



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

Conflict, Displacement and Ethnicity in Bodoland, Assam

Makiko Kimura

Date: Wednesday, 22 February 2017

Time: 4 pm

Venue: Seminar Room, HSS

In 2012, a violent attack against Muslims of Bengal origin took place in Kokrajhar district, in the western part of Assam. The attackers belonged to the Bodos, an indigenous ethnic group of the area. About one hundred people died and 400,000 were displaced by the violence.

This was not the first time for such violence to take place in the Bodo Territorial Autonomous Districts (BTAD) in Assam's west. There had been ethnic clashes in the past in response to a movement to create a separate state of Bodoland and achieve autonomy for the Bodo people. In the 1990s, in particular, there were large-scale attacks against Muslims in 1993 and 1994 and attacks against Adivasis in 1996 and 1998. Retaliatory attacks against the Bodos followed, with several chains of violent incidents. Several hundred people lost their lives and more than half a million were displaced.

One prominent feature of the violence in this area is that although the number of deaths is not too high, the number of people displaced is much higher, and people have had to take refuge in makeshift camps for a long period of time. Even before 2012 attack, more than 50,000 people were already living in the camps. It is also prominent that those who stayed in the camps were mostly Muslims and Adivasis, although many Bodo people have had to flee when the violence broke out.

Based on fieldwork undertaken among internally displaced persons (IDPs) in BTAD, this presentation will attempt to analyze why some people who belong to certain ethnic groups cannot return to their villages even two decades since the violence.

About the Speaker

Makiko Kimura studied at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi) for her PhD degree. She was a postdoctoral research fellow (2004–2007) of the Japan Society for Promotion of Science and research associate (2007–2011) at the International Peace Research Institute, Meiji Gakuin University (Tokyo). Currently she teaches at Tsuda College (Tokyo). Her research interest is ethnic movements and conflicts in Northeast India.