

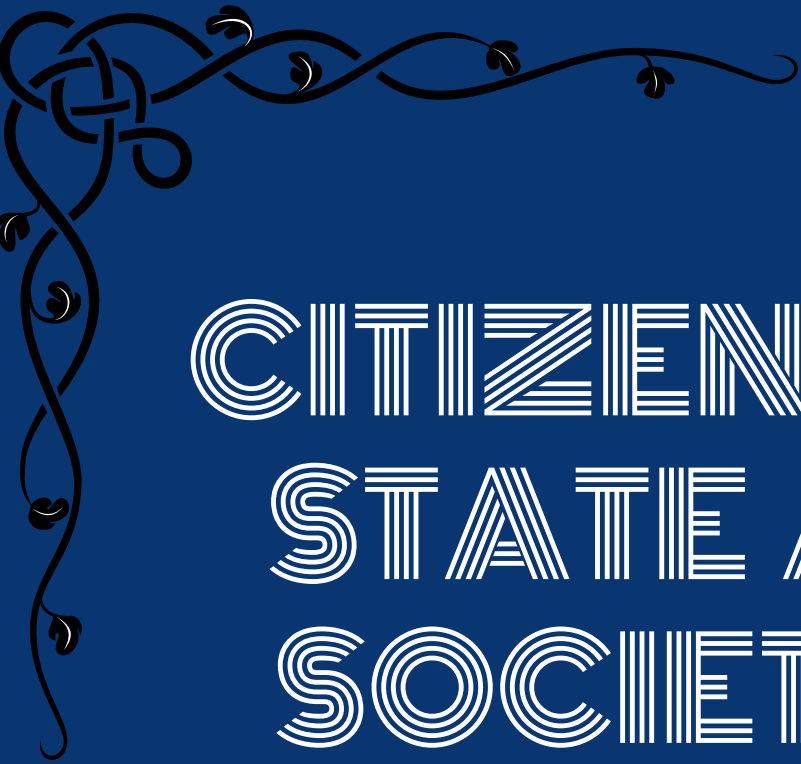
Citizenship, State and Society in Contemporary Times

**Organised by
Department of Sociology
&
Centre for Public Policy and Governance
Tezpur University
Date: 14th March 2022 (Monday)**

In classical understanding, citizenship stands for an egalitarian term that carries the connotation of the ruler and the ruled. Normatively it overrides any distinctions on the basis of class, gender, race, religion, region and ethnicity. But, in contemporary discourse, scholars have looked beyond the conceptualization of citizenship as a legal status granted by the State and tried to engage with the differentiated nature of political membership and participation. Sociologists and anthropologists have posited that citizenship takes on multiple meanings and forms based on citizens' everyday engagements with state and non-state actors. In this context, citizenship is a complex bundle of practices of the encounter between the state and citizens at different scales and levels. Scholars have also focused on the everyday engagement and interactions of marginalised people with the state. During the enactment of citizenship, the questions of entitlements, rights, and obligations of people are shaped by conditions specific to their social biography and location. Various social categories such as gender, caste, ethnicity, religion, language play a crucial role in the process of defining citizenship.

The specter of scale at which relevant communities operate has also aided the discussion of national citizenship vis-a-vis studies of cosmopolitan, transnational, or global citizenships. Because citizenship practices are also the means by which societies establish inclusion and exclusion, here the figure of the non-citizen is crucial to the construction of citizenship. Non-citizens might be conceptualized as strangers, aliens, migrants, or refugees, and these individuals always raise questions about the definitions of political communities and their borders. It provides the standpoint for people who are 'excluded' and what struggles they undergo to claim their status as a full citizen which in turn asks us to imagine how the idea of citizenship keeps unfolding through their everyday practices of claim-making to the State.

Such a new form of contestation raises debate on citizenship whether it is a legal status or a moral claim. This seminar is a modest attempt to delve into different social processes which enable or inhibit people to interact with the state. The seminar proposes to raise a few questions on the interrelationship between citizenship, state, and society in contemporary times.



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