

ICSSR-NERC Annual Social Science Congress

13th -14th December 2018

Citizenship, Ethnicity and Nation State in North-East India

Concept

The issue of citizenship is an age-old challenge for the state that wants to ascertain the exact number and nature of its constituents. The state acquires its legitimacy from citizens only through acceptability to the former's authority. So the citizenry is the very soul of an abstract democratic state. But citizenship of an individual is determined in a manner in which he has least control. Although political citizenship is acquired primarily in two ways, i.e., by birth or by acquisition, mostly people in the world acquire citizenship by birth. Of late, there is demand for global citizenship, cultural citizenship, etc. in which individual has a greater say than in political citizenship. However, global and cultural citizenship ignore the centrality of the state accompanied with power and authority rather prefer the idea of nation state system wherein individual plays more active role. So under the perception of global and cultural citizenship, India is to be seen as nation state but not as the state nation as argued by some scholars. Ethnicity which is adequately present within the contours of the nation, articulates the nature of the state in the traditional sense. Also, ethnicity expects the cultural dimension to be manifest more prominently in social relationship overshadowing the political public.

India's northeast home to different ethnic and cultural communities is often viewed from the prism of nation more rather than the state. The state comes into picture by exercising its authority when the equilibrium in ethnic and cultural relationship is disturbed. From this perspective, the state is seen as the monitor or regulator of ethnic and cultural relations in this region, not as its inalienable part. That perception has resulted in various uprisings and dissents in northeast India. However, it will be too judgmental to say whether the public perception is to be changed or the nature of governance to be corrected. But the fact is that the region has witnessed several ethnic clashes, inter-community rivalries and endless violence since independence. In turn, it has affected the individual's political bond with the state and contributed to the emergence of new lesser-known ethnic entities with new demands and aspirations. At present, the biggest challenge before the intelligentsia in general and social scientists in particular is how to find out some mechanisms which will bring social harmony, mutual trust and sense of belongingness in the overall nation building process. If we can achieve it in our social responsibility as social scientists, that will be great service not only to the northeast region but also to India writ large. With this in mind, a two-day seminar has been conceptualised with the hope that it will help generate an environment toward a more harmonious, prosperous and egalitarian society in India's northeast.

The Indian Council of Social Science Research's North Eastern Regional Centre has been striving incessantly to organise critical discourse on such crucial issues that needs attention of the think-tanks within and outside the region. For this year, the theme of the Annual Social Congress has been identified as ***Citizenship, Ethnicity and Nation State in North-East India*** and the venue will be Tezpur University campus. The Sociology Department of Tezpur University has kindly consented to help organising the event. It will be held on 13th and 14th December, 2018. The abstracts are invited from scholars, academicians, activists and think-tanks and if selected, full papers will be submitted before the Event as per the timeline mentioned in the ICSSR-NERC's website.

Sub-Themes

Concept of Citizenship

Political Citizenship vrs. Cultural Citizenship

Global Citizenship

History of Ethnicity and Citizenship Question

The Idea of Citizenship in a Nation State System in the context of North-East India

Ethnic Relations and Ethnic Rivalry

Cross-Border Migration and Citizenship Issue

Infiltration Issue and its Impact on Society, Economy and Politics

Impact of Citizenship and Nation State system on the Economy of N.E. India