

**India's Neighbourhood : The Armies of South Asia.** Edited by Vishal Chandra (New Delhi : Pentagon Press, 2013), pp..167, Price ₹ 795/-, ISBN 9788182747067.

India's neighbourhood has a profound impact in shaping its economic, foreign and defence policies. It is also a fact that the Army, as an institution, is a key component of power in a sovereign country. In the South Asian region, the armies of some of the countries have indeed played a key role in governance (i.e. Pakistan, Bangladesh and to some extent Sri Lanka). It is ironic that although India has been engaged in providing military training to defence personnel of most of the neighbouring countries, a negative perception of this country still persists. Thus it is necessary for military scholars, defence analysts and policy makers to study the structures, role, status and capability of these armies.

This short book gives an overview of the armies of seven countries in the region i.e. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. An attempt has been made to structure the chapters in a uniform manner, where necessary, issues of specific concern to that particular nation have been included. Some of the common issues covered include the security environment of the country, its geopolitical/strategic significance, geographical terrain, threat perception (domestic and external), origin/evolution of the army, its broad structure, civil-military relations, defence cooperation with other countries, people's perception of the army and future prospects. In multi-ethnic countries, the ethnic representation in the army vis-à-vis its percentage of total population have also been highlighted. Where necessary, statistics have been provided in the form of Tables/Figures.

The essays in this book are a very laudable effort by the team of authors to encapsulate the essentials of the evolution and role of the armies in India's neighbourhood. Due to restrictions of space, obviously one cannot expect a very detailed account, but the broad architecture has been extremely well covered, providing a good foundation for those interested in greater research. The book will be a valuable addition to military libraries.

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