

INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA : OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

India is a young and developing society in the 21st century world. It is among the fastest growing economies and poised to be the most populous country, soon taking over China. India presents massive opportunities for investments due to large consumption market, while also hosts a diverse population united across caste, language, religion and topography.

But we face our own set of challenges of abhorrent inequalities, abject poverty, poor productivities etc which any society in transition generally faces.

In this socio economic background, it is only Innovation & Entrepreneurship that offer possible way out for our people.

While Innovation concerns itself with new Ideas, new approaches towards solving problems or enhancing convenience ; Entrepreneurship denotes utilising these ideas to establish remunerative business set ups to putting Ideas into practice. This essay seeks to analyse the position of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in India; what role can they play in India's development strategy. Taking note of the constraints which they face, solutions, success stories and approaches of Government and civil society are also recognised.

In the 21st century Age of Disruption, economy is about the resources between 'Old & New' while human capital is seen driving the growth story, INNOVATION is a common currency. It is a very broad term covering nearly all aspects of human life.

Scientific Innovation coupled with Technological aspects is the key to master natural processes. New technology like Machine learning, Artificial intelligence, Big data analytics, has the potential to enhance productivity and fuel growth. MSMEs in India can enhance their outputs using robots like BRABO (By TATA) and other COBOTS which ensure precision and efficiency. 3D Printing production also promises in design aspect activities. Our Institutes of Technology must be made Temples of Innovation.

to address our requirements for growth
India's demographic dividend which
will make it youngest country by 2020 with
avg age of 29 yrs is an opportunity in
itself. This Youth Bulge can be channelised
to Innovation direction by adequate
Education, training and skilling Initiatives.
Recently exhibited political will in this
direction can bring tangible results. From
Sara Shiksha Abhiyan to PM Research fellowship.
From Institutions of Eminence & autonomy to
universities to programmes like GIAN and
VAJRA to attract our scientific talent
back to India are all steps to harness &
better equip Indian research set up.

Some early results are seen in
Pharma sector where Indian generic
medicines are sought after everywhere &
Indian software industry which has highly

skilled and global oriented workforce. These green shoots must be taken forward just as the space sector is being nurtured. Innovation in space technology. Mission to Mars at low cost, trials with GSLV, Aditya prospects has shown how India can prove its Innovation prowess.

But besides these advanced sectors, India faces some core developmental challenges like sanitation, farm distress, food wastage, resource / energy constraints, water crisis, health sector loopholes and many more. These are holding back our growth prospects. But we must recognise that it is in these sectors that Innovation is most required and where entrepreneurship can become tools of empowerment to better the lives of common people. Many technocrats from around are turning back to villages to use innovations in data analytics,

weather based technology, satellite data etc for predictive & scientific farming methods. These "farm techs" - start ups provide warnings of impending flood or droughts, provide doorstep delivery of fertilizers & quality seeds or take up Aquaponics themselves.

Edu techs are bridging gaps in education system by app based learning, video lectures and connecting classrooms to remote places. Govt's SWAYAM, MOOCs are such platforms in Teleeducation.

The Start Up India, Stand Up India scheme were also meant to support new people to take up new businesses, curb unemployment and provide credit support using MUDRA Yojana. Start Up Village Entrepreneurship programme, Aajeevika Gramin Express Yojana of NRLM are also similar steps.

The Self Help Group initiative in India drove the idea of Entrepreneurship to every home

and specially to womenfolk. SHGs are indulged in processing of local products, by marketing SHGs sell mangoes to market being and launched to business. It's women being independent. SHGs recorded 10% yearly growth. (2018 report). This shows that entrepreneurship can great opportunities for women to get financially independent & hence socially empowered.

In today's times, Digital technologies offer growth prospects and Governance innovations. Jan Ghan, Aarog and Mule are reshaping ties between citizen and states. Better targeting of beneficiary, ensures transparency and accountability while also enhancing public service delivery efficiency. E-delivery of services eg through Common Service Centres is providing Entrepreneurship opportunities to rural youth.

These innovations can be a learning experience even for other developing and small countries of Africa, Asia Pacific etc and hence, South South Cooperation

The development need of Energy is also driving innovation, specially at national level by International Solar Alliance

Youth, experts, scientists and entrepreneurs can come together for climate financing, developing low cost technology solutions for harnessing solar power. Even waste management, faecal sludge systems in urban areas, e-waste management, using renewable powers eg temperature difference of oceans for desalination of water are the right directions of innovations & start ups

~~But~~ Though these challenges offer Innovation opportunities, Innovation & business itself faces challenges in India on many fronts.

Funding of Research remains a bottleneck as our GERD (Gross Expenditure on R&D) remains poor in comparison to China, South Korea, USA etc. Also, its mostly ^{Israel} concentrated in public sector, where private sector is found wanting in its research contribution.

While Research/Journal publications are rising year on year, Patents are being filed but our Patent office is too sluggish, facing backlogs and inadequate staff. This can be a roadblock for solid innovation. India has to shell out huge revenue for imports of Medical Equipment, spare parts in automobiles or even in Defence sector for crucial equipments.

Universities and Labs lack a crucial synergistic linkage and professors are no longer innovators/researchers unlike in China, US (Oxford, MIT etc)

This prevents students from joining the innovation bandwagon right after studies and along with it Fellowships, and Scholarships, research lab quality also pose challenges

On entrepreneurship front, the regulatory burden, multiple clearances are required Credit Availability in the institution is suffering due to NPA cases and hence Medium sector faces severe crunch. Labour law multiplicity, rigidity, slow expansion Women face special challenges due to lack of support and finance capital. Even SEI STs CAs and face difficulties due to poor networks of business which prevent maximization of full potential

Lack of IPR awareness and procedures delays also act as challenge for innovation. Brain drain has been pointed out as a problem with severe economic loss. Academy and industry structure board of directors not strong

The burden of youth bulge, with 30% of Indian youth as NEET (Neither in Education, Employment nor Training) is a challenge in itself. Ensuring entrepreneurship would require adequate quality education and encouraging govt policy ecosystem.

Initiatives like Atal Innovation Mission, Women Entrepreneurship platform by NITI AYOg can help nurture innovation. New IPR policy for awareness, GI tags to local special goods can boost employment, tourism etc. Greater fellowship opportunities, coupled with increasing Ease of Doing business can boost investments. Innovations must not be limited to technology but also in political & governance set up. GST Council is seen as innovation in itself as a consensus based body at apex level. These and other Intellectual Innovation like Aspirational dist programme, promoting Corporate Social Responsibility,

and Civil Society Corporation can boost overall administrative delivery of services.

In the field of Entrepreneurship, 'Social Enterprises' are the future of Business. In 21st century such businesses that incorporate social, economic needs of society and account for best environmental practices will be Sustainable and benefit entire society.

With regard to Innovation and Entrepreneurship, NITI AAYOG suggests developing and boosting 3 "SHAKTI" for success -

- 1) ICCHA SHAKTI - Motivation & Encouragement by policy support to people for innovation
- 2) GYAN SHAKTI - Knowledge & Ecosystem built by education, training & experience building
- 3) KARMA SHAKTI - Hands on experience for start up and operational support in lifecycle.

These approaches can step by step enhance our competitiveness to harness the power of innovation & entrepreneurship to tackle our developmental challenges and transition India to a "Knowledge SOCIETY."

THE CHANGING IDENTITIES OF CITIES IN 21st CENTURY

“On a warm summer morning, workers set out with their tools straight to the factories. The smoke from burning coal ~~was~~ rising high. Few vehicles and trendy cars making their way through crowded shops on streets lining up for customers. The cinema too getting ready to put up a 'black & white' show. There are also some poor kids selling newspapers while some labourers laying bricks.”

This portrayal of an EARLY CITY, today seems to be taken over by a new identity. What brings to our mind today when we talk of a city? Skyscrapers of Shanghai, Bustling streets of Kolkata, official lanes of Delhi, High rise software park of Bengaluru, busy biryani bazars of Hyderabad and even Dharavi slums of Mumbai.

Cities have been undergoing changes in the 21st century. These changing identities speak volumes about the history of past, cultural currents of today and the attractions of future; which lend a unique IDENTITY to a city, its own flavour of speciality!

The growing interconnectedness and linkages due to Globalisation, constant updation in technology, growing urbanisation, industrial development and modernisation is causing transformation in every aspect of human life. And hence, not just demographically or morphologically, the identities of our cities are changing structurally in the 21st century.

On the economic front, the changes in economies of production and sectors are bringing changes. Much of value and wealth now lies in tertiary sector or the service

Industry, quaternary and quinary activities. These have relegated the industries of manufacturing and factories to the periphery of a city. In nearly all parts of world, Middle class has seen a huge expansion with the coming of new & ample job opportunities in various fields. The consumerist culture is spreading far and wide. This has caused the spree of shopping complexes and malls where people line up each day. This has inturn created new jobs for guards, front desk workers, salespersons, delivery boys and many more.

The Technological Revolution along with 4th Industrial Revolution is driving the fad for 'SMART CITIES'. Even in India, the flagship govt programme seeks to create intelligent urban spaces, using modern technology, infrastructure along with

ensuring basic facilities like sanitation, electricity, public mobility, health and education services and affordable housing. Recently Naya Raipur and Bhopal got an Integrated Command & Control Centre to manage traffic congestion, water supply, electricity monitoring, police control etc.

Cities are testing 'sand boxes' for new technology and innovation. Nagpur got its fleet of buses and taxis running on e-power while CNG, biogas buses in Kolkata are coming soon. Proposals for High speed rail, hyperloop system, pod taxis beyond metros are being promoted. Even the governance structures of public service delivery are changing with digital connectivity e-services, e-govt, Aadhar, biometric identity etc.

Beyond the material aspect and what meets the eye, the Cultural Identity of cities are undergoing changes too.

The influx of migrants from both rural areas and nearby lesser developed regions is causing a change in the demography. Cosmopolitanism is becoming the hallmark of cities where people from different cultures, ethnicities, languages, religion and caste share common work and living spaces. They eat together, travel together and enjoy Sunday movies in some theatre. These portraits of growing linkages are breaking erstwhile barriers.

Cities have long been Hubs of aspirations where people come from far & wide to fulfill their dreams of better life and identity. This is becoming more of a norm, as also a need. Due to existing infrastructure, cities host best quality education and health centres that act like magnets for growing youth population & those in distress.

The consumerist mindset has also pushed up Recreational spaces in cities. The areas of leisure are a boom in themselves. City hosts music concerts, luxury spree, holiday resorts, artist galleries and iconic tourist places. Joining the Creative Cities Network of UN, Chennai followed league of Jaipur & Varanasi by making a mark in Global Creative landscape.

An assessment of cities' identity, is inevitable without a comparison with Rural setting. Do rural villages continue to be 'sinks of localism and dens of ignorance and communalism'? Probably they have suburbanised too. As much as cities change, they carry an imprint on rural spaces also. We must also recognise, that the changing identity has also some dark underlayers to it. "Change" is not always for the good!

The 'MAL-IDENTITY' of a city is also highlighted in the grotesque incidents of crime that often hit the headlines. In its deep underbelly, the changing identity of city, hosts underworld networks of trafficking, drug abuse, kidnapping, sexual harassment/exploitation, cyberbullying, suicides, murders and robbery.

Due to stressed ~~and~~ schedules and increasing depression, crime rates of cities have also shot up in recent times as NCRB reports. Families are undergoing changes, live in relationships, less commitment to marriages, social medias' attractiveness; is driving the 'TOGETHERNESS' out of family. Rather a strange Individualism backed by selfish desires is seen dominating. The social structures have deeply harmed the women facing dual burdens, the children forced in creches' and the

elderly in 'day care or 'elder shelter'. The changing identity of cities speaks volumes about the socio-economic transformation.

Beyond that, the cities' are today facing massive challenges on the Environment front. Cities are energy guzzlers and in doing so, they contribute to burning fossil fuels, ozone depletion and global warming. Urban heat islands are becoming new challenges for city planners. Congestion mounted due to vehicles and Concrete jungles are driving up the air pollution levels and NO_x , SO_x , $\text{PM}_{2.5/10}$ make air unbreathable.

The waste management systems have not kept up with the pace of changes in city. Consequently, Bellandur lake flare up, darkening Yamuna and mounds of waste in Ghaziabad are evident.

They not only put up a bad spectacle but also threaten health of inhabitants and quality of their life in longer run. Poor environment, deforestation and deteriorating natural landscapes can undermine all material & cultural gains that cities have made.

So, the brief analysis shows that cities' identities are undergoing massive changes both positively & negatively. ~~and~~ Even in this backdrop, some identifiable attitudes of cities continue to be their hallmarks even today.

The political centres like Delhi, continue to attract distressed farmers from around India, ~~the economic centre~~ to spaces like "Jantar Mantar." The economic centre of Mumbai, continue to harbour and attract 'Bollywood dreams' even in 21st century.

The New York's Times Square continues to be the protest space for activists, some against companies while some for LGBTQ rights. This illustrates that despite changing identities cities continue to have their uniqueness and taste of special attitudes.

As more and more of the World gets urbanised, "Change is going to be the only constant." Hence, the communities, govt and nations need to gear up to adopt and adapt to these changing faces. The local governance needs to be strengthened by providing accountable administrative structures with citizen participation in deciding priorities for development.

Civil society and citizens must be taken as stakeholders to allow smooth transition of spaces into "urbane spaces"

Sustainable consumption and production
patterns must be embedded in our
lifestyle that accounts for a near global
impact of daily activities. Modern technology
can then be used to create shared
identities and common spaces for the
growing population. It's our responsibility
to make the cities of 21st century more
Resilient, Adaptive, Inclusive & Sustainable!

CHILD LABOUR : A NECESSARY EVIL

OR JUST PLAIN EVIL ?

Working with tools and teacups,
The little hands move everyday
For need and for survival,
They are ready to walk everyway
Some have an ailing sister
While some have a mother
To get home a penny
They get beaten by the 'other'.

Do these kids know, they are losing their
childhood ??

According to reports of United Nations, there are around 30 million child labourers in India in 5-18 yrs age group. This striking figure represents

a gloomy picture of the 'State of Childhood' in India.

Being an agriculturally dominant country, it is natural that more than 50% of child labour is concentrated in the farm sector.

Besides this, children work in hazardous places like firecracker making, bangle making, zari work and in carpet weaving. A sizeable population in the central belt is busy rolling bidis with their hands.

In urban areas, roadside 'Dhabas' and other hotels employ children largely. Families, with both parents working, often employ girls to do daily chores and care for their children at home. These girls rarely

get proper food and rest while are often abused or beaten. What worth a child would feel, if treated this way?

A closer look at prevalence of child labour shows that just 5 states in India contribute to around 50% of incidence. These states are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. This ^{depicts} ~~explains~~ the skewed reality today.

But what explains this reality? Why do these children work, is a question we must ponder upon. This is the only way to address this evil.



The child labour map finds a close resemblance to areas where chronic poverty persists. Indeed, poor households are the first to send their kids to work. Rarely are the incomes from marginal farms enough for the big family. Children work in the fields, specially in harvest season, while their mother works as agricultural labourer elsewhere. The pangs of poverty are Economic Compulsions that force these kids to leave their home early with 'tools' rather than 'pencils'.

Another reason, is the absence or poor quality of schools in rural and tribal areas. Either teachers are absent or the teaching is unindulging. This makes many

children to drop out. These out of school children are a potential pool of child labourers. But this perpetuates as a vicious cycle. Illiterate parents are unable to help their kids at home and more often do not bother about the 'Long' term Education benefit.

These incidences are more common in marginalised households, like that of Dalits or Tribes. Even so, the girl child faces more risk. India still accounts for 30% child marriages worldwide (World bank). Due to early marriage, girls have to give up school even if they wish to continue.

Another dimension of the 'State of Indian Economy' offers a

grim reason for child labour. Most people in India are 'self employed' meaning they have their own farms, or petty shops and businesses. Asking kids to extend a helping hand is seen as almost natural. It somehow adds to the meagre income of ~~the~~ Informal households. Due to poor nutrition and lack of healthcare, members are often pushed into diseases and infections. This adds burden to overall family.

But all is not out of own compulsive will. Many children today are trafficked into factories and Informal workplaces. Middlemen get hefty sums for each 'lost child'. Unfortunately, sometimes it's the father himself who sells off the child.

Nehal laureate Kailash Satyarthi, sadly recounts how a poor girl rescued from a garment industry explained his plight "Baba, they sold me off for ₹10,000, that is less than the price of a buffalo...."

This heart wrenching reality has consequences on various walks of life. The psychological and physical trauma, the child themselves face is indescribable.. They are often abused and girls are sexually assaulted. The child labour deprives them of equal opportunity to a better life. This is no less than a human right abuse.

It also negatively impacts child's health when hazardous smoke from bangle making or tobacco laced

on hands is inhaled / ingested. This leads to lung diseases, TB, heart problems and disabilities.

Depriving children from proper education and skill development makes them vulnerable to market forces. They continue to work in poorly paid jobs through adulthood. Is this the Demographic Dividend we talk about?

The deprived and ill nutritioned girls, when give birth, it feeds on the Infant mortality and maternal mortality. This continues the cycle of stunting, wasting and hidden Hunger.

To account for the heavy cost ~~we~~ at politico-International level, ~~a~~ huge losses are incurred.

With increasing abhorrence for child labour worldwide, European nations have included this clause in their Non-Tariff Barriers. Any product with such inclusion is rejected. Besides, ^{for} our growing stature and economy it's only shameful to employ child labour.

At this juncture, we must think, have we taken any steps to tackle child labour? The child labour law in India was recently amended to prohibit all kinds of work for 5-14 yrs and hazardous work also. But exceptions for media entertainment and own family business were made. These are grey areas that can be exploited badly.

Besides, the new Anti Trafficking legislation establishes a stringent framework to nab the perpetrators and rehabilitate the victims. Also, many NGOs and govt institutions like Bachpan Bachao Andolan, Child Rights and You (CRY) work towards alleviating the conditions.

But these efforts might not be enough for a problem that is deeply rooted in our socio-political milieu, a punitive or temporary provisions cannot be a long term solution.

It is time we realize, that if the poor household is sending the child to work out of sheer necessity; our duty is not only to protect the child but also to

alleviate the household from poverty. If illiterate mother cannot care about a hardworking daughter, its imperative that going to school is made much easier for her. Striking at childhood labour should start from striking at poverty. Schemes like MGNREGA, the goals of doubling farmer incomes etc should be achieved soon.

In urban slums, gainful employment for women and men must be arranged. At the same time, awareness for family planning needs to be spread. Households with more kids are more prone to sending elder children for work.

Besides, the factories which employ children must be severely fined and punished.

As for the tribals, education in local dialect, role model teachers from same area be appointed. This can keep away children from work. Recent schemes like Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana can better their incomes.

~~Then~~ One must also note, that in the Global scenario, countries of Asia and Africa due to low incomes and weak governance account for the major share of child labour. In conflict zones like West Asia, the disrupted households have taken a toll on child's life. Many are now forced to work in pitiful conditions.

Hence, only a collaborated and a multi-dimensional effort can help rein in the evil of child labour.

Even if it's a necessity, it's nothing more than plain evil, depriving children of their best days. We need active participation at the level of family, community, provinces and nations to defeat the 'culture' of employing a child!

Their time is for playing
And making merry in the woods,
Let us join hands
To reclaim their Golden Childhood!

ASEAN-INDIA : Emerging Challenges to Shared Values and Common Destiny

The Republic Day of 2018 for India on 26th January was a historic day in itself. But what made it more special was the guests of that day. It felt as if our entire neighbourhood arrived when leaders from Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Brunei and Philippines made their presence.

The different colours of their dresses represented the cultural diversity we share and the bonhomie reflected our friendships.

Indeed, a new chapter to the ASEAN-India relations has already commenced. Our relations with our South East Asian neighbours is built on strong historical foundation

long back in 10-11th century, Imperial Cholas made their mark in Malaya. The ancient trade route led to exchanges of spices, rice, etc. Many Indians also settled there, even before 'India' was formed. Such is the depth of our past ties.

In order to properly lay out the charter for our common destiny, one must evaluate the set of challenges our relations face. Not only between us, but also what both India-ASEAN have to tackle.

The political and strategic perspective takes the first seat. In the backdrop of Asian Century, China has been in the tussle to rival US as the world power. This has led to acquisition of islands in the South China sea. Many of these fall in the Exclusive Economic zones of Indonesia, Vietnam and Philippines. It has harmed their sovereignty but also raised threats on free movement and rules based order.

But its not that China is just a "common challenge", rather its the white Elephant in our relations with ASEAN countries. The Belt and Road Initiative will rejuvenate old trade sea links, which India is not

a part of. Also, the hefty investments which China makes, for eg in Laos' railway or Vietnam's Infrastructure creates a huge burden of reciprocity on ASEAN countries. India's low investment capacity and poor record of project delivery has often roadblocked our projects.

On the Commerce front,

ASEAN countries like Vietnam and Indonesia are emerging as our top rivals in export sector. The low-value space which China is withdrawing from, has opened up opportunities in textile, apparel, footwear sector etc. Labour intensive production and concession from European-American markets, put our neighbours at an advantage.

The recent slowdown in RCEP negotiation which includes ASEAN + 6 countries is reflective in itself.

Indian economy itself faces a challenge to establish a sustained manufacturing base. Premature De-industrialisation, in the face of Anti-globalisation headwinds is a challenge for us. Over this, opening market for ASEAN can take a toll on our industries. Besides, entry to skilled labour from India has become a serious contention. These issues are keeping from exploiting our trade potential.

Besides the Economic and Commerce front, the security and social aspects also pose challenges.

Recent seige of Island city in Philippines, by ISIS supported faction,

has raised alarm bells on 'Terrorism' threat. With majority countries with poor low capita incomes, fighting terror can become a challenge. Being prone to radicalisation, it can cause destabilisation of the entire region.

It is worth noting that the dubious golden triangle of drugs and narcotics is situated in this region. Many insurgent violent groups in North East India find refuge in Myanmar and nearby. This ~~offer~~ poses sizeable threats to our Internal Security as well.

Moving forward, on the Environment front, the developing economies face common challenges.

Due to global warming and rising sea levels, the majority island or sea opening nations of ASEAN face a huge challenge. The biodiversity faces immense threat as also the fishing industry. The wide extremities of climate, pose disaster threats like floods, tsunamis etc. Even the geographical location is such that ASEAN countries border the pacific Ring of fire, vulnerable to volcanoes.

“ But what makes a desert beautiful
Is that somewhere it hides a well...”⁹⁹

Despite all these challenges that plague ASEAN-India relations and what we face in common, they offer wide Windows of Opportunity also.

India must build on the deep roots of our shared values and cultural traditions. Thanks to the efforts of Maurayan Kings, the principles of Buddhism have spread far and wide. The recent ritual of purification by Buddhist monks for children rescued from Thailand's cave, makes one ~~pride~~ proud of Indian culture. The Tourist Buddhist circuit can open way for people-to-people ties. More so, our Islamic connect with Indonesia can yield rich dividends in diplomacy.

Developing on these strong foundations, trade ties can be deepened. A give and take attitude, as well as strategic imperative must pave way for free-trade zone.

Singapore already finds a place in India's top 5 Investment source. This reflects the relations' potential upon greater ease of doing business in India. Many students are choosing the Singapore University for education and internships. India has also opened doors for shared research in multiple fields.

The collaboration of Vietnam with Atomic Energy Institute of India and new centre of International Rice Research Institute (Philippines) in Varanasi are apt examples. These shared paths must be bolstered with adequate Physical & Digital Connectivity between the regions.

India-Myanmar are working on Imphal-Moreh road and also India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) trilateral can increase trade. This Asian highway can help us reach the South East Asian Markets. On the maritime front, our proximity to Strait of Malacca is of considerable importance. Our freight-container capacity of ships must be enhanced for fully utilising the opportunity.

A mention of maritime trade, inevitably shifts attention to the upholding of International rules based order. ASEAN countries today, see India as a chief player in Regional Security Architecture. Maritime exercises and access to Changi port of Singapore is a testimony to this.

ASEAN-India can and must collaborate on Indian Ocean regions' security.

On the front of Renewable Energy, Malaysia recently signed an MOU to replicate the success of LED-UTALA scheme. International Solar Alliance can become the active site for such technology development.

India must leverage its Space technology advancements to monitor Monsoon movements and disaster forecast, monitoring and capacity generation must supplement our humanitarian efforts to deal with impending disasters.

Above analysis, has been a bird's eye view of immense opportunities that our relations hold.

Already, our geographical proximity and regional order binds us to a common destiny. In order to forge deeper understanding and a brighter future, our countries must collaborate.

ASEAN is the keystone of India's Act East policy and India represents a democratic, peaceful and emerging economy. Our strengths and assets must be directed to ~~create~~ overcome all the challenges that we face. On the robust base of our shared values of peace and mutual coexistence, India-ASEAN must tread the path for a common destiny. This can help realize our vision for Sustainable, Inclusive & Pan Asian Development.

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