

ABSTRACT OF PRESENTATIONS

National Conference on “MAINSTREAMING THE NER”-12-13Feb,
16, KOHIMA, NAGALAND

SESSION III: Infrastructure, Trade and Security

3:10-3:30 Theme 1: Trade and Industrialization: The Act East policy and India's neighbors-
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“Development of India’s north eastern region (NER) is an important policy agenda of the government. It is also considered as an integral part of her Look East policy started in early 1990s, now modified and renamed as Act East policy. More than anything else, the Act East Policy is an indication of India’s renewed and larger concerns about NER as well as her outward-looking orientation in foreign trade policy with respect to countries of East and Southeast Asia. Besides trade, the Policy also gives emphasis to engage with them culturally and strategically. With Act East policy in place, development of NER is also expected to play the important role of a gateway or at least a window to the East and Southeast Asia. AEDR as a policy research and consultancy organization has been working on various development aspects of NER including industrialization and trade. Evidence by now suggests that the region is still missing out the economic growth drive required to make it a good partner of the Act East Policy. In this paper, we discuss the importance of industrialization and trade as the key issues for achieving these expectations. We argue that before NER can become the gateway for East and Southeast Asia, it needs to be pulled upward towards the national levels in terms of various indicators of development so as to bring it into the economic mainstream. For this, it is necessary that the region first undergoes a rigorous process of structural transformation by programs of industrialization and infrastructure development. Lastly, we argue that the trading capacity of NER largely depends on the state of its internal and external connectivity in terms of various modes of transportation and communication. It is no doubt a herculean task, but well begun may be half done. “