



## Research article

# Promotion of Sports in North-East India for Socio-Economic Ties: Understanding the Role of the Act East Policy in shaping Sports Infrastructure and Cultural Identity

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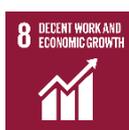
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### Abstract

The sports industry in India is evolving, with increased corporate involvement and potential for foreign investment. Historical factors, including colonial legacies and migration patterns, have shaped the region's economic landscape and resource management. India's Act East (AEP) policy, an upgrade from the previous Look East policy, aims to strengthen economic and strategic ties with Southeast Asia. This policy emphasises infrastructure development in India's Northeast region (NER), financed by international institutions, to improve connectivity with Southeast Asian countries. There is a need to study how sports can help improve the life of the region by creating employment opportunities and livelihoods among the youth and building a stronger cultural identity. It is also important to see how much the AEP has helped in promoting sports, both in building stadiums and in supporting modern and traditional games. The AEP has the potential to significantly contribute to the regional sustainability of the NER by promoting connectivity, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange with Southeast Asia. Addressing the existing challenges and ensuring inclusive and sustainable development are crucial for realizing the full potential of the policy.

**Keywords:** Act East Policy; Sports Development; Socio-Economic Impact; North-East India; Youth Empowerment.



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## Introduction

Sports have always been the ideal medium to catalyse strong life skills like teamwork, integrity, and leadership on a subconscious level. Moreover, it's a perfect mechanism for social inclusion and support for society and marginalised communities. It has also emerged as a means of livelihood through various interventions like sports leagues, fitness coaches, etc. In the last few years, sportspersons from the North East India have highlighted the immense potential of the North-East region (NER) has before the government and people. However, just like the rest of India, the North East also has its share of talented athletes who were forced to leave sports mid-career, as it is not a viable livelihood option. This, coupled with the lack of awareness among people about the livelihood opportunities available through sports, has compounded the attrition of sportspersons further.

The development of sports in the NER of India is intertwined with broader socio-economic and institutional challenges faced by the region. The area struggles with issues such as insurgency, corruption, and ineffective governance, which hinder overall development (Basumatary & Panda, 2020). Historical factors, including colonial legacies and migration patterns, have shaped the region's economic landscape and resource management (Barua, 2005). Despite reasonable achievements in human development indicators compared to the national average, the NER of India has failed to achieve commensurate economic growth. Significant disparities exist across states and between urban and rural areas (Nayak, 2009). The asymmetric development performances of states like Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland are attributed to their differing institutional structures. Manipur, in particular, faces severe challenges due to communal violence, human rights violations, and infrastructure deficiencies, which have crippled its economy and development mechanisms (Singha, 2012). The Act East Policy (AEP) by the Government of India, while having a national focus, has had profound significance and implications for the Northeast region of India. The Northeast region is situated such that it shares only 2% of its borders with the Indian mainland and the remaining 98% with various neighbouring countries, like Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, and Bhutan. (Haokip, 2010) India's AEP, an upgrade from the previous Look East policy, aims to strengthen economic and strategic ties with Southeast Asia (Palit, 2016). This policy emphasises infrastructure development in India's Northeast region, financed by international institutions, to improve connectivity with Southeast Asian countries (Yumnam, 2019). However, concerns have been raised about the policy's impact on indigenous peoples' rights and environmental sustainability in NER (Yumnam, 2019). While the policy presents opportunities for regional development and integration, its implementation requires careful consideration of local interests, such as sports and environmental concerns.

Sports play a significant role in socio-cultural development in India, contributing to national pride, unity, and economic growth (Jajo, 2016). Sports can address various socio-cultural issues among university students, including a lack of respect, honesty, and social responsibility (Ali et al., 2020). Despite these challenges, sports continue to be a powerful tool for development in India, fostering physical health, mental agility, and socio-economic impact (Jajo, 2016; Lunawat, 2021). Sports can provide diverse

career opportunities and contribute to sustainable livelihoods. Lifestyle entrepreneurs who turn their sports passion into occupations often experience improved well-being and create value for their communities (Hallmann et al., 2021). In India, the sports sector offers lucrative careers beyond playing, including sports journalism, management, and medicine (Rai, 2013). While cricket dominates the sports landscape, other sports are gaining prominence through the establishment of leagues and international successes (Lunawat, 2021). The sports industry in India is evolving, with increased corporate involvement and potential for foreign investment (Jajo, 2016).

The sports sector has a significant impact on the global economy because of its close association with other sectors such as real estate, tourism, and media & entertainment. The size of the global sports sector that comprises infrastructure, events, training, manufacturing, and retail of sports goods has been estimated to be approximately USD 595-695 billion in 2015, which is about 1% of global GDP. Further, in most of the developed countries, sports contribute to about 1-5% of their GDP (NEDFI, 2020). The potential value of the sports infrastructure market is estimated to be approximately INR 80,000 Crore. The sports industry in India has the potential to benefit a lot from the demographic dividends of India. The launch of various new leagues in the recent past has changed the face of Indian sports, allowing sportspersons to earn their livelihood through sports and showcase their talent at global events. (NEDFI, 2020)

Numerous studies have shown that active participation in sport improves community health and productivity, reduces medical expenses, imbues discipline in character, generates great leaders, and enhances social cohesion. Further, the execution of a mega-sporting event helps in developing infrastructure, generates employment, secures inflow of foreign capital, generates players and athletes, and thus contributes significantly to the economic development of a country or a region. The other significant contribution of sports and related sporting interventions is that the anti-social and crime-prone behaviour of individuals, hooliganism, and youngsters is addressed by diverting their minds, aiding rehabilitation, and development. Sporting activities and events contribute to the development of stronger social networks and more cohesive communities. Also, the diversity of sports and sporting activities (including mainstream sports and adventure sports) makes it an ideal medium to reach men and women from every age group, culture, and socio-economic background. (NEDFI, 2020).

### **Conceptual Context of the Study**

Northeast India, comprising eight states, exhibits diverse demographic characteristics with a population of 45.5 million (2011 census, GOI) representing 3.77% of India's total population, while geographically covering 8.05% of the country's area. The region is characterized by a predominantly rural population (around 84%) and a significant tribal population, especially in the hilly states. The early 1990s witnessed a strategic shift in India's foreign policy with the introduction of the Look (Act) East Policy. The policy was conceptualised originally to meet the challenges of the post-Cold War world politics. The idea that Northeast India can develop in the process of the implementation of the policy and can be a gateway to South East Asia was realised

rather late in the early part of the twenty-first century. Since then, the expectations around the Look (Act) East Policy have been remarkable. The change in nomenclature to 'Act East' in 2014 has further strengthened the hope about the potential impact of the policy in Northeast India.

However, without addressing the issues of concern within Northeast India and cultivating sufficient local resources, it remains impossible for the states in the Northeast to abruptly hope for redemption across the mountains from Southeast Asia. Against this backdrop, the present study aims to comprehend the implications of the policy for Northeast India, understanding the prospect of participation of the North-Eastern states in promoting sports culture and development of sports infrastructure, and examining the perspective of socio-economic benefits and strengthening international tie-ups.

India's 'Act East' policy aims to deepen India's engagement with Southeast Asia. There are specific relevance and implications of the Act East strategy for Southeast Asia. While India's engagement with ASEAN is likely to become more comprehensive and strategic over time, the region would need to be prepared for the implications of India playing a more active role in regional affairs (Palit, 2016). India's AEP has implications for the region, including concerns over indigenous rights and environmental sustainability. The policy is a clear manifestation of the aggressive pursuit of neoliberal policies across India's Northeast. The intent, decision-making processes, and implications of the policy led to many concerns across the region. The massive infrastructure push, which is financed by the international financial institutions, in implementing the policy and subsequently targeting people's land and natural resources, undermines the indigenous peoples' land and natural resources, and their rights and environmental sustainability. (Yumnam, 2019)

**Table 1:** Schools without Playground Facilities

State	Rural				Urban			
	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary
Arunachal	66.46	33.12	22.94	18.02	60.81	35.29	21.84	8.00
Assam	66.31	48.68	39.42	35.35	83.86	68.60	52.46	40.59
Manipur	58.38	40.83	30.59	32.26	54.11	40.21	32.32	28.00
Meghalaya	89.94	52.05	35.68	13.51	64.88	53.33	38.34	34.88
Mizoram	84.33	86.22	88.40	33.33	88.62	81.15	88.89	86.92
Nagaland	80.55	53.25	32.82	11.11	86.29	60.88	26.60	28.88
Sikkim	58.63	26.32	18.52	2.56	100.00	100.00	28.58	25.00

Tripura	43.10	26.60	13.81	9.94	56.90	41.38	43.90	28.85
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**\*Source:** Calculated in (%) from the Seventh All-India Educational Survey, Ministry of Human Resource Development.

### Review of Literature

Farooqi & Teckchandani (2024) have shown that through the Act East Policy, the Indian government has prioritised initiatives such as cultural festivals and academic exchanges, which serve a dual purpose: showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Northeast India and advancing cultural diplomacy. Jajo (2016) has studied how sports as an industry contributes to about one to five per cent of the GDPs of various countries. However, a lack of sports culture in India has deferred the formation of a similar industry in the country despite growing awareness, interest, and successes in various non-cricket sports at prominent international competitions. The Indian government is exploring the possibilities of allowing FDI in multi-brand retail in sports. India is hosting a series of international sporting events, which are likely to boost the retail market. Lunawat (2021) has criticised the impact of British colonialism on the dismal situation of indigenous games. As a British colony, India was introduced to the sport of cricket, and today, the Indian cricket team is the best in the world. Cricket dominates the Indian sports market; Hockey, although the national sport of India, still fails to gather the same hype and success as cricket enjoys. The Indian sports development structure was rather disorganised until the BCCI, the body governing cricket in India, launched the Indian Premier League, which initiated league culture in India and provided a model for sports. With the organisation of more sports leagues, the standard of Indian sports and its elite athletes has grown considerably. Basumatary & Panda (2020) opine that the socio-economic and developmental issues in NER do not specifically address the development of sports in the region. The problems in NER can be classified into three categories: social, economic, and governance. On the other hand, there are glaring economic issues of unemployment, lack of industrial development, infrastructural deficit, and under-utilisation of resources. There is a presence of cyclical paralysis of development in the NER of India. Lack of investment and infrastructural deficit are due to an unfriendly economic environment and inadequate industrialisation, and therefore, they have pushed the region towards unemployment. In effect, they give rise to social problems of various kinds impacting governance. A Mili (2016) conducted a study among four north-eastern states, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, and Assam, and found that the states have not implemented a comprehensive sports policy. Though they have drafted, overall implementation in real terms revealed that only the Assam government exercised effective control over the state's 'Olympic Associations' and 'Sports Federations' as compared to the rest of the three states. It was also found that for promoting physical education and sports, except for Assam, the remaining states have not waived tax on sports goods, which helps in promoting physical education and sports in the region. Further, it revealed that the state governments of each of the four states did not provide sufficient financial support for the promotion of physical education and sports

at schools, colleges, and universities. Hursh Kajiloni (2022) found that limited exposure, a minimum number of tournaments, and a lack of infrastructure are also seen as the causes of poor performances. Benson's theory of development assets on 'Positive Youth Development' as one of the solutions for the athlete's development, at the same time, the need for the right infrastructure, proper identification of athletes at the grassroots level, sports education, and medical facilities go hand in hand are a necessity. There is also an urgent need to facilitate the opportunities when given and build a platform to keep the spirit of sportsmanship.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Northeast India has produced many talented athletes and boasts a rich tradition of local sports. However, the region faces many problems, like poor infrastructure, a lack of support, and limited opportunities to grow sports. Even though the AEP is meant to prove connections with Southeast Asia, its role in improving sports facilities and promoting local identity is not clearly understood. Therefore, it is necessary to study how sports can help improve the life of the region by creating employment opportunities and livelihoods among the youth and building a stronger cultural identity. It is also important to see how much the AEP has helped in promoting sports, both in building stadiums and in supporting modern and traditional games.

### **Research Objectives**

- i. To understand the 'Act East Policy' in the context of regional sustainability in NER.
- ii. To assess how the promotion of sports contributes to socio-economic development and livelihood opportunities among the youths in the NER.
- iii. To assess the contribution of the Act East Policy to sports infrastructure in NER with a focus on enhancing regional and international ties.

### **Research Approach**

A comprehensive and descriptive research was undertaken to understand the Act East Policy and to prove its connections with its role in improving sports facilities and promoting local identity. Secondary data was taken into consideration for the objectives of the study. To understand the sports sector in India as well as in NER, the challenges faced by athletes to achieve excellence and the expectations of stakeholders, the Act East Policy with reference to Niti Aayog; National Skill Development Agency (NSDA); North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFI); The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); North East Council (NEC); Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) were taken into consideration for the study. Various leading practices from India and outside were studied to understand trends in the market for the development of sports, and learnings were derived from them while concluding the study and proposing the initial recommendations.

### **Research Findings**

## **The 'Act East Policy' in the context of regional sustainability in North East India**

The AEP, with its focus on NER, aims to promote regional sustainability through increased connectivity, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange with Southeast Asia. By integrating the NER with the broader Indo-Pacific region, the policy seeks to foster economic growth, enhance India's strategic influence, and address the region's historical neglect. However, challenges related to infrastructure development, security, and socio-economic disparities need to be addressed to ensure the policy's success and the region's sustainable development.

### **Connectivity and Infrastructure Development**

The AEP recognizes the NER's strategic importance as a gateway to Southeast Asia and aims to leverage this potential for regional development. The policy prioritizes infrastructure development in the NER, including roads, railways, waterways, and digital connectivity, to improve trade and movement of people.

### **Economic Cooperation and Trade**

The policy seeks to integrate the NER's economy with Southeast Asia through increased trade, investment, and joint ventures. It aims to provide the NER with access to new markets in Southeast Asia and vice versa, fostering economic growth in the region. The policy also encourages the development of natural resources in the NER in a sustainable manner, aligning with regional development goals.

### **Cultural Exchange and People-to-People Contact**

The AEP promotes cultural exchanges, academic collaborations, and tourism to foster stronger ties between the NER and Southeast Asia. It also aims to showcase the NER's rich cultural heritage and promote it as a tourist destination, contributing to its economic development.

### **Addressing Challenges and Ensuring Sustainability**

The policy acknowledges the security challenges in the NER and seeks to address them through increased cooperation with neighbouring countries and improved border management. It is crucial to address the socio-economic disparities within the NER and ensure that the benefits of the AEP are shared equitably across all communities. The policy needs to prioritize sustainable development practices, ensuring that economic growth does not come at the cost of environmental degradation or social inequalities.

### **Contribution of sport towards socio-economic development and livelihood opportunities among the youths in the region**

Sports play a crucial strategic role in NER, contributing to economic development, social integration, and regional identity. Football has seen significant growth in the region due to factors like institutional support, economic incentives, and cultural affinity (Rokozelie, 2023). Sports and athletes from the Northeast have been instrumental in combating xenophobia and promoting national unity (Subba, 2013). The cultural significance of sports in Northeast India is deeply rooted in tribal traditions

and societal values. Traditional games among the Tangkhul Nagas foster community cohesion, preserve cultural heritage, and transmit knowledge across generations (Shimray, 2024). The cultural landscape of NER is characterised by rich folklore, traditional arts, and historical narratives that reflect the interconnectedness of tribal and non-tribal populations (Dutta, 2012). These cultural elements, including sports and games, serve as vital expressions that sustain indigenous identities and contribute to the broader discourse on cultural preservation and diversity in the region (Shimray, 2024; Andrew, 2025).

Sports offer diverse career opportunities in India, extending beyond traditional athletic roles to include sports journalism, management, medicine, and goods manufacturing (Rai, 2013). The field provides options in both the government and private sectors, with various degrees and diploma programs available (Ramteke, 2022). Sports universities in India play a crucial role in developing the nation's sporting ecosystem by integrating physical education, athletic training, and academic achievement (Kumar et al., 2025). These institutions focus on sports science, coaching, and management, contributing to the national sports pipeline. Education is fundamental to skill development, fostering innovation and economic growth (Singh, 2015). The Khelo India program aims to revive India's sports culture at the grassroots level, promoting personality and community development (Singh & Bali, 2020). Skill development research in India highlights the importance of institutions like NSDA and PMKVJ, the need for integrating skills with secondary education, and the role of skill development in women's empowerment (Cabral & Dhar, 2019).

**‘Act East Policy’ towards enhancing sports infrastructure in North-East India, boosting regional and international ties**

The AEP aims to develop India's NER as a gateway for trade with Southeast Asia, focusing on infrastructure development and connectivity (Barua, 2020; Chiru, 2017). The region's strategic importance is further emphasised in India's Act East policy, which aims to foster closer engagement with Southeast Asia and integrate the Northeast with the rest of India (Phukrem, 2019). While the policy prioritises physical infrastructure over social development, it faces contestation from local communities concerned about becoming merely a transit hub (Barua, 2020). The success of the AEP depends on addressing challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and poor infrastructure in the NER (Chiru, 2017). Critics argue that new national road infrastructure often bypasses local economies, emphasising the need to link rural infrastructure with broader markets (Ziipao, 2018). Realising the potential of the Act East Policy requires improving connectivity within the region and with the rest of India, as well as developing industries, services, and institutions. A comprehensive long-term plan is necessary to balance infrastructure development with socio-political stability and ecological concerns (Nath & Kumar, 2017). The present condition of the development of sports infrastructure is mere as exemplified in Table 2:

**Table 2:** Sports Facility and Infrastructure in NE States

<b>Sports Facility</b>	Assam	Arunachal	Nagaland	Mizoram	Manipur	Meghalaya	Tripura	Sikkim
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Cricket	03	01	01	00	00	01	01	00
Football	02	06	01	02	01	01	00	03
Athletics	01	01	00	00	01	00	00	00
Multi-Purpose	10	19	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	01

\*NA: Data unavailable.

India has a promising economy with a thriving middle class that has the capacity and desire to spend on, participate in, and support sports. As the country looks to host more mega sporting events, having successfully hosted the U-17 FIFA World Cup, Men's Hockey World Cup, and the Commonwealth Games, it is necessary for all stakeholders to truly invest in the nation's relationship with sports. With better guidelines for PPPs, legislation that brings the various sports authorities under one roof, and increased accessibility to quality sporting facilities at the local level, India has the potential to become a formidable sporting nation.

The emphasis on promoting sports and physical education from the school level, as enunciated in the National Sports Policy, 2008, through to college and beyond, will require a large pool of trainers and coaches in the country, not to mention related professions such as sports medicine and physical therapy. The innate physical and sporting abilities of people in the northeast could be channelled into this arena. In Northeast India, sports have become an important tool for helping young people grow socially and economically. They offer more than just physical activity; they also help with community development, identity building, and job creation. Traditional games played by tribal communities like the Tangkhul Nagas are not just games but are ways to bring people together, teach important values, and pass on traditions (Shimray, 2004). These games help preserve cultural identity and bring different communities closer. Famous athletes from the region like Mary Kom, Mirabai Chanu, and Lovlina Borgohain have shown that young people from Northeast India can succeed at the highest level. Their achievements not only bring pride to the region but also help dispel negative stereotypes and promote unity between the rest of India (Subba, 2013).

**Table 2:** Various Indicators of NE States

<b>State</b>	<b>Area (sq. km) 2001</b>	<b>Popul. (lakhs) 2001</b>	<b>Literacy (%) 2001</b>	<b>Infant mortality rate (per 000) 2005-06</b>	<b>Poverty ratio based on MRP . 2004-05</b>	<b>Per capita GSDP (Rs) 2004-05</b>	<b>Road length (km/100 0 sq. km.) area 2002</b>
Arunachal Pradesh	83,743	10.98	54.3	61	13.4	21,919	219.3

Assam	78,438	266.55	64.3	66	15.0	15,661	1140.9
Manipur	22,327	22.94	70.5	30	13.2	16,299	512.1
Meghalaya	22,429	23.19	62.6	45	14.1	20,775	426.5
Mizoram	22,081	8.98	88.8	34	9.5	30,357+	229.8
Nagaland	16,579	19.90	66.6	38	16.5	26,129+	1267.9
Sikkim	7,098	5.41	68.8	34	15.2	26,215	284.4
Tripura	10,486	31.99	73.2	52	14.4	24,984++	1554.1
NER States	262179	389.84	68.5	45#	13.9#	18,032	660.9
India	328724 0	10,287.3 7	64.8	57	23.6	25,944*	755.4

**Table Sources:** Statistical Abstract of India (2006), downloaded from [www.mospi.nic.in](http://www.mospi.nic.in)  
NEDFI Data Quarterly (2005) <http://www.planningcommission.nic>

**Note:** # Simple averages used for NER; + Refers to estimate per capita GSDP for 2003-04 and 2004-05; ++ refers to its estimated value for 2004-05; \* Per capita GDP at factor cost (RE) from RBI, Handbook of Statistics on the Indian Economy, 2005-06.

Economically, sports create many job opportunities. Today, sports careers go beyond playing the game. Young people can now work as coaches, trainers, journalists, event managers, and even in sports medicine and manufacturing (Rai, 2013; Ramteke, 2022). This opens up a range of livelihood options. Government programs like Kelo India support young talent at the grassroots level. These initiatives aim to make sports popular in schools and communities and to develop life skills. (Singh & Bali, 2020). Sports universities and training centres also offer degrees in sports science, coaching, and management, combining physical training with education. However, many training programs do not match the real needs of the job market. Poor quality training, lack of experienced teachers, and outdated materials often reduce the usefulness of skill development programs. Also, many sports facilities are limited to cities and towns, leaving rural youth behind (Cabral & Dhar, 2019).

The AEP is a major policy by the Indian government that aims to connect Northeast India with countries in Southeast Asia. While the policy mainly focuses on trade and roads, it also affects sports development in the region. There has been a push to build roads, stadiums, and training centres in Northeast India. Projects like the Indo-Myanmar highway and the Kaladan transport project improved the region's connectivity with neighbouring countries. These developments open the door for sports diplomacy, using ways to improve international friendships. However, there are some problems too. Many local people feel that the focus is only on building roads and not improving schools, jobs, or healthcare (Barua, 2020). Some infrastructure projects pass through rural areas without helping the local communities. This can lead to feelings of exclusion (Zipao, 2018). Thus, to make the AEP truly successful for sports, the government should not just build roads and stadiums but also focus on training athletes, hiring coaches, and building community-level sports facilities. The policy can yield rich dividends only when it is realised by all stakeholders, both nationally and internationally, that 'South East Asia Begins where North East India ends' (Aiyar, 2008 b).

## **Conclusion**

The study highlights the importance of the AEP, which is helping to improve roads, buildings, and transport in the region. These developments make it easier to organise sports events and connect Northeast India with Southeast Asian countries. However, the benefits of these improvements are not always shared equally, especially in rural and tribal areas. If local people are not included in the developmental plans, they may not gain much from these projects. To get the best result from sports and government policies, there needs to be better planning, more investment in education and training, and more focus on including women and rural communities in sports. It is important to support sports at the grassroots level, in villages, small towns and schools. Programs like Khelo India should be made stronger and reach more young people. Local competitions can help discover hidden talent in remote areas and give young people a chance to shine. Sports training centres should be well-equipped and have qualified coaches. Finally, sports can be a bridge to other countries. The government should support international sports events and training programs that bring together athletes from Northeast India and Southeast Asia.

Sports form an important pillar of India's holistic growth. Hence, the foundations of this integral sector cannot be subpar. In order to place India firmly on the path to sports supremacy, due consideration must be given by ecosystem stakeholders to the state of sports infrastructure in India and the different hurdles that hinder its development. The designation and usage of SSZ's will go a long way towards ensuring a dedicated approach to infrastructure development by addressing some of the key challenges facing the industry today. By incorporating infrastructure planning in sports initiatives, encouraging and easing the path to PPP's, and investing in technological upgrades to sports facilities, the sports sector in India can be equipped with the capacity and resources needed to achieve national long-term objectives.

In conclusion, the AEP has the potential to significantly contribute to the regional sustainability of the NER by promoting connectivity, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange with Southeast Asia. However, addressing the existing challenges and ensuring inclusive and sustainable development are crucial for realising the full potential of the policy.

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Abbreviations used in the Study

AEP: Act East Policy

NER: North Eastern Region of India  
 ASEAN: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations  
 BCCI: Board of Control for Cricket in India  
 GDP: Gross Domestic Product  
 NSDA: National Skill Development Agency  
 PMKVJ: Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna  
 NEDFI: North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd.  
 FDI: Foreign Direct Investment  
 USD: United States Dollar  
 INR: Indian Rupee  
 DoNER: Development of North Eastern Region  
 NEC: North East Council

### Conflict of Interest

The researchers do not entertain any conflicts in this research. All findings are based on secondary data aligned with previous studies.

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