

INTERPRETING INDIA'S ACT EAST POLICY THROUGH FUNCTIONALIST THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The Look East Policy introduced in the 1990s during P.M. Narasimha Rao was revived in 2014, under P.M. Narendra Modi and renamed as the "Act East Policy" stressing on the need to be more "active" in extending relations and integrating with India's extended neighboring countries of the Asia Pacific region. The Act East Policy is analyzed and understood through the functionalist perspective, on how Act East Policy uses non-political factors such as economy, social and culture as its objectives in its attempt to promote cooperation with the countries of the Asia Pacific region, and also to integrate regionally through regional organizations like the ASEAN. The recent development like the implementation of Free Trade Agreement on Investment and Services between India and ASEAN in the economic aspect proves the importance of non-political sector which are mutually beneficial to all participating states in seeking integration. Regional integration is of great importance to India and its neighboring countries to counter the rise of China in this region. KEYWORDS: Regional Integration, Functionalism, Soft Power, Act East Policy, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Northeast India.

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