a public-private partnership (PPP) model, advocating the PPP model, the Government of Manipur (GOM) urged young people both inside and outside Manipur to participate dexterously in AEP, Manipur's effort to improve physical connectivity by stretching national highway to the border town of Moreh in Manipur to expedite trade and commerce, and physical infrastructure that has opened a multi-story shopping complex at the Moreh to facilitate the trade of various products fabricated at Manipur via Myanmar and other projects such as the construction of guest houses and the inception of border hats, however, exhibits the endeavor of Manipur.

The effort to grab the advantage from the AEP can be seen in various projects such as the inception of the Mission for Economic Empowerment of Traditional Artisans and Craftsmen (MEETAC) for promotion of the traditional art and crafts of Manipur to economically elevate, Centre for Entrepreneurship and Skill Development was instituted under the School of Social Sciences in 2014 as a catalyst for the advancement and augmentation of entrepreneurship and skills development activities at Manipur. The 2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit was held in Guwahati on February 3, 2019, with the theme "Connectivity: The Path to Shared Prosperity", where the Chief Minister of Manipur N. Biren Singh urged domestic and foreign investors to come to Manipur for the venture and ensured that the state will do every conceivable effort to ensure productive investments in the state. This in a way portrays Manipur's thirst on the advancement path through AEP.

Manipur as a gateway to Southeast Asia shares contiguity not only in terms of region, also in culture, customs, and food habits, and is all around connected by the Imphal International Airport, which in a way depicts the untapped extraordinary potential to thicken its relationship with Southeast Asian countries in particular and throughout the Pacific Rim. There has been a vigorous attempt to discover the potential of the Northeastern region of India by intensifying people-to-people affinity and fortifying the relations of civilizational under the framework of AEP. AEP has a huge potential and its impact on the state's socio-economic situation can have a long-term positive impact if executed proficiently.

III. WHAT DOES INDIA'S ACT EAST POLICY MEAN FOR MANIPUR?

With the pursuit of an aggressive India's AEP, Manipur and other states in northeast India have been battered by prodigious infrastructures notably the extractive industry, hydroelectric power projects and other plans. To facilitate this process of projects, a series of actions have been formulated and are also associated with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) that lead to encroachment of land and resources. The World Bank is financing 400 kV high voltage transmission and distribution lines in Manipur, The Asian Development Bank focuses on financing road projects in Manipur and throughout the region, and The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is preparing to finance the Loktak 66 MW Downstream hydroelectric power plant in Manipur. At the Northeast Business summit held from 21st-22nd November 2017 at least 39 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with several Southeast Asian countries and companies at Imphal. The

Memorandum of Understanding incorporates such as Oil pipelines from Numaligarh (Assam) to Imphal (Manipur), mining of chromium and limestone, etc likewise also signed MOU with the North Eastern Electric Power Cooperation on 28 August 2014 notably 67 MW Khongnem Chakha, 60 MW Irang HEP, 51 MW Tuivai, and 190 MW Pabram HEP projects on the Barak River, Iran River, and Tuivai River in Manipur. The above inscribed are named as an action plan to achieve the goals of sustainable development and climate change mitigation, rather such projects are simply antagonistic to sustainable development and are forestalled by the people of Manipur as those projects will only prompt to unsustainable development and alienation of land and natural resources, by constructing dams over the rivers in Manipur and by mining and extraction of fossil fuels (oil and gas) in the state. Moreover railway work, a total of 19,135 hectares of forest reserves has been deflected as stated by Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) without the consent of the indigenous people of Manipur which apparently demonstrates the decision-making process to be subverted by the implementation of development projects which affect people's land and natural resources.

The Indian Government's approval of the Dutch-based Jubilant Oil and Gas Private Limited by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas of India for exploration and drilling in the Manipur oil block in 2010 was given regardless of people's consultation and without prior approval. Since May 2017, Oil India Limited has conducted seismic surveys in the villages of Khaidem, Moidangpok, and Sangaitel around Imphal, West district despite many objections from villagers. Consent of deforestation has been passed by the Ministry of Forestry, GOM, and GOI for 111 kilometers for the Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal railway, without consulting and recognizing their rights; since indigenous peoples are not given a legitimate role in the decision-making process for their lands, forests, and resources at Manipur this emphatically raises question- How will AEP be successfully implemented if it goes against the will of native People of Manipur? It becomes rational for indigenous people to revolt against the government but due to certain laws related to oil exploration, drilling, and processing, such as the Oil Fields (Regulation and Development) Act of 1948, the Oil Industry Act (Development) 1974, Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Acquisition of Right to User in Land), Act 1962, The Oil Fields Act of 1948 the indigenous people are ill-equipped to handle the situation as these laws nurtures rights to the central government, it does not contain provisions that recognize the community's rights of the people in their land and grants rights to the central government in terms of minerals, and there is no such provision for consultation with communities. Such process of oil exploration, mining, and dam construction in the sense typify rejection of the voices of the people and their right to manage their resources. Thus the scenario of the Manipur emphatically portrays the nature of relations between the state and the central government, the clear dependence of the first on the latter for finance, and other reasons for power. Beyond the dominance of natural resources by both central and state governments there are certain pernicious issues which Manipur have to deal with notably the issues of drug trafficking and Migration.

After the signing of the cross-border trade agreement between India and Myanmar in 1995 official trade has slowed for years, while illicit trade is flourishing in the border areas of Moreh and Tamu. Soaring in illicit trade, especially drug trafficking is predominantly responsible for the rapid deterioration of the social ambiance of the state. Various synthesis for heroin production from raw opium is smuggled from Kolkata and other parts of the country to Tamu (Myanmar) and then to Moreh (Manipur) and other northeastern region of India via Manipur. Also Myanmar is the second-largest opium producer in the world after Afghanistan, also a part of the Golden triangle. It had an allegation that the military junta that operates in Myanmar finances to aggrandize drug trafficking in the country since it didn't have other sources for income. Under international pressure, the area of opium cultivation in Myanmar shrank from 161,012 hectares in 1991 to 130,300 hectares in 1998. Countries like Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia took drug trafficking solemnly in their territories and took efficacious steps to forestall it; whereas Manipur became an alternative route for drug smugglers in the late 1970s and early 1980s because of its proximity to the Golden Triangle. Until the late 1980s although opium was practically non-existent still Manipur became a consumer state precisely the drug heroin no. 4; the quintessence form of heroin is available in the state at moderate prices. With the advent of AEP drug trafficking emerges to be a serious headache for Manipur and northeastern states bordering Myanmar.

Apart from drug trafficking migration also plays a cardinal role in the altering demographic of Manipur. Traditionally Manipur's native population has been a marginal player in the cross-border trade sector. Moreh since a long time encouraged small-scale trade between residents; however, the town has filled in as a significant hub in greater commercial networks barely, since the mid-1960s, when merchants from terrain India's; the abused Diasporas in Myanmar started settling, Marwari and Punjabi families played a significant job however the most sizable were the Tamils from the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, who had developed just from 200 in the mid-1960s to 13,000 in 1980. The dependence networks of mainland people against kinship ties made virtually challenging for indigenous people to indulge themselves in the market since the indigenous people, precisely the tribal's continually suffer from a lack of economy as the state does not have a tradition of capitalist trade or wide-range trading. The concern lies with the risk of influx of migrants from distinct Indian

states over the past 65 years, with the risk of minority manipulation; keeping this concern at the core even led to pass three bills by the Manipur State Assembly, intending to protect indigenous people's right on 2015 notably:

- The Manipur Peoples Protection Bill-2015
- The Manipur Land Revenue & Land Reforms (Seventh Amendment) Bill-2015
- The Manipur Shops & Establishment (Second Amendment) Bill-2015

Migrants now dominate the market; they now own lands in large parts of the Manipur; they even wedded indigenous girls to affirm their land rights. Risks increments with the commencement of projects-roads and railways under the framework of LEP or AEP as it embolden a people to people contact.

IV. IMPEDIMENTS FOR THE SMOOTH FUNCTIONING OF AEP

4.1 Insurgency

The extremist associations run their very own administration conspicuously known as Under-Ground (UG) government in Manipur. Which is pretty much parallel to the equitably chosen government. These underground governments are sufficiently able to meddle in the internal affairs of the state. For instance, the Federal Government of Nagaland is the government of the NSCN-IM (Nagaland Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah), the jurisdiction of NSCN-IM stretches out not exclusively to Nagaland yet in addition to all Naga-populated areas in the northeast, including Manipur. They commandingly extort money from the people in the form of tax; concerning the issue, the Central government and the GOM appealed to the NSCN-IM to halt a wide range of extortion in Nagaland and parts of Manipur saying such exercises are not worthy from a group that has consented to an agreement at a gathering held in New Delhi. However, the NSCN-IM group driven by senior pioneer V.S Atem invalidated the government. These parallel governments confound the common people of Manipur. Underground associations make endeavors to topple the democratically chosen government; accordingly, there is a contention and tussle between the government Vs underground associations. Because of the disastrous and detrimental that ejects because of the conflict, 741 civilians and 230 security workforce, and 1480 non-state actors, as a whole 2451 perished from 2005 to 17th April 2016. That is to say, folks of Manipur have to endure a lot, and their lives turn out to be edgy. Additionally, there are phony encounters by the security forces in Manipur for the sake of insurrection. Expressly, many innocent people died in operations against the insurgency. The Right to Life, Liberty, and Security of an individual as enshrined in Article 3 of the United Human Rights Declaration is dishonored in the counter-insurgency operations. People of Manipur have been experiencing maladministration in sorts of accountability, responsibility, and credibility which eventually prompts lawlessness in the society.

Ethnically speaking, the relations of the three main ethnic groups of Manipur namely Meities, Nagas, and Kukis are much denser to the people of northern Myanmar, than those from the mainland of India and the state's accession to India in 1949 was under drastic pressure from the Indian government. These problems are exacerbated by economic estrangement, as the partition has detached Manipur's deep-rooted natural trade relation with its neighbours precisely Myanmar. In the late 1970s, Meitei insurgencies cropped up at Imphal and around the valley where Delhi riposted by forwarding belligerent paramilitary campaigns endorsed by the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, which authorized the use of lethal force by the central security forces against citizens who transgress laws or regulations. The law endorsed by the central government has paralyzed the fundamentals of criminal justice in the operation of counter-insurgency in Manipur while creating a "Culture of impunity" for military people, which is also extended to state security personnel.

This domineering demeanor of the central government wrought as an ideological justification for underground groups to fight against the ill-treatment of the state. The menace of violence still obliges traders not to invest time and money and not to take personal hazard to mold and transmit relations with various actors in the changing rebel landscape of Manipur.

4.2 Militarization

Manipur has been encountering low-intensity armed conflict since Raja Budhachandra was dragooned to sign a merger agreement to India in 1949. The merger was repudiated by the natives since it was not addressed and ratified by the Manipur Legislative Council, which was founded in 1948 with an adult franchise. Responding to the people's efforts to assert their right to self-determination, the Indian government mobilized its troops and then issued special laws, endorsed by the Armed Forces (Special Powers) of 1958, which restricted basic rights, including compensation rights for violations of other rights, including killing by civil servants. The law obtruded by the central government patronized under Armed Forces (Special Powers) 1958, acknowledged Manipur as a disturbed area and authorized extensive military operations, indeed vouchsafed even a non-commissioned officer to kill on whomever they suspect with guaranteed immunity. The scale of military operations heightened with the end goal of anti-rebel operations in the 1990s, thereafter at least four divisions and 270 paramilitary companies were installed in the state. Seemingly today there is a military camp nigh to the inhabited areas of Manipur. Certain areas of the state security unit surpass the area of land employed by the

villagers. As an illustration, security forces from the Sangakpham market to the Koirengei duck farm in Heingang Constituency, the distance around 5.5 kilometers away occupy about 470 hectares of land. Impacts of militarization have been detrimental for the common people of Manipur; it has significantly sabotaged people's physical and mental integrity and has jeopardized the existence of the entire population of Manipur. Activities of security forces such as rape, torture, arbitrary deportation, detention and seizure of agricultural land, sacred cultural and hilly sites in residential areas, or restrictions on fishing, agriculture, and other activities in forests and wetlands have triggered threats to the state's population. Land usurpation for stationing military units is the cause of major difficulties and repeated frustration, as in the case of the encroachment of around 200 hectares of land by massive Assam Rifle unit in the village of Mahakabui in the Senapati district. The land is monopolized regardless of its value and consent of the indigenous people. The 8th Assam rifles had seized Chinga hill which is weighed as a sacred place by the Meitei people, furthermore, engrossed a section of land within the campus of Manipur University, which was once the site of the King Gambhirsing's Royal Palace and the Central Reserve Police has occupied Tombisana School that lies in the core of Imphal. Where military camps were built, villagers not only lost their land but are also ached by numerous curtailments that devastate their livelihoods. 7th Assam rifles in Thanga Karang and Sendra have utterly forbidden fishing on Loktak Lake after dark and are strictly regulated at other hours.

Intensive artillery and small arms training has caused a fatality and has harmed residents and their domestic pets and cattle. Villagers submitted a petition to the Guwahati High Court in 1997, 1998 respectively; the court ordained the army to switch the location for shooting practice from time to time and to pay compensation to the victims and casualties, notwithstanding the order has been violated. Over time, the military is opened up in Manipur to protect unsustainable and destructive government projects aggravated by the aggressive push of the AEP. Projects such as the Loktak hydroelectric power plant project that dislodged a massive number of people in the districts of Thoubal and Bishenpur devoid of remittance and immense devastation of Loktak wetlands is being guarded by Central Reserve Police Forces (CRPF) and Border Security Forces (BSF). The construction of Mapithel Dam of the Thoubal Multipurpose projects in the Ukhrul district that has been emphatically opposed by the native residents of Manipur has been protected by the Assam Rifles and Indian Reserve Battalion. Further on Assam Rifles has promulgated to protect the construction of the Tipaimukh dam, which has been oppugnant by residents for more than two decades. The reason above is that some socio-political factors create impediments for the smooth functioning of the business environment or say that they don't please the business climate; Creates aghast scenario in the investor's mind.

V. CONCLUSION

One of the linchpins of India's strategy has been to build up the country financially and technologically. From the genesis of regional cooperation, economic cooperation among neighboring countries is turning into a prevailing component of the world's economy. India's strategy has likewise been practicing these collaborative oriented measures to reestablish interfaces and coordinate India with its quick and expanded neighborhood explicitly with the nations of South East Asia under the agenda of AEP. The revamping of Look East Policy to Act East Policy by Modi is similarly a message that India is progressively eager to play an increasingly dynamic and conspicuous key job by improving diplomacy with East and Southeast Asia.

However, India's AEP has shown a little useful impact on the region's development in terms of economic and commercial revivification. Having the vision of a prosperous Northeast India associated with the nations of Southeast Asia, the AEP conceives the development of correspondence, trade and commerce that would empower the general population in the region to essentially improve their satisfaction of needs. On the contrary, people from the Northeastern region is yet to encounter any such advantages, and still experiences the ill effects of the old issue of economic. Apart from investment, infrastructure and tourism even border trade are yet to gain momentum. The sensational trade exchange with India's eastern neighbors has had almost no effect on Northeast India. A large portion of this trade exchange extension has not occurred due to the lack of connectivity routes, which was supposed to be fulfilled under the framework of AEP. It would not be off-base to argue that Northeast India has by and by underestimated. It is needlessly important to be stressed that the physical infrastructure for encouraging trade and economic connections between the Northeast and the neighboring nations is to a great extent missing. Infrastructure bottlenecks and deferrals at border points add generously to the exchange cost in the International trade exchange and appallingly with shut Border the Northeastern region of India becomes tough for trade expansion strategy with eastern neighbors via land.

As the argument above shows the Northeast region has other forms and optimistic/pessimistic aspects from the AEP. Regardless as this research is concerned; it is ought to be sufficiently genuine to use the appropriate meaning of advancement for the equivalent dissemination of regional advantage to the people of the nation; improvement ought not to be methods for producing salt for the already injured general population, but the effective production of medicine which has the potential to cure and life-expanding prospect by perceiving social esteem and their goal else it will be "Pie in the sky". AEP transfigures the Northeastern region to better

stage into the international arena; gives enthusiastic exertion with most extreme consideration to persuade the financially hit zone for premium profit by the arrangements of the AEP framework; nonetheless possesses a risk more to be rhetoric if not implemented efficiently. By improving trade policies, the government has implemented various infrastructure development projects at national and international levels to improve physical connectivity all such precautions must be effectively enforced. AEP is a sensitive issue today in the Northeastern region, particularly in Manipur. The policies along with people of this region are not solid and steady; meticulously are not prepared. The nonattendance of local consultation and participation certainly to be sure has made the visualization on the AEP vague. In any case, this vital missing connection has the capability of deferring and even triggers optimistic projects. The hype of AEP is crucial for India's achievement in foreign policy initiatives taken up by the Modi Government to connect with the Asian nations especially the south-East Asian nations. Significantly, the central government is ought to be proactive along with local actors as Manipur holds a crossroad position in the AEP. If one looks from Delhi towards the east; Manipur is at the tip of the border and if looks towards New Delhi from South-East Asian nations India starts with Manipur in terms of the trade routes via land surface. That is the reason Manipur being flagship amongst the most significant local actor under the framework of AEP. The vital position of Manipur in the AEP, particularly at a practical level, should be comprehended by the stakeholders in both states as well as the central government. Hence the socio-political issues and the physical infrastructure such as roads and railway links in Manipur should be improved. First and foremost as all these courses of action or arrangements are made; there is a change for the upgrade of cross-border trade among India and South-East Asian nations through Moreh in Manipur. In a nutshell until and unless the socio-political circumstance in the Northeastern area and especially Manipur is improved the dynamic AEP of India can hold back at some point if not obliterate.

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