



Programme: **Ph. D**

Course No: **LG 698**

Course Title: **Civil Society and Democracy in India**

Credits: **4**

Course Type: **Elective**

Semester: **Second**

Course Faculty: Dr. Varada A. Sambhus

Class Schedule and room: As per the time table

About the Course

The idea of civil society has gained a momentum in the contemporary discourse as the efforts are made to deepen democracy and make governance more participative. Though the idea of political society and civil society can be seen in the writings of thinkers of earlier centuries, it received a fresh attention in last three decades. Across the political and ideological spectrum, a need for civil society organizations is realized. It is commonly accepted that a robust network of civil society organizations is necessary for effective democratic functioning. In a democratic set up, though competitive electoral systems are essential, they are insufficient. Self-organized groups of citizens check the power of the state as well as critically engage with the policy makers and adjudicators at various levels of governance. However, do all civil society groups contribute to strengthening of democracy? Whether the democratic space be available to such civil society organizations that instigate hatred, violence and divisions in the society? What are the kinds, functions and limits of the civil society? Is the conceptual framework as developed in the western context, relevant to the Indian scenario? How does the state regulate the civil society organizations? This course shall help students to reflect upon these questions while exploring the interdisciplinary debate and contestations around the notion of civil society. The objective of this course is to discuss the complex and contingent relationship between civil society and state in India and analyse how it impacts institutions and processes of democracy and governance. During the course, students will undertake comprehensive cross disciplinary readings on civil society, state and democracy. While focusing on the Indian context, the instances from the global developments will be discussed during the course.

Course Outline

1. Civil Society

- a. Conceptual Trajectory and Key Debates
- b. Uncivil Society and Beyond Civil Society?
- c. Civil Society in India
- d. Global Civil Society

2. Democratic Governance

- a. Meaning, Scope and Limits
- b. Role of Civil Society in Democratic Governance
- c. Participation, Deliberation and Negotiation

3. NGOs, INGOs and Social Movements

- a. Nature, Type, Structure and Organization
- b. Local, Regional and Global Concerns
- c. Transformation – Reform and Revolution

4. Dynamics of Civil Society

- a. Factors: Caste, Class, Gender and Religion
- b. Market – Neo-Liberal Market, Social Capital
- c. Obligation and Resistance
- d. Policy Advocacy, Public Deliberation and Opinion Making

5. Digital Civil Society

- a. New Pathways of Social Activism
- b. Algorithms, Digital Platforms and Civil Society
- c. Civic Tech and Digital Democracy
- d. Limitations, Challenges and Opportunities