

Discussion

Monirul Hussain continued the discussion by arguing that the map making of northeast is continuous, it has continued since the British times and has been a source of conflict. The border of northeast India was always fluid where people came in from different regions. Also Assam was not a part of the Indian empire in the historical context which resulted in different mixtures of ethnicity in the region. Once borders were demarcated during the British era, the flow of people from different directions also came to a stop. The integration of the region to India has always been contentious. Now that India looks forward to be a global power, northeast is supposed to play a part through Look East Policy. This has several implications for the region. It is important to recall that besides Bengal and Punjab, Assam was also partitioned during 1947.

It is important to emphasize that the infrastructure in the region is still not developed. There have been some improvements, but not enough. The aspirations of Look East Policy is yet to materialize. The partition took away a substantial transport network in the region. It is still a difficult task to connect to Southeast Asia through the Northeast. The proposition of connecting the capitals is yet to see daylight. It is very difficult to visit regions like Mizoram. We have to go via Calcutta. Now Agartala and Arunachal are in now railway map. However, roads in Arunachal gets shutdown due to landslides leading to uncertainties in the journey. The ILP is also a impediment to communication in the region. These are also negating factors in business and trade. The project completion rate is very poor in the region. The east west corridor is also a farfetched dream. The political unrest, particularly in Bodoland becomes very important in the discussion since the issues of the Bodo people are yet to be solved. There needs to be more emphasis on infrastructure building. One may recall that as far back as the 1940's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had managed to enter Myanmar through the north east. However, even today there is no direct connectivity to Myanmar after 70 years of independence.