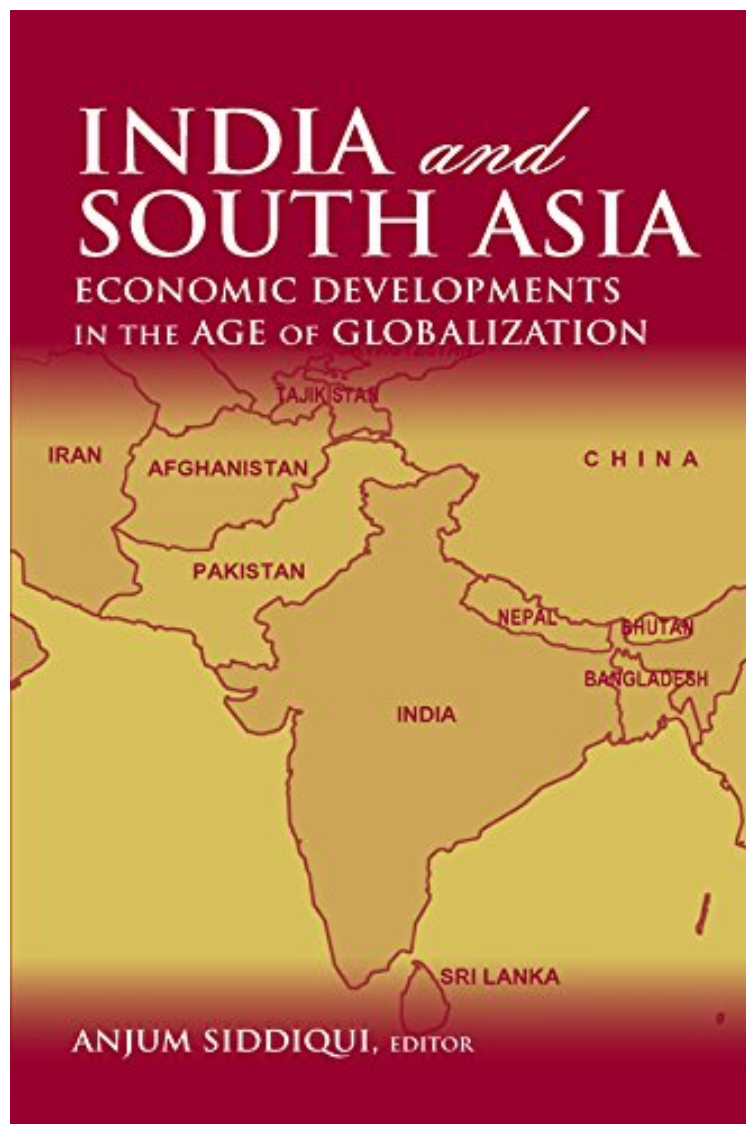


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Anjum Siddiqui

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Finally, after decades of socialist-inspired slow growth, India and its neighbours are starting to enjoy consistent and impressive growth rates. Necessary to eventually alleviate a still crushing poverty amongst many of their peoples. Here is a book that unabashedly hails globalisation for the benefits it brings. The technological infrastructure of the Internet and the vast bandwidths offered by fiber make offshoring of good, skilled jobs possible. By virtue of its sheer size, India dominates the book's scope. So we see the breathtaking growth in software, centred around a few cities like Bangalore and Mumbai. But the book also cautions that so far, only a relatively few million have tangibly benefited. The vast majority of Indians still have been mostly unaffected. And there are indeed large problems of parlous infrastructure. Where India compares most unfavourably with the immense buildout of the Chinese infrastructure. From electricity generation to highways, railways and ports, the Indian scene is often shambolic. The book raises real questions as to how long can the growth be sustained, given these impediments. The reader should not ignore the descriptions of the other south Asian countries. Notably Pakistan. They also have been registering strong growth. But there is one big difference between Pakistan and India, if you carefully read through the book. If you are an American company, wanting to offshore some design work, you can readily send your executives and other employees to India. To interact with an Indian offshoring firm. Or maybe to run a wholly owned subsidiary to do the equivalent work. Americans in India are generally pretty safe. The same cannot be said if they venture to Pakistan. Sadly, outside of a few protected enclaves in some Pakistani cities, there is considerable anti-American sentiment. Backed by armed insurgents who might be quite ready to kill American visitors. One reason why offshoring in the book focuses so much on India, with relatively little space given to Pakistan.

South Asia has become a major center of attention on the world stage with the U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan since 9/11, the ongoing concern over Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan, and India's emergence as a regional economic power. In addition, the age-old problems of South Asia - mass poverty, poor infrastructure, misgovernance, rampant corruption, political uncertainty, and regional wars - add to the increased interest in the region. Incorporating the most current information available, the expert international contributors to this handbook examine the economies and geo-political developments of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan. They focus on three core areas of importance: trade and development in the post-WTO era of globalization; macroeconomic adjustment and economic growth; and poverty, governance, the war on terror, and social indicators. With its cutting edge analysis, the handbook is an essential reference for all students, researchers, and practitioners dealing with the region.