Concept note:

Since the 19th century, the understanding of culture has been one of the central focuses of understanding human societies by different disciplines, especially anthropology. From the lens of orientalist gaze in the early part of the twentieth century to that of the shift in focus to focusing on the native's point of view in the 1960s, and then the focus on appropriate representation of culture as a dialogic expression of natives, has shaped the way of doing studies of culture. Culture has been an inherent part of scholars' understanding of society. Scholars have produced a lot of literature, from belief systems to norms and values that people are obliged to. However, the question is whether we have exhausted our understanding of culture in our methodological approaches, theorisation and outlook. Critiques no longer restrict the understanding of culture as the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behaviour. It is more than that. There is much to explore regarding the theories and methodologies used to study the nuances of culture within Indian society. Approaching culture as a dynamic entity rooted in socio-cultural anthropology, yet not limited to the discipline alone, one can approach culture from different cognate disciplines. What the seminar intends to do is revisit the concept of culture, especially within the context of Northeast India, which is also multiculturally vibrant, given the dynamic nature and societies that are no longer insulated but changing and reinventing themselves, we have new paradigms to understand the culture to generate multiple understandings of it.

Objectives:

1. To reexamine the socio-anthropological concept of culture
2. To understand the contemporary cultures of the tribal and non-tribal Societies in Northeast India
3. To foster interdisciplinary approaches to understanding culture
4. To explore new methodologies for cultural research in Northeast studies