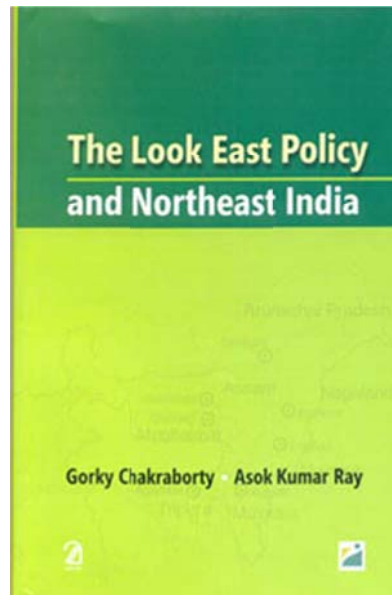


The Look East Policy and Northeast India

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Re-scaling of space has been an inseparable part of the capitalist development process. While the search for newer markets necessitates capitalism to transcend space, it simultaneously also requires *spatial fixes* for each regime of accumulation. It is a multi-scalar dialectical process which scholars have ascribed as *annihilation of space by time* and *space-time compression*. Among other factors, the interplay of both these processes related to time and space results in conditions for construction and re-construction of space in the form of territories. The contemporary phase of globalization is also a part of this *longue duree*.

Re-scaling of space in the form of territories has also been an inherent part of Northeast India. From the perspective of the state there has been varying justifications e.g. whereas revenue generation along with trade has been the sole criterion for the colonial state, it has been politico-administrative for the post-colonial Indian state. Till the 1950's, the region was viewed within the anthropological paradigm. In the 1960's, the Indo-Chinese War (1962) marked a shift of the region towards security paradigm. The 1970's marked another shift towards political paradigm. This continued till the 1980's. From the late 1980's onward NER entered into a development paradigm under neo-liberal globalization. Now, the question of trade which was hitherto stymied and ignored during the post-colonial period, gained momentum with the launch of Look East Policy and eventual North Eastern Region Vision 2020. Northeast India under these two policies was officially made a major player in trade and commerce across the frontier and even beyond to South and Southeast Asia. This offered an 'arrowhead' role to NER in the matter of regional and cross-regional trade.

This work is an exercise in understanding the above phenomenon, as to where North East stands today? Analysing the Look East Policy from the perspective of the Northeast is our main area of concern. Spread over seven chapters dealing with the issue of regional co-operation, security and governance, macro-economic trends and trade, the work concludes with a critique of the Look East Policy.