

National Seminar

Emerging Dynamics in India's Northeast
Society, Polity and Economy

Organised by

OKD Institute of Social Change and Development (OKDISCD), Guwahati

April 10-11, 2025

India's Northeast has always been considered as a special region in the colonial and post-colonial architecture of governance. This has been evidenced from several experiments and experiences of colonial and post-colonial interfaces between Indian state and the region. The peripheral and contested region of the nation-state commonly known as Northeast India has, however, seen significant transformation in terms of its sense of integration with the mainland and its socio-economic and political development. Further, the (in)adequate push for development in the region, making the region a gateway to the Southeast Asia and beyond has also attributed to newer understanding of the region hitherto been in isolation. The changing nature of political and economic appropriation of the natural and human resources of the region has another facet of its transformation. During the last few decades, the region has emerged as a point of reference so far as policy makers, politicians and businesses are concerned marking a paradigm shift, though in rhetorical sense, from a strategic frontier to a vibrant economic frontier. The proposed seminar intends to deal with the emerging debates and understandings in terms of changes in the relations between the region and the mainland, and the transformation in the field of society, economy and polity witnessed in the region.

The Seminar would have following Subthemes

1. Northeast India: History of Integration and Contestations

Colonial annexation had led to the rediscovery of the region with several political and administrative experiments which continued to dominate the discourses on the Northeast even today. The post-colonial governance of the region also had numerous innovative administrative structures. Besides, there are several instances of militant movements contesting the idea of integration of the region with the mainland. The seminar intends relook at the historicity of integration and contestations on the one hand and efficacy of mainstreaming and peace building exercises on the other.

2. Question of Identity, Autonomy and Citizenship

Understanding issues of identity and ethnic nationality in the Northeast has remained complex and diverse. Every ethnic nationality aspires to assert their identity and autonomy adding more complexity to the debate on ethnicity in the region. Furthermore, the move for updating the NRC and implementation of CAA, especially in Assam, has

brought back the question of citizenship. Hence, the Seminar intends to examine the question of identity and autonomy contextualising the citizenship debate.

3. National Political Contours and Regional Politics in the Northeast

There has been a visible shift in the national political contours in the country since the BJP-led new regime took over in 2014. Among others, the shift is also noticeable in terms of over-centralisation of the federal structure vis-à-vis declining pace of regional political parties. The Seminar intends to understand the dynamics of regional politics and issues of representation of Northeast in the overarching contours of present day national politics.

4. Northeast India in the Emerging Narrative of New India: Issues and Challenges

The thrust of this theme is to critically understand Northeast in the context of 'New India'. The term 'New India' popularly refer to the post-2014 era. Several new narratives pertaining to the Northeast have been created, such as terming Northeast as the *Astalakshmi* and new growth engine of national economy, among others. With several such new rhetorical narratives, it is claimed that the region has now received critical attention and boost/ impetus/ significance in terms of economic development that was ignored in the long period of post-colonial history. The Seminar intends to critically examine issues and challenges ahead and the debate they have generated in the region so far.

5. Emerging Development Paradigm in the Northeast India: Context and Content

Developmental bottleneck has always remained the primary concern for the Northeast. During last few decades, there has been lot of initiatives, to address the concerns of development in the region especially bridging the critical infrastructure gap in terms of connectivity and communication. Such initiatives have yet to augment benefits in terms of industrial growth and investment in the region. How far these development initiatives corroborate with the geographic specificity, environmental fragility and cultural diversity of the region is a question one needs to ponder upon critically.

Submission and other details

- 1. An abstract of around 500 words indicating the subtheme and research problems of the paper to be submitted by January 20, 2025, along with an author bio sketch (100 words) and 3-4 keywords to**

okdprogramme2022@gmail.com

- 2. Selected abstracts will be notified by January 31, 2025. Following this, each author must submit their full paper by March 15, 2025.**
- 3. Seminar dates: April 10-11, 2025**
- 4. Travel and accommodation: Limited support for travel expenses will be provided and modest accommodation will be arranged during the days of the seminar.**