

Understanding Asia: State-Society Relations

# Development Hybris and the Dubious Recognition of the 'Environment' in Indian National Politics

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Since the establishment of the BJP government in 2014 debates on the state of India's environment gained new momentum. Critics worry about the continuous erosion of rules, laws and institutions meant to protect the environment, in the context of a state policy, which propagates corporate economic growth as its main mission. Especially attacks on laws protecting the rights of marginalised communities, the speeding up of 'green clearances' of industrial projects and pushing new large scale 'development' projects like the Indian River Linking Project (IRLP) or the Char Dham All Weather Highway Development Project, alarmed vigilant citizens. In view of such a hegemonic national policy social conflicts are predestined and the perspective on state-society relations needs to be pluralized.

This contribution will critically review the environmental laws and policies in the context of India's national development strategy and especially look at their impact on different parts of Indian society. It will further pay attention to the arena of civil (political) society, which also encompasses new forms of 'saffron environmentalism'. ■

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