

## Abstract

### Act East Policy and Beyond Implications for Assam

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In this presentation, a number of aspects of the NER will be touched upon. First, the nature of the North East and how it figures in the usual categorisation of economic entities. It is often not realised that while the NER is discussed as one geographical entity, there is a considerable economic and cultural heterogeneity in these states. Here, the specific focus will be on Assam and its relation to the other states of the NER. Second, discussion of the “Act East” policy must start with a discussion of the former “Look East” policy as enunciated in vision 2020 document of NER. The vision document discussed intensively the states of the NER and their interrelationship (or the lack of it). Here, the focus will be on understanding the implications of “Act East” policy and how cultural, political, security and infrastructural constraints dictate the articulation any “Act East” policy which tries to link Assam to the ASEAN formation. Third, there will be some discussion of how the emergence of ASEAN in recent years must change the traditional approach of the former “Look East” policy. The traditional “Look East” policy was not originally focused on the NER. In particular, the recent democratisation of Myanmar and the move of ASEAN towards economic union dictates some changes in looking at the NER in relation to the states of ASEAN. Again, here the focus will be on how the “Act East” policy must be formulated in order to understand these new economic and diplomatic changes.