



Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Lecture Series
Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Politics at the Boiling Point South Asian Environmental History and the Anthropocene

Prof. Rohan D'Souza

Date: Monday, 22 August 2016

Time: 4 pm

Venue: Seminar Hall, HSS

Environmental history has acquired a critical political urgency in the contemporary context of climate change and anxieties about global warming. Three ingredients have been central to most environmental history writings. First, is the much fortified claim that Nature is not a passive backdrop to the drama of human life. Second, has been the effort to relate environmental change to aspects of political economy, cultural politics and social transformation. And thirdly, debating the presumed boundary between nature and culture.

The speaker will be suggesting that South Asian environmental history will need to announce a decisive conceptual shift in terms of its central concerns and object of study. Scholarship will have to be more attentive to debates about 'historical responsibility' (HR) and be ever more willing to engage with the much troubled notion of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDRRC): a defining principle of the Kyoto Protocol (1992). Put differently, environmental history writing in the South will have to frontally take on 'anthropocene politics'.

About the Speaker

Rohan D'Souza is Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies (Kyoto University). He is the author of *Drowned and Dammed: Colonial Capitalism and Flood control in Eastern India (1803-1946)*, Oxford University Press, 2006. He has co-edited with Deepak Kumar and Vinita Damodaran, *The British Empire and the Natural World: Environmental Encounters in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, 2011 and has also edited *Environment, Technology and Development: Critical and Subversive Essays*, Orient BlackSwan, 2012