India in the Connectivity Matrix
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Contemporary international relations seem to be fixated with the term connectivity. Connectivity projects that construct new logistical expanses encompass frontier regions and link outlying areas have come to characterize global politics. The magnitude of these ambitious ventures at connectivity encourages comparisons with similar initiatives that exemplified the geopolitics of Europe and the Atlantic in the 20th century. In this context the chapter attempts at engaging in a dialogue with various representations of connectivity with an emphasis on the Chinese and Indian connectivity projects but at the same time keeping abreast of the American, Turkish, Japanese, Korean and the Russian ones. It seeks to locate the region within the larger continental framework with a definite role for India and emphasizes the importance of policy connectivity in complementing infrastructural connectivity. The focus of the chapter is on mapping and analyzing the scope, vision and impact of Indian and Chinese transnational infrastructural projects. The individuality of the projects and their competitive nature is sought to be conceptualized. Attention is given to India's Act East Policy highlighting the interfaces, intersections and overlaps between India's Northeast and Southeast Asia in terms of connectivity projects. Similarly, the Go West Policy advocated by the Indian government is given consideration with its focus on diversifying linkages with West Asia, mapping connectivity projects and the security architecture. The importance of the sub regional-moment in connectivity is sought to be addressed. The gap between rhetoric and reality, the vision and its implementation is kept in mind. While mapping contemporary connectivity projects is the focal point of the chapter the historical backdrop in the form of spontaneous, pre-meditated linkages provide for the framework upon which constructed connectivity projects (with the accompanying disconnectedness) of the age of sovereign nation-states are contextualized and analyzed.