

## **Infrastructure Development in Northeast India: Examining Inequality and Exclusion in the Development Promise of Progress and Prosperity**

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### **Abstract**

The pace of infrastructural development in Northeast India is on the uptick since 2008. The past development experience in Northeast India has oscillated between complete neglect to sporadic interest based on particular needs of economic enclaves and military preparedness and strategic presence. From a scorched-earth policy of New Delhi in frontier areas such as Arunachal Pradesh, to the Trans-Arunachal Highway Project aiming to connect remote border areas, for instance, exemplifies the shifting priorities. The infrastructural development priorities in Northeast India have seen a lopsided pattern, and core questions about the balance between the promise of economic prosperity and social inequalities is important to examine, especially when India is engaging with Japan to intensify its infrastructure development in its strategic frontier.

The social infrastructure requirements for the various tribal communities of Northeast India, along the basic developmental indicators of public health and hygiene, sanitation, education facilities across all levels, access to safe drinking water, banking institutions, markets and job opportunities, have to be strengthened in order to enable the people of the region to absorb the economic benefits in a sustainable manner. Borderland communities in Northeast India collectively face a democratic deficit in meaningfully participating in the infrastructural development decision-making.

**Keywords:** Infrastructure Development, Inequality and Disparity, Democratic Deficit