



National Seminar

State, Community and Gender: Frameworks and Practices in South Asia

Department of Sociology, Tezpur University

Date: 15th & 16th March 2022.

Venue: Department of Sociology, Tezpur University, Assam

How do we talk about gender justice in a language that does not undermine the rights of the non-majoritarian groups? What are the lessons to be learnt from the transnational forms of gender politics that questions older forms of knowledge produced about women? How does one engage with these issues at a time of the simultaneous ascendance of neoliberal economics and right-wing politics?

Feminist scholars and activists have engaged with these sets of questions and contributed towards a more nuanced understanding of the issues of gender justice. While the idea of a just and an all-inclusive public-space has largely remained an elusive normative ideal everywhere, historical investigations have underlined the specific forms of exclusions faced by women from minority groups and cultures in post-colonial contexts. The history of anti-colonial resistance has affected the history of gender politics in Indian subcontinent in myriad ways. However, the more contemporary discourses on the rights of minority groups and gender equality in the Indian subcontinent needs to be placed in the specific context of the strengthening of a majoritarian politics, and a larger shift at policy level towards a neoliberal economic framework. These shifts have presented fresh set of challenges for people from minority groups in terms of shrinkage of the availability of public goods, and through enforcement of stricter codes of inclusion in public spaces; and yet, we are also witness to the novel forms of resistance and mobilisations, often led by women from varied caste, class, and community positions. In these times we need to revisit the idea of an inclusive society and gender justice in ways that enable us to decode the nature of our public space, institutions and the moral codes of civic life, and open them up for scrutiny in terms of parity of participation. We also need to understand the life experiences of groups that are at variance with the majoritarian cultures through more engaged modes of hearing/listening. These processes not only help in cultivating a more nuanced and critical understanding of our times, but they also help in articulating our vision of the alternative publics.

Themes

The seminar proposes to critically engage with the following themes from a gendered perspective:

Frameworks and perspectives on minority rights

Communities in postcolonial societies

Codes of inclusion and exclusion in public space

Protests, mobilisations and resistance

Cultural politics of education

Intersection of class, community, and caste in the everyday life

About the event

The two-day seminar invites academics, researchers, and activists to engage with similar questions and participate in the process of fostering dialogue through this platform. The Seminar is organized and hosted by the Department of Sociology at Tezpur University on 15th and 16th March 2022.

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