

**One Day International Seminar On Rethinking State and Civil Society, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2020  
Organized by**

**The Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal**

**Concept Note**

At a conceptual level, civil society is said to be a historically bound concept that varies from one society to another. Civil society has been referred to as “our last best hope” and a “key to good governance” by some scholars. It has a unique role of expanding and promoting civic space by bringing citizens into the political sphere and mobilizing a range of popular voices to address the government on issues of interest. However, this role can be achieved only when civil society is given the space to act. State-civil society relations are central in defining the role CSOs can play in national development, because it is governments that must give civil society the space and autonomy to organize through the law.

Debates about state-civil society relationship have long filled the literature. The major theories developed within this context have argued that this relationship differs from one political context to another. To better understand this relationship numerous frameworks have been developed to provide an improved understanding of the state-CS relationship. In 1992, Gidron et al. analyse the state-CS relationship by taking the social welfare system as a basis for their framework (Gidron et al. 1992). In that framework, the authors presented four different typologies of the relationship: (1) government dominant (government being the main funder and provider of services); (2) third sector dominant (this sector being the main funder and deliverer of services); (3) dual (both sectors working in parallel in different spheres and not cooperating); (4) collaborative (both sectors collaborating where the government is funding and the third sector is delivering the services). In this fourth typology, Gidron et al. stressed the need to analyse the degree of autonomy of service provision, since such an arrangement could lead either to the third sector acting as the agent of the state or to enjoying a high degree of autonomy .

Neither State, nor Civil Society is immutable, nor is the context, and change in one leads to the others through triangulation. As it appears in India, as well as in some other countries, new nationalist upswing has the possibility of changing the relationship between State and Civil Society, new types of governance and new types of civil spaces. Against this backdrop the seminar invites papers in the following areas:

- a) Rethinking State building
- b) Civil Society and Public Institutions
- c) Understanding---Democracy, Citizenship, Representation.

***Important Dates: Abstract Submission to be made by 26<sup>th</sup> February,2020.***

***Intimation to Selected Paper Presenter 28<sup>th</sup> February,2020***

***Full Paper Submission to be made by 2<sup>nd</sup> March,2020***

***[Times New Roman,12 font, single space, APA style,Headings in 14 font, Author's name in 10 font italics after the heading]***

Abstract to be sent to: [ranjitac.slg@gmail.com](mailto:ranjitac.slg@gmail.com)