

## **Fiji in Asia: India's 'New' Look East Policy - Looking Beyond Southeast Asia at the South Pacific**

**Shankari Sundararaman**

### **Introduction**

Comprising of several scattered and far flung islands in the middle of the vast ocean, the South Pacific island group resembles a cluster of 'pearls in the ocean' (Kaul, 1993). However, if one looks beyond the gloss of this metaphor, it has a far more serious range of issues that come to the forefront (Dibb, 2001: 13-21). There is a greater need to focus on and address, the nature and manner, in which the future of the region will be shaped and redefined. In this context there is the question that is critical for both Fiji and the region: how does the impact of globalisation affect the region? While there is academic convergence on the view that globalisation is not a recent phenomenon, several scholars have also been of the opinion that small states may be more vulnerable to the process of globalisation itself than much larger states, which may have to capacity to withstand the pressures unleashed by the process (Shamsul, 2002:193-209). Within this dynamic is also the need to focus more on the growing relevance of regionalisation, that is, pushing forward regional integration to tackle the consequences of globalisation. This has been particularly highlighted in the manner in which the East Asian states responded to the financial crisis in the region. The effects of regionalism can offset the impact that individual nation-states can face from the challenges unleashed by this process (Dittmer, 2002: 21-36).

This paper focuses on the theme of Fiji in Asia, and specifically on how India's Look East Policy, can look beyond Southeast Asia to the Pacific region. What I intend to do is to focus on one of the primary areas of my research, which is India's relations with Southeast Asia and try and establish certain linkages between this and the South Pacific region. With the growing impetus for the rise of regional interactions there is a need to understand why the Look East Policy of India needs to look beyond the

Southeast Asian region to the South Pacific and also why the region can gain from looking towards the north and west in the immediate region of both Southeast Asia and also further west at India.

This paper looks at a few of the key challenges that are critical to India's Look East Policy. With the dialogue partnership in the Pacific Islands Forum, India has made statements that speak of looking beyond South East Asia to the Southwest Pacific. India's joining the Pacific Islands Forum was seen within the foreign policy circles in India as a logical extension of India's Look East Policy. But within the scope of the relations both with Southeast Asia and with the South Pacific there is a need to focus on certain critical issues. There are within the region certain challenges that limit the degree of interaction between India and the South Pacific region. Certain issues need to be addressed from the two sides in order to expand the existing ties and in this respect India needs to do more particularly within the context of its relations with Fiji and also with the rest of the region. This paper is divided into two sections. In the first section, I briefly deal with the basic structure of the Look East Policy itself and try to bring out its salient features. This is merely to highlight the basic premises of the relations between India and the Southeast Asia region and also to highlight where the policy currently stands. In the second section I look at what the 'New' Look East Policy could be and examine the logic of extending India's interests beyond Southeast Asia to the South Pacific.

### **India's Look East Policy and Achievements:**

India's Look East Policy began as the cold war came to a close – several factors had been responsible for the delayed interaction with Southeast Asia. However, in the early nineties the Indian government set forth its Look East Policy with the view to improve its relations with the Southeast Asian region.

This phase of interaction was in many ways a clear delink from the past in which the earlier two phases were significantly different and perhaps opposite to one another. During the time of the decolonization process there were several issues that actually drew India and the region closer together. The development of the nationalist movement in most of Asia followed India's own struggle for independence and the aftermath of this period witnessed the emergence of several newly independent nations that took on the mantle of the third world and the non-aligned movement

together (Sundararaman, 2002).<sup>1</sup>

However despite these early associations the two sides moved apart, as a result of the differing ideologies of the cold war period and also the positions that they took in respect to the Cambodian conflict. This second phase remained more dominated by the external environment of the cold war. ASEAN's emergence within this phase was viewed with scepticism, as a regional grouping that had emerged from the ashes of the US backed alliance, the SEATO. Moreover, with the end of the Vietnam War and the protracted conflict that engulfed Cambodia, both India and the ASEAN found themselves on opposite sides of the ideological spectrum, divided by the interplay of global power politics. ASEAN backed, the CGDK aligned itself at the regional level with China and at the extra-regional level with the US. On the other hand India backed the Heng Samrin regime, which was supported at the regional level by Vietnam and at the global level by the erstwhile USSR (Kaul, 2001: 41-66).

Added to this was the fact that at the domestic level India was pre-occupied with its own concerns and was also more involved with its relations in the immediate neighbourhood. For the ASEAN itself, this was a crucial period where issues of internal and external concern brought member-states together (Soesastro, 2003: 21). Considerations of security at the national and regional levels were based on continuity and legitimacy of the political leadership, which thereby ensured domestic stability and economic development.

With the changed global environment after the cold war, there was a resolution in sight for the Cambodian conflict and this paved the way for changes within the regional setting in Southeast Asia. Another factor was a shift in India's foreign policy calculus with the announcement of the Look East Policy under the government of Narasimha Rao – with its emphasis on broadening the scope of its ties with the ASEAN countries. This policy was driven by the realisation that in thirty years ASEAN had emerged as a dynamic regional grouping and the potential for India-ASEAN ties were immense. There is no doubt that the 'Look East' policy has made tremendous strides since its initiation in the early nineties (Sundararaman, 2004: 371-385).

Much of the focus of the Look East Policy also received attention due to the emergence of the ASEAN as a major economic player. With India's economic liberalization in the early nineties, there was a recognition that the two regions could mutually benefit. India was truly im-

pressed with the economic strides made by the ASEAN countries and the regions began to view each other as possible sources of FDI and investments in various sectors. The volume of trade between India and the Southeast Asian region in the early 1990's stood at US \$ 2 billion. Today it stands at US \$12 billion.<sup>2</sup> This is however still not comparable to the volume of trade that exists between China and the ASEAN region which stands at US \$ 23 billion. In fact of all of India's global export, that to the ASEAN region stands at only about 10%. There is a potential for a serious increase in this especially with the Free Trade Agreements signed with both Thailand and Singapore, and the FTA agreement with the ASEAN that is to be on ground by 2016.

Added to the increased economic interaction with the region, there was also a realisation that India could be a suitable partner for developing a dynamic security relationship as well. This factor at first was not recognized by all the countries but slowly the ASEAN started to look west at India as India continued to look east. Currently the Look East Policy has been transformed into a vibrant policy with the establishment of the ASEAN plus One India summit which is an annual meeting of the ASEAN and India. This particular achievement began from 2002, with the first summit at Phnom Penh; it marks the institutionalization of the India ASEAN dialogue both at the economic and the security levels. As part of this process several steps were achieved the most significant of which is the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement that hopes to link the region together in a FTA. As part of this, access to both goods and services is expected to be significant. In this regard there are some significant infrastructure agreements that have begun to take shape. One is the opening of the Moreh-Tamu-Kaleawa road link that links the north eastern regions of India through to Burma and the Southeast Asian land route (Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation 1997). With Myanmar (Burma) becoming a member of ASEAN in 1997, it linked India through a land route to the rest of the Southeast Asian mainland and this also determined the need to establish relations with the region which now had a geographic contiguity to India (Framework Agreement, 1997; Naidu (1998). This has helped to bring in land contact and has allowed for easier mobility of goods services and people. Added to this the proposed rail link between Delhi and Vietnam has also been planned under the agreement. Also it identifies several products that can be placed on the early harvest list of the FTA while there is a proposed

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed study of the politics of India's Look East Policy see also Grare and Mattoo (2001).

<sup>2</sup> For details see India ASEAN Trade links at the website: [http://www.ibef.org/artdispview.aspx?art\\_id=4267&cat\\_id=400&page=3](http://www.ibef.org/artdispview.aspx?art_id=4267&cat_id=400&page=3)

time frame through which other products can be placed too. However, currently India has already signed FTAs with both Singapore and Thailand but the progress has been slow, especially in terms of agreement on the commodities that should be placed in the FTA.

### **What is India's New Look East Policy?: Lessons from Southeast Asia**

In August 2002, at the thirty-third annual summit of the Pacific Islands Forum (formerly known as South Pacific Forum), India was admitted to the PIF as a dialogue partner. At this time the former Indian foreign minister, stated that the entry into the PIF was a logical extension of India's look east policy – a new approach to our 'looking east' to look beyond Southeast Asia, and further to the Asia-Pacific. The need to look beyond the Southeast Asian region was factored as a result of several issues (Singh, 2003: 12-25).

First, India has increased its economic relations with one of the largest economies in the Pacific – that is Australia. There has been a great shift in the volume of trade with Australia. In 1989-90 the volume of trade stood at roughly \$A860 million, with Australian exports to India amounting to approximately \$A590 million.<sup>3</sup> For the year 2004-05 it stood at about \$A7.5 billion. Since 2000 India has emerged as Australia's sixth largest market for exports. While Australia still enjoys a trade surplus with India to the tune of \$A3.6 billion, there is scope for greater potential in this two-way trade sector. In fact the volume of trade is estimated to rise to about \$A16 billion by 2010. During the recent visit, six bilateral agreements were signed – an air service agreement; a trade and economic framework; MoU's on customs cooperation, defence cooperation and biotechnology and a letter of intent to set up a strategic research fund. These agreements critically target areas of common and emerging interests to both India and Australia. There is also growing convergence on Australia becoming a favourite destination for Indian students, while Australia has been looking to India for skilled workers. As the impetus for regional trading blocs gain ground both Australia and India will emerge as key players, along with China within the wider Asia-Pacific region. Two factors are driving this interaction, the first is that the US with its focus on the war on terror has not been able to give so much of its attention to this region and in this sense Australian role in the region be-

<sup>3</sup> The Australian High Commission has published documents on the Prime Minister's visit to India in March 2006 at the website <http://www.ausgovindia.com/>. Also see Sundararaman (2006).

comes crucial. Second, the fact that the Chinese are gaining both political and economic ground in the region is a factor enough to push the interest of both India and Australia (Medeiros, 2005/6). This provides an additional reason for India to take a closer look at the Pacific region. Also with these three key players emerging in the Asia-Pacific calculus there is potential for the smaller states to engage both India and China into the region in a deeper cooperation. One of the significant factors that can emerge from this is to get these two countries to compliment each other in the investment sector of the smaller countries, thereby promoting greater cooperation rather than conflict between India and China.

Second, one of the significant developments has been the emergence of deeper trade links among several regions of East Asia and India – the ASEAN has simultaneously worked out its Free Trade Agreements with both India and China. This has led to the emergence of the largest trading block which is today within the vicinity of the South Pacific Islands. Moreover Australia too had been forming closer ties with China on the economic front as with India. Added to this both East Timor and Papua New Guinea have expressed their intent to be the link between Southeast Asia and the South Pacific (Singh, 2003: n15). This brings the Pacific region even closer as the region's largest economic player is wooing the two economic giants in Asia. Both India and Australia and New Zealand are part of the East Asia Summit in the 10+3+3 arrangement, here India and the two Pacific states form the last matrix of the group.<sup>4</sup> This brings the region significantly closer in terms of the trade linkages and will open the opportunities for the Pacific island states to explore newer dimensions to increase the potential for further investment in the region.<sup>5</sup> Bringing in newer investment has been one of the key objectives of the Pacific plan in the trade and investment sector – while it will bring the region into greater open access to India and to East and Southeast Asia, it will also bring about a situation where the less developed members of the region will interact to share common issues relating to both development, and concerns that relate to security. While there is one view that in many ways the greater the numbers, the more possibility of finding a plausible and common solution to issues that have common roots, there is a view that the East Asia Summit is not balanced and that the manner in which China is currently driving the summit process may lead to more power

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed analysis of the East Asia Summit see Malik (2005)

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed look at the trade and investment issues see the Forum Secretariat (2002).

games being played within the structure.<sup>6</sup> Already the Chinese assertion that the process will have two distinct groups in the form of a core group which comprises just the ASEAN Plus three (East Asian countries) as separate from the peripheral group of the 10+3+3 process, brings this clearly into picture (Malik, 2005: n20). However it is surely the largest trading bloc near the region and the region will stand to benefit from this.

Third, one of the significant challenges to the South Pacific region has been in the area of economic development - there is disparity between the way some states in the South Pacific region have tended to show signs of relative stability as compared to other states in the region itself - for example the distinction between the Polynesian groups (like Samoa) and the Melanesian states (like Solomon islands) have had different approaches to state building in the post colonial period.<sup>7</sup> One of the factors that can contribute is to place economic development in the forefront of all the regional agendas. This can have a significant impact by increasing regionalism itself. While there is an over reliance on both Australia and New Zealand in the region, this can be balanced out by bringing other players into the equation. It is significant for the members within the regional grouping of the Pacific Islands Forum to ensure that economic development concerns of all member states needs to be addressed. Much of the discussion in the Pacific has been with regards to the fact that the region may not have a level playing field if opened out to the regional trading blocs that are currently being established within the neighbourhood. However, that level playing field needs to be created within the region itself where the levels of member states are not equal. Also currently according to the Pacific Plan the intra-island trade is still very low and this increase will automatically ensure a degree of dependency that will assist in the regional economic development. Creating this for the region should be the primary objective of the PIF. India's assistance to the smaller and less economically developed states in Southeast Asia can be replicated in the context of the South Pacific too. Particularly in resource and capacity building initiatives India can offer significant assistance.

In addressing this issue the region can draw from the lessons of Southeast Asia. The expansion of ASEAN automatically led to the inclusion of newer members which did not have the same level of economic development as that of the older members. What is significant is that where there is an uneven level of economic development it would be far

more astute to bring in investments from a wider source rather than being dependent upon one particular source.<sup>8</sup> This has been clearly seen in the ASEAN's engagement with both India and China. The newer ASEAN states, the CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) were more dependent upon Chinese and Indian investments than the original five members of the ASEAN and later Brunei. This dependency had its own resultant implications for these countries and also for the investing countries too. For the newer members of the ASEAN it has ensured first, the reduction in the developmental gap between the old and the new members and second has also reduced the dependency of the new members on the old (Snitwongse, 2003: 35-51).

For India the implications have been both on the economic front and the security one. In the case of the linkage with Myanmar it has helped to open the roads that link India with Southeast Asia through the land route, the Moreh-Tamu-Kalewa road link. The proposal to open up the road links and also pursue the establishment of a rail link between India and Vietnam are critical to the FTA arrangements and investment in infrastructure development (Kumar, 2003). For India one of the key security issues here is the issue of the northeast which has been the scene of strong insurgent movements. This economic interaction with the region will allow more economic ties for the northeast and will reduce the developmental gap between the northeast and the rest of India too. This is one security implication which is significant for India. For China too it has been significant in providing both Yunan and Guanxi with access to the South China Sea. Second, it has helped to reduce the developmental gap between China's inland areas and the coastal regions. It is being seen as a win-win situation for both China and ASEAN.<sup>9</sup>

### **Critically Assessing India's Links with the South Pacific:**

Within the background of the analysis so far, there is a need to see exactly how much India has interacted with the region and what are the areas in which a furthering of this can be done. One of the areas that has been significant is in the service sector - the development of entrepreneurial skills - India has been able to provide this kind of assistance and the Pacific Island states can well benefit from this. It has included training in

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed analysis of China's relations with Southeast Asia see, Da Cunha (1998).

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed account of this issue see Reilly (2004: 479-493).

<sup>8</sup> This point of the regions overdependence upon Australia and New Zealand was made by Professor Jane Kelsey (above). In this regards the region should actually begin to diversify its source of economic and trade investment.

<sup>9</sup> For details see, Lijun (2003).

the areas of information technology and other related issues. There is already some degree of interaction in this sector – especially when India assisted the Nauru government in the summer of 2005. The government was near financial collapse and was not able to pass the budget due to some failure in the computer systems. This was then fixed with the assistance of the CMC Ltd which had the system functioning in ten days (Singh, 2005). Cooperation with India in IT sector can be very useful and needs to be explored. India has the potential to further its assistance to the region in the IT sector. Also the field of higher technical education in India is extremely competitive and can possibly accommodate students from the region.

In terms of India's ties with the South Pacific region Fiji has the potential to play a very vital role. When India's entry into the Southeast Asian region began, there were two countries that assisted the Indian integration into the region. Both Malaysia and Singapore played this role within the ASEAN in terms of being country coordinators for India's entry. In this respect the opportunity for Fiji is immense – in many ways Fiji can have the opportunity to be a significant player in the development of closer ties with India because of the links between Fiji and India. After the 1987 coup, when diplomatic links were severed the contact between the two countries had come to a standstill. This was a difficult phase to get past since Fiji had been the entrepot for Indian goods to the South Pacific region. All this while the trade to Fiji from India was directed through Singapore and Hongkong. With more than 300,000 Indian Fijians, it had a significant impact on the relations with India. Most often Fiji's relations with India has been viewed within the backdrop of the ethnic tensions between the indigenous community and the people of Indian descent.

In August 2005, India loaned Fiji, \$F89 million to upgrade its sugar mills. The upgrading was to be completed by 2007-08. This was to ensure the diversification of the mills into the area of bio-fuels. This has been a significant step. During October 2005, Prime Minister Qarase visited India with a 50 member delegation and signed four agreements – including a development cooperation agreement, with particular emphasis on health partnership and tourism. While this was no doubt a crucial step the loan to the sugar industry was a tied loan, containing a provision for the use of Indian experts and Indian machinery.<sup>10</sup> If India is to play the role of an investor in the region in order to increase its relations in the region, limiting its potential to the form of tied loans will not be enough. In fact even

<sup>10</sup> Comments made by Mr. H. P. Singh in the discussion on the panel.

today apart from the early Indian companies that were established (like Bank of Baroda, Life Insurance Corporation of India, National Insurance company and Asian Paints), very little Indian investment had flowed into Fiji – which both historically and economically remains India's key focus in the region. Other forms of aid to the region have been rupees 21 lakhs [approximately \$F100,000] assistance to the Federated States of Micronesia for the purchase of an oil extraction plant. The Palau government also received support for the purchase of kitchen equipment for its hospitals (Singh, 2005: n31).

One of the key areas where there can be greater cooperation is in the field of medical assistance and pharmaceuticals. The health agreement signed during Prime Minister Qarase's visit to India is crucial in this regards. India has been emerging as a source of good biomedical and biotechnological facilities. Also in the field of pharmaceuticals India has achieved a standing for being able to produce generic drugs at far cheaper prices. This is one potential area of cooperation between India and the South Pacific region. However, with the WTO entry there is a phased withdrawal of this provision but India is trying to leverage a greater position for itself with regards to this particular issue. Within India too the domestic lobby to keep the option of producing generic drugs is very strong particularly in view of the increasing threats from HIV/AIDS cases. India is today emerging as a medical capital and can provide greater healthcare facility to the region. One of the problems within India is the gap between public and private health care. While there is a growing need for synthesis between these two, there has been increasing demand for Indian medical expertise from outside. One of the recent initiatives has been among the Confederation of Indian Industries and Australia-India Council, which have agreed to enhance and support research related to HIV/AIDS.<sup>11</sup> This is a crucial step and can link the rest of the region together within this, especially as this is one of the concerns in the region. Within this context India must certainly do more to make its visa regime and controls facilitate those who are coming from the region for treatment to India. There was a recent case where a young man was deported after a kidney transplant, because the patient's visa expired. This approach in such cases does not portray India as the emerging leader that it claims to be in the region.<sup>12</sup> Within the context of the visa regime is

<sup>11</sup> The Australian High Commission has published documents on the Prime Minister's visit to India in March 2006 at the website <http://www.ausgovindia.com/>, n. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Comments made by the discussant for the paper Mr. Singh in response to the paper presented. The imposition of very strong bureaucratic procedures does not help facili-

also the case for relaxing visa regulations by India. Currently any Indian can get a visa for ten days on arrival at the airport in Fiji. However this is not the case for any Fijian coming to India. The Fiji- India Business Council has been playing a role in assisting Indo-Fijians to get fifteen year multiple entry visas to Indians. However, visa relations are normally on a reciprocal basis; in such a case similar formalities need to be followed on both sides.<sup>13</sup>

Another key role that India can play, is in the realm of political leadership within international organizations like the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Today there is a growing need for the countries of the developing world to stick together in order to protect their interests within organizations like the WTO. This has been emphasized in the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis when regional organizations such as APEC addressed the issue of globalization. The establishment of the Economic and Technical cooperation (ECOTECH) on the 15<sup>th</sup> APEC Summit in October 2003, was done with the need to address the political and social dimensions of globalization.<sup>14</sup> This is significant to the South Pacific region also where the Pacific plan has addressed this issue. The need to have a voice within these organizations is significant and there is a role for both India and the South Pacific in this regard. While the globalization process is irreversible and countries today cannot avoid being closely associated with the process, there is a need to understand the differing dynamics of the process, so that the internal domestic stability is not challenged. This is particularly the case for the small island nations of the region which, have a stake in maintaining the cultural identity of the region which too can be challenged by the globalization process. The Pacific Islands Forum is an observer at the APEC and stands to be impacted by developments within the group. India in that sense can play a leadership which is also trying to maintain a balance between its economic liberalization programme and the domestic compulsions of being a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual state.

---

tate the promotion of India as a major destination for advanced and affordable medical treatment.

<sup>13</sup> Comments made from the floor of the conference in response to the paper. Foreign Minister Tavola raised some of these vital issues and was urged to follow up with the Indian government the concerns regarding the visa regulations followed in India for the Fijians. There was a view that all Fijians must be treated with the same regulations and no distinctions should be made between Indo-Fijians and the indigenous Fijians.

<sup>14</sup> Fifteenth APEC Ministerial Meeting Joint Statement Summary of Key Issues at the website [http://www.apecsec.org.sg/apec/ministerial\\_statements/annual\\_ministerial/2003\\_15th\\_apec\\_ministerial.html#15AMM\\_Statement](http://www.apecsec.org.sg/apec/ministerial_statements/annual_ministerial/2003_15th_apec_ministerial.html#15AMM_Statement) .

Lastly, in the area of security relations there have been considerable changes in India's posture. In the late eighties India's blue water navy was seen as a threat to the region particularly to both Southeast Asia and Australia. Also following the Indian nuclear tests there were significant reactions from Australia. Among the Southeast Asian states too there was some reaction particularly from Thailand and Malaysia. An editorial in the Bangkok Post titled 'The Nuclear Club Offers No Honour' was critical of India's decision to go nuclear, stating that it undermined the long held policy of disarmament (The Bangkok Post, May 1998). The Malaysian press also reacted with an article in the New Straits Times titled 'KL Deplores Indian Nuclear Test' (Sridharan, 2001). However, at the same time several other Southeast Asian nations were not critical of India's decision to test. Vietnam's response was that it was targeted against other states though no particular country was named in this regard (Sridharan, 2001: 67-90). For both Southeast Asia and the South Pacific, it would be vital to understand that India's decision to go nuclear is a factor that emanates from the geo-political compulsions of the neighbourhood in which it is placed. In the context of Southeast Asia there has been much change in this perspective especially after India acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) and also endorsed the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ). Both these factors contributed immensely to making the region understand that India had no hegemonic interests in the region. Within the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), there have been deeper security linkages with the Asia-Pacific region. Joint naval exercises have been carried out between India and few Southeast Asian nations. Issues relating to Maritime security have been addressed in the ARF; this particularly links both India and Australia together. Many new agreements have been signed with regards to the new terrorist scourge with the Southeast Asian countries. While there is greater scope for convergence of security interests, these have not yet been fully explored. India's emerging potential both economically and in the security arena remains untapped.

## Conclusion

While interaction between India and the region has been more recent and there have not been long historical contacts, with the increasing opportunities provided by the growing regionalisation of economic and security issues, there is a possibility of consolidation in the ties between India and the South Pacific. Consolidation of these ties will no doubt act

as a much needed anchor in a region that is witnessing rapid and fundamental change. One of the primary factors in this consolidation of ties is the fact that India's relation with the South Pacific region seems to be premised upon India's relations with Australia. This is a significant cause for concern particularly among the smaller nations in the Pacific.<sup>15</sup> India's policy towards the region should not be contingent upon its ties with Australia alone and this needs to be critically analysed within foreign policy circles.

Another significant issue on which diverse opinions were expressed relates to the issue of regionalisation itself and the emerging impetus for signing regional trading arrangements. There is no doubt that this is a process that needs to be thought through. However, the implications of staying out are far greater than those of being part of the regional trading blocs. There is no doubt that the process is today moving forward, and states must decide whether they would be part of these arrangements or remain isolated in the face of growing interdependence. In conclusion, the issue of interdependence and regional trading blocs ought not to be approached with a uni-dimensional approach. At the current level of ties between India and the region, I am not advocating that a FTA be signed. However, it is important to explore the opportunities that India has to offer and also for India to explore the potential that relations with the region can have. The logic of this approach certainly exists, particularly with regards to the areas that have been assessed above.

Moreover, looking at economic integration from within the discipline of international relations, and security studies in particular, the approach has clear advantages to it. Most approaches to security in the Asian region tend to look at the domestic sources of insecurity where economic development does feature as a primary factor. However, even this approach keeps the state as the primary referent of the security debate. While addressing the issues of economic development and regional interdependence in an era of globalisation, it would be critical to keep in mind the logic of economic security as it looks at the individual. With this in mind, the logic of integration should not be approached with either a maximalist or minimalist position. The approach should be balanced and flexible. Its logic can be appreciated if states look at it as a need based priority rather than one based on greed.

<sup>15</sup> Comments made by Dr. Ganesh Chand, in response to the panel presentation.

## References

- Da Cunha, Derek (1998) 'Southeast Asian Perceptions of China's Future Security Role in its 'Backyard'', in Jonathan D. Pollack and Richard H. Yang (eds.) (1998) *In China's Shadow: Regional Perspectives on Chinese Foreign Policy and Military Development*, Washington: Rand.
- Dibb, Paul (2001) 'Strategic Trends in the Asia-Pacific Region', in Paul D. Taylor (eds.), *Asia and the Pacific: US Strategic Traditions and Regional Realities*. Newport Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, pp. 13-21.
- Dittmer, Lowell (2002) 'Globalization and the Twilight of Asian Exceptionalism' in Catarina Kinnvall and Kristina Jonsson (eds) *Globalisation and Democratisation of Asia: The Construction of Identity*. Routledge; pp. 21-36
- Forum Secretariat (2002) '33rd Pacific Islands Forum Communique' Suva, Fiji Islands, 15-17 August, at: <http://www.pacificforum.fiji.gov.fj/>
- Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Between the Republic of India and The Association of Southeast Asian Nations at the website [http://commerce.nic.in/agree\\_asean.htm](http://commerce.nic.in/agree_asean.htm)
- Jackson, R. H (1990) *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaul, Man Mohini (1993) *Pearls in the Ocean, Security Perspectives in the Southwest Pacific*. New Delhi: South Asia Books.
- Kaul, Man Mohini, (2001) 'ASEAN-India relations During the Cold War', in Frederic Grare and Amitabh Mattoo (eds.) (2001) *India and ASEAN: The Politics of India's Look East Policy*: New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, pp. 41-66.
- Kumar, Nagesh (2003) 'India-ASEAN Partnership', *The Hindu (Madras)*, 7 October.
- Lijun, Sheng (2003) 'China-ASEAN Free Trade Area: Origins, Developments and Strategic Motives', ISEAS Working Paper International Politics and Security Issues Series No.1, ISEAS, Singapore at: <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/ipsi12003.pdf>
- Malik, Mohan (2005) 'The East Asia Summit: More Discord Than Accord', *Yaleglobal*, 20 December, at: <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=6645>
- Medeiros, Evan S. (2005/6) 'Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability', *The Washington Quarterly* 29(1) CSIS Washington DC and MIT, pp.145-167.
- Naidu, G V C (1998), *India and ASEAN*, Delhi Paper, No. 8, IDSA, 1998.
- Reilly, Benjamin (2004) 'State Functioning and State Failure in the South Pacific' *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 58(4) December: 479-493.
- Shamsul, A. B. (2002) 'Globalisation and Democratic Developments in Southeast Asia: Articulation and Social Responses', in Catarina Kinnvall and Kristina Jonsson (eds.), *Globalisation and Democratisation in Asia: The Construction of Identity*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 193-209.
- Singh, Subha (2003) 'Reaching Out to the South Pacific'. *Frontline*, October, pp. 12-25.
- Singh, Subha (2005) 'Pacific Connection', *Frontline (Madras)*, November 5-18.
- Snitwongse, Kusuma (2003) A New World Order in East Asia, *Asia-Pacific Review*, 10(2) November: 35-51.

- Soesastro, Hadi (2003) 'Globalisation, Development and Security in Southeast Asia: An Overview', in David B. Dewitt and Carolina G. Hernandez (eds.) *Development and Security in Southeast Asia*, Volume III: Globalisation, Burlington, USA: Ashgate.
- Sridharan, Kripa, (2001) 'Regional Perceptions of India', in Frederic Grare and Amitabh Mattoo (eds) pp: 67-90.
- Sundararaman (2002), India and ASEAN, *The Hindu (Madras)*, November 19, 2002.  
For a detailed study of the politics of India's Look East Policy see also Frederic Grare and Amitabh Mattoo, eds., *India and ASEAN: The Politics of India's Look East Policy*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 2001
- Sundararaman, S (2006) 'The Pendulum's Upward Swing: Australia's Relations with India', *Asian Currents* at: <http://iceaps.anu.edu.au/ac/asian-currents-06-06.html>, June.
- Sundararaman, Shankari (2004) 'Politics and Security in Southeast Asia: Prospects for India-ASEAN Cooperation, International Studies' *International Studies* October -December, 41(4): 371-385.
- The Bangkok Post* (Bangkok), Internet Edition, May 18, 1998.

**Shankari Sundararaman** is Associate Professor at the Southeast Asian Studies Division, Centre for South, Central, Southeast Asian and Southwest Pacific Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.