Two Regimes of Waste and Value: 'Post-Disaster' Landscapes in a New India

Abstract

In this age of 'disaster capitalism', catastrophes are neither 'natural' nor 'external'. They are political events mediating and vitally shaping the unequal and exploitative use of environmental resources. India's 'post-disaster'[1] landscapes at the turn of the new millennium powerfully demonstrate how visions of the 'new-normal' can be imposed in the catastrophe's aftermath by indomitable state-capital alliances. Insidious ideas of 'entrepreneurship' and a muscular Hindutva-tinged liberalisation have served as the main tropes of post-disaster recovery and management interventions of the past two decades. The article demonstrates how these post-disaster landscapes, as seen in the cases of the 2001 Gujarat earthquake and 1999 Odisha supercyclone, can be understood through regimes of waste and value, which redefine the meanings of space and nature. At their core, these regimes rely on the purposive use of institutions, laws and discourses by powerful actors at multiple levels. The article suggests that the post-disaster landscape offers a unique perspective into the everyday environmental authoritarianism unfolding throughout India today.

Keywords: value; disaster; catastrophe; waste; environment; new India

INTRODUCTION

Major environmental disruptions unleashed by extreme hydro-meteorological and geological events are taking place all around the world. Floods, cyclones, heatwaves, earthquakes and tsunamis all produce changes that have profound socio-political consequences on the configuration of societies and the distribution of power. While these hazards derive from natural physical phenomena, it is their interaction with the unequal structures of society that underpins their transformation into devastating disasters (Wisner et al., 2004). Moreover, disasters and catastrophes constitute important political moments for powerful states that in alliance with private capital implement new ideas from above, reshaping landscapes, livelihoods and populations in ways that would have been contested in 'normal times'. Klein

[1] We put 'post-disaster' in quotes just once to emphasise the contingency and fluidity of what post means in the context of disaster but refrain from doing this throughout the text for ease of reading.

labelled these phenomena as the ‘shock doctrine’ and ‘the rise of disaster capitalism’ (2007) to exploit situations of crisis and intense confusion.

There exists a growing body of scholarship on how, in the aftermath of the shock, states and private capital deliberately rely upon a simplified perspective that treats the disaster as both a non-social *and* a non-political phenomenon, framing disaster risk reduction (DRR) and recovery policies in technical terms (Oliver-Smith, 2016). While focusing on the immediate aftermath, these dominant actors deliberately elude questions of longer-term processes of dispossession and precarity, even when the cumulative effects of disasters may be felt over a long period (Baruah, 2022). Research on disaster politics has shown how disasters may act as tipping points for either accelerated status quo and restoration of the social order or for transformative change (Pelling and Dill, 2009). This article builds on this important scholarship but goes further, to specifically examine how post-disaster management interventions of the past two decades reflect ideas of waste and value, purity and pollution, utility and idleness. In fact, the politics of the aftermath itself becomes a prism to examine India’s intensified turn to environmental authoritarianism since the start of the century, both in direct and indirect ways.

The principal elements of authoritarianism in India include the state’s selective backing of big-capital, punishment of dissent and the compliance by capital with a larger project of Hindu majoritarianism (Sinha, 2021), all of which have serious implications for a specific environmental authoritarianism (Dutta and Nielsen, 2021). Authoritarian rule does not always emerge through spectacular violence alone; it can manifest through the quiet repurpose of legal and bureaucratic institutions. Chacko (2018) describes how the authoritarian turn in India has precisely involved subtle institutional capture, reinterpretation of law, and a politics of revenge, analysed as ‘authoritarian statist’ tendencies aimed at marginalizing dissent within a framework of constitutional democracy. Despite the long history of a Hindu environmental consciousness in India, scholars note 2014 as marking a sharp turn in right wing politics but especially in Indian environmental policy (Sharma, 2023). However, this environmental authoritarianism is not a unified and top-down project; instead, as Sud (2020) has compellingly shown, it is multi-scalar, enrolling subnational and local bureaucracies and other informal actors beyond the state. Building on Sud’s perspective, this article interrogates post-disaster politics in two distinct yet comparable cases of Jagatsinghpur district in Odisha on the eastern coast after the 1999 supercyclone, and Kutch district in Gujarat on the western coast after the 2001 earthquake to make three principal contributions.

First, we situate the contemporary reconstruction and recovery politics of the post-disaster landscape in India within the global rise of disaster capitalism (Klein, 2007), and an era of authoritarian crisis resolution (Bruff, 2014) but we go beyond the national story. We explore how the national turn to environmental authoritarianism can be observed through waste and value regimes post-disaster in two subnational contexts. *Second*, we examine how the disaster and its aftermath play a part in engendering these regimes of waste and value - through deliberate changes in institutions, laws and discourses. We see the broader operation of these regimes as constellations of formal rules and informal codes of conduct, beyond formal state apparatuses and policies, contributing to the everyday nature of environmental authoritarianism. *Third*, this comparative approach allows us to say more about two critical elements of authoritarian development reconfiguring post-disaster landscapes. Pro-capital political coalitions and the dynamics of saffron politics in both Gujarat and Odisha have been instrumental in driving resource reconfigurations and environmental changes in the aftermath of disaster, but their modalities are not identical.

Methodologically, this essay is a result of long-term engagement by the authors in the two case study sites, and a collaboration to bring together our research into an analytical synthesis[2]. For Odisha, research has been carried out studying the long-term trajectories of the supercyclone under 4 research projects since 2009. These projects were devoted to understanding memories of the supercyclone as well as the trajectories of recovery beyond the immediate aftermath. For Gujarat, research has been carried out for a doctoral project studying wind power politics and land relations in Kutch since 2019. Our insights are drawn from our field engagement based on predominantly qualitative research: interviews, group discussions and participant observation (more than 150 interviews and group meetings in Odisha carried out by one author and their research associates over the 4 projects, and around 70 carried out by the second author in Gujarat). These research projects also drew from a variety of secondary sources ranging from published research to grey literature, reports, proceedings of conferences, policy documents, laws, newspaper reports, and official and company databases. A critical reading of other scholarly work especially in early post-earthquake Kutch, Gujarat provided the context in which doctoral research could be carried out. In Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, more recent scholarly work brought the analysis up to date. A few key informant interviews were also

[2] We responded to a call for a niche conference 'Living in the Aftermath- Catastrophes in South Asia and the Himalayas' at the Centre des Colloques, Paris, in June 2024. The paper was born out of this conference presentation.

conducted for the Odisha case in August 2024 given the very recent change in its state government. Long-term studies of disaster recovery continue to be rare (see Fayazi et al., 2019) and we were motivated by the aim of bringing our two cases into dialogue to critique the contemporary politics of development.

The next three sections set out an essential conceptual and contextual prologue to the cases. Section 2 situates the politics of India's environment within the global rise of authoritarian populism. Section 3 problematises the 'aftermath' and its politics in the context of disaster. Section 4 discusses the regimes of waste and value, the conceptual framework for this analysis. The substantive empirical analysis in Kutch, Gujarat, and Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, follows in Section 5. And section 6 concludes.

THE RISE OF AUTHORITARIAN POPULISM AND THE POLITICS OF INDIA'S ENVIRONMENT

In countries across the world, political elites have come to 'privilege regime maintenance and internal stability over political liberalisation', hence leading to situations of environmental authoritarianism (Beeson, 2010: 276). The rise of an 'authoritarian fix' within neoliberal capitalism has emerged as a powerful means to eliminate all remaining barriers to accumulation, starting with the environment and its 'constraining' protection standards (Bruff, 2014). Globally, we see the emergence of national-populist leaders who promise the restoration of a socially conservative status quo that also extends to nature and the environment (Sinha, 2021). Authoritarian regimes result in coercive and highly securitised forms of environmental and resource governance that can be deadly at the extreme (Deutsch, 2021; Middeldorp and Le Billon, 2019).

Authoritarian modes of organising and managing the environment generally conflate nature and nation: 'Physical and biological environments and resources become politically understood as inextricably linked to national identities, fortunes, and prospects […] politics of nativism, masculinism, white [or religious] supremacy, and the hardening of borders are deeply intertwined with ideas linking racialized, gendered, and national identities to specific environments, territories.'(McCarthy, 2019: 306–7). Indeed, in this era of authoritarian crisis resolution, environmental management accompanies broader governmental projects to discipline colonised subjects even within postcolonial development regimes, producing surplus populations and enforcing ethnic boundaries (Harms, 2014; Mullenite, 2019).

The authoritarian-populism of the BJP-led national regime since 2014 has striking environmental implications (Dutta and Nielsen, 2021; Sinha, 2021). Despite its long tradition of the use of draconian state power for securitisation of the environment, there is little doubt that India has entered a new phase of 'autocratic environmental governance' (Dutta and Nielsen, 2021: 70). The current political dispensation has considerably diluted key environmental laws and regulations and enhanced a variety of controls on environmentally active individuals and organisations, amounting to an effective environmental authoritarianism (Dutta and Nielsen, 2021). Acts/notifications for land acquisition (LARRA 2013), coastal zone protections (CRZ notifications 2014-18), forest rights (Forest Act 1927 and Forest Rights Act 2006), and Compensatory Afforestation (CAMPA 2018), besides the procedures for EIA have all seen important changes (see Kohli and Menon, 2022).

India also has a deep history of mainstream environmental consciousness influenced by Hindu nationalism, as manifest in plural versions of 'eco-nativism', 'eco-naturalism' and 'eco-nationalism' (Chatterji et al., 2019; Sharma, 2012, 2023). The salience of the current political moment, i.e., the 'new India', is in normalizing Hindu nationalism as an uncontested cultural expression of Indian identity that has unleashed a vitriolic politics of authenticity within public discourse (Ahmed, 2024; Dutta and Nielsen, 2021). A distinctive brand of 'Hindutva constitutionalism' has appropriated the constitution as a sacred idea, while keeping 'legal technicalities' ambiguous to pursue authoritarian political projects, such as the revoking of Article 370 and reversing the secular basis of citizenship laws (Ahmed, 2024; Jaffrelot, 2021). Aided by a strong conception of waste and value and its pollution-purification equivalent, Hindutva politics resonates with violent racialized and colonial land relations that claim access to indigenous land, enforcing power relations that traverse caste, class, tribe and gender (Crowley, 2022; Lerche and Shah, 2018). This majoritarianism rides on the popularisation of widely shared notions of goods and harms based on creating value from wasted lands, peoples, and entire environments. Disasters, as visible moments of rupture, provide useful opportunities for these notions to take root. We interrogate how a disaster and its aftermath intensify an everyday and multi-scalar environmental authoritarianism, as seen through the sliding of democratic controls, the varied manipulation of consent, and denigration of 'less valuable' peoples and land uses.

DISASTER AND THE POLITICS OF THE AFTERMATH IN TWO INDIAN STATES

Disasters continue to be treated by states as unpredictable and catastrophic acts of nature that are external to society (Zhang, 2016). In India too, there is a pronounced focus on the 'naturalness' of the calamity within the norms of disaster relief, reflecting the legacy of the colonial Famine Commission of 1880. Contrarily, critical insights in DRR show that a hazard interacts with societal risk, stemming from the structural factors of poverty, inequality and marginalisation (Wisner et al., 2004). State interventions in the name of disasters, or indeed, in response to disasters, have been criticised for perpetuating unjust modes of planning and governance of highly colonial and racialised mentalities, institutions and processes (Rastogi, 2020; Rivera, 2022). Guyot-Réchard (2015) demonstrates for example how the 1950 Assam earthquake and its aftermath fuelled considerable stereotypes about the 'northeast frontier' that furthered its marginality within Indian mental maps and undermined its continued unity.

Odisha flanked by the Bay of Bengal to its east, has a long history of cyclones and floods in its coastal tracts. The devastating supercyclone of 1999 triggered a shake-up of a visibly unprepared administration, while leading to the political casualty of the presiding Congress government (Ray-Bennett, 2018). Given India's politics of fiscal federalism, the outgoing Congress government alleged unfavourable treatment by the BJP-ruled centre, despite the declaration of the supercyclone as a national calamity (Chhotray, 2014). The 2000 state elections ushered in the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD, a powerful regional party with a centralised leadership that went on to rule the state continuously, until its defeat to the BJP in 2024.

Under Patnaik, disaster management became a politico-administrative mission to be accomplished. The government created the Odisha State Disaster Management Authority or OSDMA in 2000, and the passage of the Odisha Disaster Management Act in 2005, inspiring a National Act along the same lines. It has transformed response protocols with a raft of techno-infrastructural measures like cyclone shelters, embankments and sea walls combined with community preparedness drills. 'Zero casualties' as a defining mission of disaster management became a political win-win, with the state gaining accolades at home and abroad for minimising deaths after Cyclone Phailin in 2013. Critical concerns were also raised about the promotion of a lucrative construction culture through the infrastructure-heavy response of the state, and the question of longer-term recovery, but key officials in OSDMA firmly defended the sanctity of their defined disaster management approach (Chhotray, 2022).

With a death toll surpassing 20,000 persons in the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, the state government could certainly not claim a 'zero casualty' policy as it turned out to be outrageously

unprepared to handle the deadly consequences of the catastrophe. Although it did manage to create from scratch the first ever Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) just a few weeks after the tremor, the initial government interventions bounded compensation to only material damages and delimited the recipients of aid to those with proper government documents, property titles, ration cards and the like, leaving behind the most vulnerable (Sud, 2001). Police even had to fire warning shots in Bhuj over a crowd that protested the unfair distribution of relief materials and the lack of state actions. The failure of BJP Kesubhai Patel's government to manage the catastrophe, and its embroilment in broader corruption allegations, further pushed him out of office. Eight months after the disaster, in October 2001, Narendra Modi was propelled at the forefront of Gujarat politics and replaced Patel as the new Chief Minister (CM) while never having faced a single election. He subsequently promoted his post-earthquake reconstruction as a form of efficient governance and a symbol of his successful 'Gujarat model' that served well Modi's ambitions to win Prime Ministership in 2014.

This post-disaster management model in coastal Gujarat, and the politics of development that followed, are, like others before, characterised by the dominant idea of (re)building everything anew, and cultivate a strong sense of erasure, forgetfulness and collective amnesia among the population. Only three years after the shock, the Gujarat CM was already prompting impacted populations 'to put the earthquake behind them', a veritable politics of memorialization unfolded that was aimed at 'silenc[ing] alternative readings of the earthquake and its significance' (Simpson and Corbridge, 2006: 581), establishing it quickly as something of the past. This politics of erasure and forgetfulness had nonetheless a strong precedent and history, as argued by Simpson (2020). In contrast, the anniversary of the supercyclone is marked through meetings and drills across the affected districts, with a politics of remembering rather than forgetting serving the interests of the state administration to publicly declaim its accomplishments.

Scholars studying disaster politics have emphasised that disasters may act as tipping points, or moments for an acceleration of the status quo (Pelling and Dill, 2009). However, this scholarship also shows that disasters cannot be deterministically used to explain ensuing events; their interaction with other factors matters. Unlike post-earthquake Kutch in Gujarat's economic hinterland, Odisha's cyclone-affected districted districts fall within the economically dominant coastal zone, already home to varied industries, ports and transport corridors. Patnaik continued the legacy of his father, the legendary statesman Biju Patnaik, in overseeing a rapid

process of state-led privatisation (Kale, 2019). The disaster in coastal Odisha unfolded within this overarching context, providing evermore opportunities for state-capital partnerships to reconfigure land uses.

REGIMES OF WASTE AND VALUE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO EXAMINE POST-DISASTER LANDSCAPES

Value lies at the centre of human and non-human life and dictates a certain relationship with the world and the surrounding environment. Political economists have historically focused on production and labour in their definition of value, understanding 'the value of commodities [as] derived from the human labour that went into producing them' (Graeber, 2001: 26). Anthropologists like Appadurai (1988) have rather emphasised the exchange dimension of value, pointing out that commoditisation is not a purely capitalist phenomenon. Instead, it spans across multiple 'regimes of value' which are themselves determined by the outcome of a social struggle and certain cultural standards. Graeber offers a theory of value that is rooted in concrete action: 'value emerges in action, it is the process by which a person's invisible 'potency'—their capacity to act—is translated into concrete, perceptible forms' (2001: 45).

Indeed, value encloses ideas of the desirable and the non-desirable, assumptions about how one might act in the world. It is inseparable from its twin concept of waste: defined by Gidwani and Reddy as 'the political other of capitalist "value"', waste refers to those 'things, places and lives that are cast outside the pale of "value" at particular moments as superfluity, remnant, excess, or detritus; only to return at times in unexpected ways' (2011: 1625). The colonial category of 'wasteland' is a fine example of how waste and value operate in a complementary way: classified as lands that did not generate any revenue or financial value, 'wastelands' became properties of the colonial state after seizure by the British Crown. 'Wasteland' was both prescriptive of human behaviours and ascriptive of moral values. It enforced the 'cultural inferiority and physical infirmity' of colonial subjects and justified a certain kind of political conduct, a desire to conquer and transform the 'savage' and the 'wild' through force and knowledge (Gidwani, 1992: 40). For this reason, theories of waste have historically participated in making indigenous land available for settler and colonial goals and have conveyed racist forms of othering (Liboiron, 2021; Stehrenberger, 2020). This waste and value duality is still predominant in post-independence hegemonic modernism and development projects as well as in post-disaster recovery programs (Baka, 2013; Kapila, 2022).

Waste and value enact a specific 'ecological regime', or in other words, a certain way of governing the relationship between humans and the rest of nature (Moore, 2015). It is argued that capitalism itself is constitutive of an ecological regime that 'uncork[s] a new stream of nature's goodies for free or at low cost: cheap food, cheap energy, cheap raw materials, cheap labor' (Lilley, 2011: 150; Moore, 2015). Deciding what holds value in the capitalist process of accumulation, and what, on the other hand, is 'mere' waste is politically contentious and reveals an important form of power, a 'negotiated process of discriminating' (Ferry, 2013: 13). As ecological regimes, capitalism and, more recently, neoliberalism constantly value and devalue human interactions with nature, include and exclude populations, environments, and modes of cultivation within their ambits, and interact with regimes of governing and of citizenship (Ong, 2006). This has prompted scholars like Armiero to argue that we are living in a time of 'wasteocene' rather than Anthropocene, because 'wasting implies sorting out what has value and what does not' (2021: 10) and justifies the imposition of wasting relationships on subaltern human and more-than-human communities.

In the aftermath of a catastrophe, states and private capital are well positioned to impose enacting ideas and practices of waste and value and of the new (non-)desirable,.). While reclassifications as 'empty', 'deserted', 'unproductive' and 'waste' are unfolding more broadly across the global South in the name of development, a disaster creates highly enabling conditions for waste and value regimes to operate. These regimes, as constellations of formal rules and informal codes of conduct, are not limited to discourses and narratives; instead, these regimes are materialised by enacting legislations, regulations and institutional practices that empower extractive actors and alter critical land acquisition procedures, coastal protections and forest rights.

DISASTER AFTERMATHS AND TWO REGIMES OF WASTE AND VALUE

We discuss below two new waste and value regimes that unfolded in the aftermath of two major disasters, and their irreversible consequences on socio-political and economic landscapes. The 2001 earthquake in Kutch revealed a tremendous potential for capital accumulation via the liberalisation or dispossession of 'wastelands', and the development of grid-connected energy infrastructures. The legacy of emptiness left by the 1999 supercyclone in Jagatsinghpur was tapped by state-backed private capital to enrol paddy farmers into post-disaster entrepreneurship for shrimp culture, reconfiguring land relations permanently, together with

large-scale land dispossession for extractive industries. Both waste and value regimes in post-disaster landscapes afford distinctive insights into India's environmental authoritarianism.

Kutch, Gujarat

The catastrophic earthquake that hit western Gujarat on the 26th of January 2001, measuring between 6.8 and 7.9 on the Richter scale, left a permanent footprint on Kutch, which bore 90% of the fatalities. It reconfigured Kutch's environment in more ways than one, opening the way to unbridled liberalisation and 'bankable' reconstruction programmes, new dispossessive and destructive politics of development, and muscular Hindu nationalism. What happened in Kutch after 2001 prefigured in many ways the authoritarian turn of the last decade in India, and particularly its environmental dimension. Simpson demonstrates that 'it was not the disaster itself but the doctrines of the interveners that were truly shocking', instituting a 'doctrine-SHOCK era' (2014: 50–1) or a 'second earthquake' that lasted for the next two decades and profoundly reshaped relationship to land and nature.

It took representatives of the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank only two weeks after the catastrophe to come with a figure regarding the cost of rehabilitation and reconstruction. 2.3 billion U.S dollars they said, a figure that was later used to measure and design loans and policies (Simpson, 2014). Indeed, those financial institutions came with a precise idea of what the desirable or the 'new-normal' would look like, and how to best 'help' and 'develop' communities affected by the earthquake. They advocated for the deregulation of state sectors, financialization of aid, penetration of private insurance companies and overall, the introduction of incentives for the private sector to take over activities previously undertaken by the state. Urban reconstruction provided the opportunity to introduce ideas of new systems of land management, removal of protectionist measures, and simplified land registration, reclassification, and titling procedures (Simpson, 2014).

State agencies such as the GSDMA or the Gujarat Urban Development Company (GUDC) were specifically tasked to identify potential 'bankable projects' and manage the funds coming from various development banks. This restructuring was also supported by important policy changes: the central government declared a five-year excise duty exemption, and Modi's then government (state level) announced a package of tax incentives for industries and private power plants as well as cheap government 'wasteland' acquisition rates. In Gujarat's 2003 Industrial Policy, Modi further relaxed the existing environmental, land, and labour regulations for new

investors. Sud (2020: 7) estimates that by 2005, Modi's state government had opened 4.6 million hectares of government-owned 'wastelands' to prominent industrialists and energy companies. In this process of state 're-scaling' (Kennedy, 2014), power slowly moved from a central authority to local state agencies, and state officials such as the District Collector found themselves largely empowered to redistribute land resources as they pleased, notably through the process of 'promulgation' where new revenue maps are surveyed and *gauchar* (village common pastures) reclassified as government-owned 'wastelands'.

Over a period of ten years (2001-2011), Kutch's landscape changed drastically, around 200 companies invested more than INR 150 billion in Kutch and benefited from tax incentives to the tune of INR 58.41 billion, turning 'the Kutch earthquake [into] an opportunity for investors and a blessing in disguise for the locals' (Kohli and Menon, 2016: 271). This landscape is now heavily dominated by port infrastructures, SEZs, coal-based power plants, and industrial parks (Sud, 2020: 12), revealing the 'hyperbolic' capitalist imaginary underlying Kutch's socio-economic transformations and post-disaster landscapes (Simpson, 2014: 37–41).

The Adani group benefitted the most from this new investment climate and post-disaster landscape; the group was entrusted with India's first multiproduct port-based private SEZ in Mundra in 2003. Jaffrelot (2019) revealed that the group was granted land at an extremely cheap rate, way below the real market value, making enormous profit by subletting the land to other companies, including public ones, at a much higher rate. The group was also allowed to bypass all the state environmental rules regarding coastal regulations, as mangroves and forestlands were illegally cleared, and improper handling of coal ash drastically reduced fish catch and polluted water (Kohli and Menon, 2016). This generated a fair amount of resistance and opposition from local populations, particularly the Muslim fishermen community, and was met with selective corporate patronage and tactics of persuasion (Kohli and Menon, 2016). Recent reports have covered for example the injury of RTI activist R. Balia and the assassination of his son by a man accused of illegal sand mining in northern Kutch[3].

After the disaster, Kutch suddenly stopped being imagined as 'the backwater of the prosperous state of Gujarat, a 'punishment post for the bureaucrats' or a 'museum of environmental hardship''. Rather, it 'emerged as a symbol of reconstruction and development' (Mehta and

[3] https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/rti-activist-injured-son-killed-after-man-accused-of-illegal-sand-mining-rams-their-scooter-in-kutch/article65974920.ece

Srivastava, 2019: 199), a land 'full' of opportunities and promises, especially as the earthquake revealed an almost infinite availability of 'empty' and 'waste' lands or even provided the legal tool to turn commonly held pastures into 'waste' through new map 'promulgation'. These representations about 'the rise of a new Kutch' following the earthquake and Modi's vision are a clear reference to the 'new, more Hindu, region of a Hindu Gujarat with a changed iconography pushed by the state and muscular, populist strongman leader from above' (Sud, 2020: 13).

Indeed, the post-disaster landscape in Kutch, or the 'second earthquake', also fostered an important saffron wave, or the reconstruction of an ideal 'new' Kutch as profoundly Hindu, Brahmanical and Gujarati. As part of state restructuring and the financialization of disaster management, private agencies and NGOs were soon allowed to adopt affected villages via public-private partnerships. RSS satellite organisations, Hindu sects like the Swaminarayan movement, or overseas branches of the VHP quickly used these schemes to build new models of saffron villages. Here, the boundaries of pollution/purification along gender, caste and class were clearly demarcated and local syncretic religious practices firmly embedded into a more universal, homogeneous and 'purified' practice of Brahmanical Hinduism (Simpson and Corbridge, 2006; Simpson, 2014).

The VHP constructed, for example, a new settlement 'model' village at the supposed location of the earthquake epicentre, Lodai, renamed afterwards as Keshav Nagar or Krishna's City. It carefully selected upper caste Hindus as new inhabitants, while Dalit and Muslim villagers remained in the old 'wasted' village ruins, reflecting the new Indian civilisation as envisaged by the VHP: 'exclusive, disciplined, strong and Hindu' (Simpson, 2014: 110). Other organizations mobilized ideas of *sewa* (service), selfless 'social welfare', acts of spirituality and hospitality. Scholars working on Hindutva have argued that 'far from being a benign practice, *seva* in the Hindu nationalist tradition has played an important role in furthering the political project of Hindutva by reorganizing communities according to new Hindu political identities […] in more nuanced forms of enlisting support […] subtle, nonviolent, and clothed in humanitarianism' (Bhattacharjee, 2016: 77–9).

At this juncture of 'hyperbolic' capitalist development, environmental disruption, and ethno-nationalism, the district became the target of massive energy projects connected to the national grid in 2010. At that time, the National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) matched the area's great wind energy potential with a mass availability of state-owned 'wastelands' revealed or

created by the earthquake: it is no coincidence that Kutch has been labelled with the highest concentration of 'wastelands' in Gujarat according to figures from the Wasteland Atlas of India for the years 1992 (41.9% of the district's lands classified as such) and 2006 (16.7%) (Gujarat Ecology Commission, 2017). In the meantime, Gujarat state-level wind energy policies, generous feed-in-tariffs and 'simplified' land acquisition procedures under Modi's rule largely helped private energy companies to acquire government 'wastelands' at minimal cost and exploit this new 'gold'. What remains today of the post-earthquake politics in Kutch and is further carried on decades after the actual catastrophe is the same enduring legacy of waste and value. In the past two decades, Kutch's pasture common lands have been turned into 'wastelands' at an increasingly rapid pace and subjected to intense environmental changes, transformations, and competition, first for agricultural value-making, industrial and mining projects, and more recently for 'green' energy production.

If these 'waste' lands legally belonged to 'nobody', as companies' representatives liked to say, and were the property of the state, they were far from being empty and without any value for others. These lands were valuable forests, pastures and even mangroves for pastoral populations, particularly for women who relied heavily on them for daily subsistence. Local populations were abruptly dispossessed and saw their access largely restricted by the arrival of turbines, roads, trucks, wires, and cables, with important caste and class differentiation between villagers. State-corporate alliances relied on powerful ground-level brokers and fixers, money and muscle power to stub out any resistance attempts and convince the last discontent villagers to fall in line. In some cases, the arrival of wind turbines even coincided with the 'promulgation' of a new revenue map ordered by the District Collector office in Bhuj and shifted chunks of *gauchar* land and contested wind site locations into government-owned 'wasteland'. The state therefore produced 'rightless' and disenfranchised citizens (Berenschot and Dhiaulhaq, 2023), both *de jure* and *de facto*, as people sitting on 'wastelands' were not entitled to any right to compensation or recognition of previous land rights. They could not practice pastoralism or farming in peace anymore, as their environment was completely reconfigured and livelihood resources around land were destroyed. They could not be employed in the wind sector either, a jobless industry for locals as it relied mostly on cheap migrant labour.

Jagatsinghpur, Odisha

The 1999 supercyclone flattened the coastline for miles inland, killed thousands and caught the state machinery unprepared. Many RSS-affiliated organisations filled the deficit in the immediate aftermath providing relief but in a 'sectarian' manner (Chatterji, 2004: 347). Odisha has been a stronghold for the Sangh Parivar, with Sangh activists targeting Christians, Adivasis, Muslims and Dalits for conversion. An RSS office bearer in Odisha said, 'If *vanavasis* (forest-dwellers) see themselves as outside Hinduism, then their lands too are anti-development and cannot be used for the betterment of the nation. Bharat is a Hindu nation, and these people and their lands are anti-development.' (Chatterji, 2004: 329). This strident eco-nationalism is paired comfortably with the long-term political consensus on extractive development in Odisha.

However, Hindutva politics in coastal Odisha is mediated by its specific political and social conditions. The coastal tracts of Odisha represent the more economically advantaged and politically dominant parts of the state, with a preponderance of general castes, and fewer Scheduled Tribes, which are concentrated in the state's mineral-rich and poorer western districts. Bengali immigrants (of Hindu low caste as well as some Muslims) from East Bengal (later Bangladesh) arrived in the large unoccupied tracts of coastland from the 1950s onward. These groups have regularly been subject to various dynamics of othering, facing both everyday struggles over environmental rights as well as formal challenges over their citizenship status (Chhotray, 2018). The presence of many Hindu Bengalis immigrants (though there are Muslims too) has complicated the expression of majoritarian ideas here, provoking their articulation through an assertion of Odiya indigeneity in environmental conflicts. Odiya fishers' rights to the Gahirmatha sanctuary became politicised along these lines especially after the supercyclone's devastating blow constrained resources further (Chhotray, 2016).

Unlike in Kutch, it was difficult here to identify a coherent push for long-term reconstruction of the affected districts along any clear agenda. However, the supercyclone ruptured the landscape in more ways than one, unleashing subtle but important changes in the ecological conditions of the coastline through the introduction of commercial shrimp aquaculture. The many faces of disaster capitalism (Klein, 2008) present differently depending on the context. Unlike the lush urban developments or tourist traps of post-Tsunami Thailand and Sri Lanka, or the many power plants, ports and SEZs in Gujarat, the introduction of aquaculture in Ersama block in Jagatsinghpur district, amongst the worst affected by the supercyclone, rests on inconspicuous changes like the creation of prawn ponds from paddy fields. But most distinctively, and in stark contrast to the case of wind farm development in Kutch, there was

no physical dispossession of landholders, and no resistance or overt conflicts with paddy farmers, which is highly unusual for areas with shrimp culture (Flaherty et al., 1999).

The supercyclone created a legacy of 'waste' and 'emptiness' that provided state-backed private capital an opportunity to enrol these paddy farmers here into a striking narrative of post-disaster entrepreneurship. Smallholder farmers that had suffered ruination in previous experiments with black tiger shrimp at the hands of local moneylenders were willing to take up *vannamei* shrimp with commercial support. A company representative said, 'He (the farmer) finds the culture *worth doing*.' 'The farmers are doing a productive activity which benefits them, and earns revenue for the state… After the cyclone, there was nothing much for them to do anyway.', said a block official (Chhotray, 2022). The designation of waste and value is never restricted to physical environments alone. In this narrative, there is an unmistakable presumption of the enterprising and risk-taking (male) aquaculturist that is adding value to both his own life as that of the nation.

Over the years, a narrative of waste and value has produced a steady conversion of previously paddy-growing lands into shrimp ponds and farms, encompassing even greater land areas away from the coast. Unable to sustain the upfront costs and unpredictable losses that are integral to shrimp cultivation, many smallholders have been forced out of shrimp too, and lease out their lands to larger entrepreneurs, both from within the district and outside (Chhotray, 2022). 'Slash and burn' forms of aquaculture are rampant, with large land areas used for shrimp ponds constantly being abandoned without being properly treated (further 'waste') before converting new areas (to create more 'value'). While these lands are typically privately owned/leased lands, it is not uncommon for common/*gauchar* lands to be used, echoing a pattern of commons' abuse seen in Gujarat as well. Women are almost entirely excluded from aquaculture because of a range of factors (including their personal safety on distant *gheris*) and experience worthlessness (Chhotray, 2022). Most smallholders are taking recourse to wage labour, either further inland where paddy is possible or on shrimp farmers, or as migrant labour outside the state. Bengali immigrants living in seaside villages are the worst affected and being unable to raise even a modicum of capital to sustain shrimp culture, faced near total conversion from erstwhile paddy farmers to wage labourers.

The role of the state in promoting this disaster capitalism needs a nuanced treatment. Odisha was at the forefront of economic liberalisation, being one of the first states in the country to privatise electricity distribution, signing hundreds of MOUs for mining, including committing

areas of the Chilika Lake to commercial shrimp culture back in 1991 (Kale, 2019; Adduci, 2009). Under the state fisheries policy, 2015, Odisha promotes shrimp culture through a single window clearance mechanism for licensing and registration and has adopted a cluster-based expansion approach along the coast. However, the lack of electricity subsidies- as compared to even more aggressive promoters like Andhra Pradesh- continues to present a barrier for smaller entrepreneurs since diesel costs are prohibitively high, further concentrating profits and opportunities with large-scale shrimp entrepreneurs.

This post-disaster waste and value regime in Ersama offers a unique insight into the insidious nature of multi-scalar environmental authoritarianism, with its hegemonic portrayal of commercial shrimp, dilution of environmental regulations and enrolment of multiple powerful actors within a broader state-capital relationship. With its large swathes of fragmented smallholdings, aquaculture in Ersama has not been perceived as a big-bucks or high-stakes activity. This is unlike in neighbouring Chilika or Bhitarkanika national park where the state has clamped down on illegal shrimp ponds. But post-supercyclone, Ersama has proven valuable as a new frontier for the expansion of shrimp capital with minimal resistance, which may not have happened so acquiescently without the disaster. Many bureaucrats and politicians from these coastal tracts have holdings in aquaculture companies besides also leasing lands that are used for shrimp. District and block fisheries officials have been willing to ignore aquaculture by the shoreline, within the Coastal Regulation Zone, which was previously disallowed by the CRZ Act. Registration under the terms of the Coastal Aquaculture Act 2005 is lackadaisically implemented and there is hardly any long-term environmental monitoring of the consequences of aquaculture (such as on ground water salinity, and mangroves) (Chhotray, 2022). Besides, ever since the 2023 national amendment to the CRZ Act, aquaculture is allowed within ecologically precarious coastal zones, mirroring the trajectory of environmental politics in the country.

In an important corollary to this silent dispossession, the state government signed an MOU with Korean steel giant POSCO in 2005 to establish an integrated steel plant in Jagatsinghpur. The plan, complete with a captive port and processing plant in this district, was to extract 600 million tonnes of iron ore per year from inland areas (Balaton-Chrimes and Pattnaik, 2021; Kodiveri, 2021). This would displace nearly 22000 residents across 3 panchayats in Jagatsinghpur, besides dozens of villages in the iron-ore producing districts of Keonjhar and Sundargarh in western Odisha. All 3 panchayats were affected by the supercyclone and what

followed was an intricate story, weaving disaster with state-sponsored development by dispossession, all the while ostensibly creating 'value' from lands otherwise seen as 'waste'.

Echoing the experiences described in Kutch, the area was soon declared an SEZ with special tax exemptions, speedy clearances and other benefits for industries, each a key characteristic of the country's own brand of environmental authoritarianism. The Odisha State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO) was empowered to acquire land, which it proceeded to do in stages, encountering stiff resistance from locals. A post-supercyclone people's humanitarian movement called PPSS has consistently led this struggle (Balaton-Chrimes and Pattnaik, 2021). The following years saw a vigorous tussle between the coercive might of the state and the forces of popular resistance, given the blatant appropriation of forest land that had a variety of local and communal uses. Like in Kutch, district administrators played a key role in enabling dispossession, compromising the protective measures of the Forest Rights Act 2006. The central Ministry of Environment and Forests gave forest clearance in 2017 despite a highly unresolved local situation.

After protracted struggles, POSCO withdrew in 2017 citing the inability to acquire land quickly. PPSS welcomed the decision, but the taste of victory soon soured as land that had been acquired was not returned to villagers and put into a land bank by IDCO. The state transferred the land to a different corporate- Jindal- violating the land law LARRA 2013. Local accounts of subsequent public hearings attested to deep collusion of interests between key government agencies like the district collectorate and the Odisha Pollution Control Board, company representatives, and sarpanches from the ruling party. Particularly egregious in recent years is the aggressive use of land banks under the aegis of the IDCO to create a 'state of exception' within the law to escape the scrutiny of popular consent provisions, normally applicable through FRA 2006 for forest lands (Kodiveri, 2021). A highly coordinated operation is also underway throughout Odisha to identify land for compensatory afforestation and bank these, in direct response to the demand from industries/project developers[4]. In 2022-23, Odisha was the top-ranking state for the diversion of forest lands for non-forestry use under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980[5].

[4] Conversation with forest rights activist, Bhubaneswar, August 2024.
[5] https://www.indiastat.com/table/forest-and-wildlife/state-wise-forest-land-diverted-non-forestry-use-u/1432241

There are several ongoing battles over land in the state and environmentalists face intensified state oppression to break their struggles (Padhi and Sadangi, 2020). The recent election of the BJP government – reflecting a strong anti-incumbency drive, grassroots mobilisation by BJP and associated cadres, and effective campaigning by Modi[6]- is expected to align the state even more visibly with the commercial interests promoted by the national BJP government. The state is deeply committed to its extractive futures, as seen in ambitious plans to develop new ports, besides turning Paradip Port (situated in Jagatsinghpur district) into a mega port[7].

CONCLUSION

This article contributes to a broader literature on how disasters serve as critical moments for reconfiguration within contexts of environmental authoritarianism (Mullenite, 2019). It explains post-disaster politics through regimes of waste and value, which influence how institutions, laws and norms operate. There is an acknowledged need for more historically and geographically specific studies 'across larger stretches of time and space' (McCarthy, 2019: 307) to better link authoritarianism with forms of environmental politics and governance. The story we tell is compatible with key patterns in other contexts like Brazil (Deutsch, 2010), where state institutions are consistently reoriented to remove barriers to capitalist accumulation. Whether by weakening environmental regulatory institutions or diluting laws, or by making a mockery of public consultation procedures, or resorting to brute force, the state weakens controls on capitalist extraction and accumulation. The article documents the emergence of everyday Indian environmental authoritarianism that operates in multi-scalar form (Sud, 2020) and is now widely internalised in the operation of state institutions and dominant social and commercial actors. Through its interrogation of two post-disaster landscapes that are similar but distinctive, the article arrives at the following lessons for the larger politics of development in India.

First, in both cases, we see the unfolding of waste and value regimes post-disaster that enabled dominant state and corporate interests seeking to reconfigure land, including terrestrial water bodies and forests, into new frontiers of capital accumulation. In Gujarat, the BJP saved its government and reacted to the earthquake by propelling Modi and his politics of muscular

[6] https://theprint.in/politics/how-bjp-engineered-downfall-of-naveen-patnaik-after-2014-broke-bjds-stranglehold-on-odisha/2115322/

[7] https://indianinfrastructure.com/2022/12/30/port-progress-upcoming-opportunities-in-the-state-of-odisha/

Hindutva liberalisation and 'bankable' reconstruction to the forefront. In Odisha, the BJD capitalised on the previous Congress government's failure to tackle the supercyclone to get re-elected on a bold programme for reconstruction and industrialisation, both premised on extraction. These political changes broadly aligned with the interests of social and economic elites in both states, engaging both regional capital (prawn mafia, Odiya sea food exporters) and national and international industrial interests (Jindal and POSCO in Odisha, Adani in Gujarat).

'Authoritarianism is an exceptional form of the state in the service of capital' (Hall 1979, Poulantzas cited in Sud, 2020: 3). In India, neoliberal market reform since the 1990s has neither challenged the hegemonic status of the state nor trammelled state predation of the economy (Mehtal and Walton, 2014). The ensuing years have seen the rise of strong state capital relationships, where a business-friendly state has becoming increasingly intolerant of vocal labour or resistance more broadly (Chacko, 2018). The two cases described in this article confirms that state enablement of private capital is now widespread, but viewing this relationship from the perspective of a post-disaster landscape offers further nuance. In the case of Gujarat, the earthquake serves as a clear turning point in the attentions of state and private capital because the story unfolds in Kutch, a part of the state that is a traditional backwater. In contrast, the Odisha story unfolds in Jagatsinghpur, along the coast that is the more prosperous area; so, the turning point is less obvious and needs to be treated as a part of a longer continuum.

Second, the article's comparative subnational approach reveals that the dynamics of majoritarianism and othering can be both explicit and overt, as well as relatively muted. Gujarat is more well known as the Gujarat model, a poster-case for the rise of Hindutva fuelled capitalist accumulation. However, Odisha has a steady and old history of grassroots saffronisation and is a pioneer in India's liberalization and privatization agenda. It must therefore be brought into open dialogue with better known cases as Gujarat. With the recent 2024 victory of the BJP in the state's Assembly elections, Odisha has acquired a new spotlight under the Modi-led central government. Across India, ideas of purity and pollution have dovetailed with eco-naturalism in both more and less obvious ways (Sharma, 2023). The disasters unleashed by the earthquake or the supercyclone aided the normalization of strong assumptions of social hierarchy, indigeneity and deserved claims on resources, processes that may have had older geneses but were boosted by these conjunctures. And yet, in contrast with

stark saffronisation in Gujarat, Hindutva politics presents itself an Odiya cultural identity revival campaign within the social context of coastal Odisha.

Third, idioms of utility and idleness are core components of the regimes of waste and value and instrumental in driving reconfigurations of space via the remaking of laws and relaxation of environmental regulations. While these processes are unfolding anyway, our article shows that a disaster, as a moment of ecological, social and political rupture, does intensify them (Siddiqi, 2019). Entire landscapes intertwined with peoples' livelihoods and identities are turned 'waste', 'deserted', 'empty' and 'unproductive', a vocabulary actively triggered by the very rupture that a so-called 'natural' disaster can cause. Importantly, such meanings extend not just to the remaking of the physical environment, especially land, but also result in a remaking of personhood, belonging and identity. As suggested by Li (2014), those meanings rely on regimes of exclusion and injunctions to make land productive that distinguish legitimate from illegitimate uses and users and inscribe boundaries through devices such as fences, title deeds, laws, zones, regulations, landmarks and storylines. In Kutch, there is a spectre of idleness and purification that comes with dispossession, resonant with a fast-expanding crisis of labour throughout India as new modes of extractivism mean that companies need land, but not labour (Kale, 2020). This is creating further differentiation amongst already marginalised populations, like Adivasis and Dalits, as they anticipate displacement (Noy, 2023). In Jagatsinghpur, we see both immiseration without physical dispossession (in the case of aquaculture), as well as more conventional threats of displacement due to extractivism (in the case of POSCO). These are masked within narratives of male entrepreneurship and productivity, and disadvantage smallholders and women.

The extent of these reconfigurations is both vast and multifaceted. Lands both *designated* as well as *deemed* waste are reshaped to serve state-capital interests. The Gujarat case confirms a national trend of the easy viewing of common properties as wastelands and their effective treatment as *terra nullius*, available for new industrial uses. In actual practice, these lands were valuable forests, pastures and even mangroves for pastoral populations who relied heavily on them for daily subsistence. The Odisha case shows an even more insidious side of waste to value conversion, as post-supercyclone, reconversions were targeted at lands not officially designated as waste, but practically treated as such by local officials and company-men. The normalization of shrimp culture in coastal tracts, despite its varied fortunes and high-risk nature, has led to some accounts of local communities converting village common lands into

shrimp ponds (when other lands have been rendered ‘waste’ after one or two rounds of shrimp culture).

Finally, the article brings the politics of the aftermath into direct conversation with the ‘anti-politics’ of disaster governance (Ferguson, 1990). Most mainstream disaster response approaches, including those observed in the two states of interest, fetishize the disaster as a singular event, delimited in time and space. Beyond the immediate aftermath however, as this article shows, the resource configurations that followed were impossible to contain within this neat parcelling of the disaster into an isolated bureaucratic space, seeming devoid of politics. The role played by state laws, institutions, actors and discourses in enrolling private interests to push through change in post-disaster landscapes perpetuates multiple later disasters, that are not officially declared as such, or attributable to an external calamity. For these ‘slow disasters’ with spirals of vulnerability, poverty and dispossession (Baruah, 2022) there is no culpability of the various extractive, racializing technologies and institutional infrastructures.

REFERENCES

Adduci, A. (2009) ‘Neoliberal wave rocks Chilika Lake, India: Conflict over Intensive Aquaculture from a Class Perspective’, *Journal of Agrarian Change* 9: 484–511.

Ahmed, H. (2024) *A Brief History of the Present: Muslims in New India*. Delhi: Penguin Random House India.

Appadurai, A. (1988) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Armiero, M. (2021) *Wasteocene. Stories from the Global Dump*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baka, J. (2013) ‘The Political Construction of Wasteland: Governmentality, Land Acquisition and Social Inequality in South India’, *Development and Change* 44(2): 409–28. doi:10.1111/dech.12018.

Balaton-Chrimes, S. and S. Pattnaik (2021) ‘The Rightful Share: Land and Effective Claim Making in Odisha, India’, *Development and Change* 53(3): 623–646. DOI: 10.1111/dech.12692

Baruah, M. (2022) *Slow disasters: Political Ecology of Hazards and Everyday Life in the Brahmaputra Valley, Assam*. Routledge Studies in Hazards, Disaster Risk and Climate Change Series. Oxon and NY: Routledge.

Beeson, M. (2010) 'The Coming of Environmental Authoritarianism', *Environmental Politics* 19(2): 276–94. doi:10.1080/09644010903576918.

Berenschot, W., and A. Dhiaulhaq (2023) 'The Production of Rightlessness. Dispossession, Land Conflict, and Palm Oil Expansion in Indonesia', *Globalizations*,1–19.

Bhattacharjee, M. (2016) 'Sevā, Hindutva, and the Politics of Post-Earthquake Relief and Reconstruction in Rural Kutch', *Asian Ethnology* 75(1): 75–104. doi:10.18874/ae.75.1.04.

Bruff, I. (2014) 'The Rise of Authoritarian Neoliberalism', *Rethinking Marxism* 26(1): 113–29. doi:10.1080/08935696.2013.843250.

Chacko, P. (2018) 'The Right Turn in India: Authoritarianism, Populism and Neoliberalisation', *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 48(4): 541–65. doi:10.1080/00472336.2018.1446546.

Chandrasekhar, D., Y., Zhang, and Y. Xiao (2014) 'Nontraditional participation in disaster recovery planning: cases from China, India, and the United States', *Journal of the American Planning Association* 80(4): 373–384.

Chatterji, A.P., T.B. Hansen, and C. Jaffrelot (2019) *Majoritarian State: How Hindu Nationalism Is Changing India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kbdk/detail.action?docID=5793980.

Chatterji, A.P. (2004) 'The Biopolitics of Hindu Nationalism.' *Cultural Dynamics* 162(3): 319–372.

Chhotray, V. (2014) 'Disaster relief and the Indian state: Lessons for just citizenship', *Geoforum* 54: 217–225. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2014.01.013.

Chhotray, V. (2016) 'Justice at Sea: Fishers' Politics and Marine Conservation in Coastal Odisha, India', *Maritime Studies* 15(4): 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1186/ s40152-016-0043-3.

Chhotray, V. (2017) 'Nullification of citizenship: Negotiating authority without identity documents in coastal Odisha', *Contemporary South Asia* 26(2): 175–190. https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2017.1303445.

Chhotray, V. (2022) 'A supercyclone, landscapes of emptiness and shrimp aquaculture: the lesser-known trajectories of disaster recovery in India', *World Development* 153. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2022.105823

Chhotray, V. & J. Hill (2013) 'Socio-political and environmental dimensions of vulnerability and recovery in Coastal Odisha: Critical lessons since the 1999 Super-Cyclone. A Research Report.' https://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/ home/library/environment_energy/socio-political-and-environmental- dimensions-of-vulnerability-an.html.

Crowley, T. (2022) ‘Unfixing Space: Toward Anti-Caste Philosophies of Nature’, *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 113(7): 1554–1562. doi:10.1080/24694452.2022.2132907.

Deutsch, S. (2021) ‘Populist Authoritarian Neoliberalism in Brazil: Making Sense of Bolsonaro’s Anti-Environment Agenda’, *Journal of Political Ecology* 28(1): 823–844. doi:10.2458/jpe.2994.

Dutta, A. and K.B. Nielsen (2021) 'Autocratic environmental governance in India', in S. Widmalm (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Autocratization in South Asia*., pp.70–80. London: Routledge.

Fayazi, M., Yeh, E. T., & Li, F. (2019) ‘Development and Divergent Post-Disaster Trajectories in a mountain village: Temporal dynamics of differentiation after the 2008 Wenchuan eathquake’, *World Development* 124, 1–12.

Ferguson, J. 1990. *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ferry, E.E. (2013) *Minerals, Collecting, and Value Across the US-Mexico Border*. Bloomington, UNITED STATES: Indiana University Press. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kbdk/detail.action?docID=1214501.

Few, R. et al. (2023) ‘“We Are Not in the Same Boat”: Representations of Disaster and Recovery in India’, *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 92 (June): 103709. doi:10.1016/j.ijdrr.2023.103709.

Flaherty, M., P. Vandergeest, and P. Miller (1999) ‘Rice paddy or shrimp pond: Tough decisions in rural Thailand’, *World Development* 27: 2045–2060. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(99)00100-X.

Gidwani, V. (1992) ‘“Waste” and the Permanent Settlement in Bengal’. *Economic and Political Weekly* 27(4): 39–46.

Gidwani, V., and R.N, Reddy (2011) ‘The Afterlives of “Waste”: Notes from India for a Minor History of Capitalist Surplus’, *Antipode* 43(5): 1625–58. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8330.2011.00902.x.

Graeber, D. (2001) *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gujarat Ecology Commission. (2017) ‘State of Environment Report: Land Resources’. Government of Gujarat, Ahmedabad.

Guyot-Réchard, B. (2015) ‘Reordering a Border Space: Relief, rehabilitation, and nation-building in northeastern India after the 1950 Assam earthquake’. *Modern Asian Studies* 49(4): 931–962. doi:10.1017/S0026749X14000250

Harms, E. (2014). ‘Knowing into oblivion: Clearing wastelands and imagining emptiness in Vietnamese New Urban Zones’, *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 35: 312–327. https://doi.org/10.1111/sjtg.12075.

Jaffrelot, C. (2019) 'Business-Friendly Gujarat Under Narendra Modi: The Implications of a New Political Economy', in C. Jaffrelot, A. Kohli, and M Kanta (eds) *Business and Politics in India,* pp. 211–33. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/oso/9780190912468.003.0008.

Jaffrelot. C. (2021) *Modi's India: Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kale, S.S. (2019) ‘Business and State in Odisha’s Extractive Economy’, in C. Jaffrelot, A. Kohli, and K.Murali (eds) *Business and Politics in India*, pp. 260–281. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kale, S.S. (2020) 'From company town to company village: CSR and the management of rural aspirations in eastern India’s extractive economies', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2020.1825290

Kapila, K. (2022) *Nullius: The Anthropology of Ownership, Sovereignty, and the Law in India*. HAU. https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/N/bo71983369.html.

Kennedy, L. (2014) *The Politics of Economic Restructuring in India: Economic Governance and State Spatial Rescaling*. 1st edition. London and New York: Routledge.

Klein, N. (2007) *The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Kodiveri, A. (2021) ‘Our Land is Banked: Forest rights, consent and the invention of a legal exception as land banks’, *The International Journal of Human Rights.* https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2021.1874938

Kohli, K., and M. Menon (2016) ‘The Tactics of Persuasion: Environmental Negotiations over a Corporate Coal Project in Coastal India’, *Energy Policy* 99(C): 270–76.

Kohli, K. and M. Menon (2022) *Development of Environmental Laws in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lerche, J., and A. Shah (2018) ‘Conjugated Oppression within Contemporary Capitalism: Class, Caste, Tribe and Agrarian Change in India’, *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 45(5–6): 927–49. doi:10.1080/03066150.2018.1463217.

Liboiron, M. (2021) *Pollution is Colonialism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Lilley, S. (ed.) (2011) 'Jason W. Moore: The Socio- Ecological Crises of Capitalism', in *Capital and Its Discontents: Conversations with Radical Thinkers in a Time of Tumult*, pp. 136–52. Oakland: PM Press.

Mehta, L., and S. Srivastava (2019) 'Pastoralists without Pasture: Water Scarcity, Marketisation and Resource Enclosures in Kutch, India', *Nomadic Peoples* 23(2): 195.

Mehta, P.B. and M. Walton (2014) 'Ideas, interests and the politics of development change in India: Capitalism, inclusion and the state'. ESID Working Paper 14. University of Manchester, Manchester.

McCarthy, J. (2019) 'Authoritarianism, Populism, and the Environment: Comparative Experiences, Insights, and Perspectives', *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 109(2): 301–13. doi:10.1080/24694452.2018.1554393.

Mezzadri, A. (2020) 'A value theory of inclusion: Informal labour, the homeworker, and the social reproduction of value', *Antipode* 53(4): 1186–1205.https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12701

Moore, J. (2015) *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Verso. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uea/detail.action?docID=5177275.

Middeldorp, N., and P. Le Billon (2019) 'Deadly Environmental Governance: Authoritarianism, Eco-Populism, and the Repression of Environmental and Land Defenders', *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 109(2): 324–37. doi:10.1080/24694452.2018.1530586.

Mullenite, J. (2019) 'Infrastructure and Authoritarianism in the Land of Waters: A Genealogy of Flood Control in Guyana', *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 109(2): 502–10. doi:10.1080/24694452.2018.1490635.

Noy, I. (2023) 'Waiting for displacement: Land, compensation and socio-temporal inequality in a mining-affected village', *Geoforum*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2023.103821

Oliver-Smith, A. (2016) 'Disaster risk reduction and applied anthropology', *Annals of Anthropological Practice* 40: 73–85. https://doi.org/10.1111/napa.12089.

Ong, A. (2006) *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Duke University Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctv11hpgzc.

Padhi, R. and Sadangi, N. (2020) *Resisting Dispossession: The Odisha Story*. New Delhi: Aakar Books for South Asia.

Pelling, M. and K. Dill (2009) 'Disaster Politics: Tipping Points for Change in the Adaptation of Sociopolitical Regimes'. *Progress in Human Geography*. http://phg.sagepub.com/content/early/2009/05/12/0309132509105004

Pradhan, D. & M. Flaherty (2007) 'National initiatives, local effects: Trade liberalization, shrimp aquaculture, and coastal communities in Orissa, India', *Society and Natural Resources* 1: 63–76. https://doi.org/10.1080/ 08941920701655734.

Rastogi, P. (2020) *Postcolonial Disaster: Narrating Catastrophe in the Twenty-First Century*. Chicago, United States: Northwestern University Press. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kbdk/detail.action?docID=6126053.

Ray-Bennett, N.S. (2018) *Avoidable deaths: A systems failure approach to disaster risk management*. Springer Briefs in Environmental Science. Springer International Publishing

Rivera, D.Z. (2022) 'Disaster Colonialism: A commentary on disasters beyond singular events to structural violence', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 46(1): 126–135.

Robbins, P. (2011) *Political Ecology. Critical Introductions to Geography.* 2nd Edition. Wiley-Blackwell..

Siddiqi, A. (2019) *In the Wake of Disaster Islamists, the State and a Social Contract in Pakistan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sharma, M. (2012) *Green and Saffron: Hindu Nationalism and Indian Environmental Politics*. Indian Century. Bangalore: Permanent Black. http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/toc/fy13pdf03/2012335480.html.

Sharma, M. (2023) 'Hindu Nationalism and Right-Wing Ecology: RSS, Modi and Motherland post-2014', *Studies in Indian Politics* 11(1):102–117.

Simpson, E. (2020) 'Forgetfulness without Memory: Reconstruction, Landscape, and the Politics of the Everyday in Post-Earthquake Gujarat, India', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 26(4): 786–804. doi:10.1111/1467-9655.13416.

Simpson, E., and S. Corbridge (2006) 'The Geography of Things That May Become Memories: The 2001 Earthquake in Kachchh-Gujarat and the Politics of Rehabilitation in the Prememorial Era', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96(3): 566–85. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8306.2006.00706.x.

Sinha, S. (2021) '"Strong Leaders", Authoritarian Populism and Indian Developmentalism: The Modi Moment in Historical Context'. *Geoforum* 124 (March): 320–33. doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2021.02.019.

Sud, N. (2001) 'Earthquake Response: Beyond Bricks and Mortar'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 36(35): 3353–54.

Sud, N. (2014) 'Governing India's Land', *World Development* 60: 43–56. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.03.015

Sud, N. (2020) 'The Actual Gujarat Model: Authoritarianism, Capitalism, Hindu Nationalism and Populism in the Time of Modi', *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 52(1): 102–26. doi:10.1080/00472336.2020.1846205.

Sud, N. (2021) *The Making of Land and The Making of India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Stehrenberger, C. S. (2020) 'Annobón 1988. Slow Disaster, Colonialism, and the Franco Dictatorship', *Art in Translation 12*(2): 263–287. https://doi.org/10.1080/17561310.2020.1791451

Wisner, B. et al. (2004). *At Risk: Natural Hazards. People's Vulnerability and Disasters*, London: Routledge.

Zhang, Q. (2016) 'Disaster response and recovery: Aid and social change', *Annals of Anthropological Practice* 40: 86–97. https://doi.org/10.1111/napa.12090.

Author Bios:

Vasudha Chhotray is Professor of Politics and Development at the School of Global Development, University of East Anglia, specializing in the political analysis of environment and development, with a special focus on India. Her recent work focuses on disaster politics, resource contestations, certifications and citizenship, extractive development, hydropower as green energy, and critiques of green developmentalism. Her ongoing research project is studying coal closures and expansions at a historic time when India is considering an energy transition. Besides publishing in many highly ranked peer reviewed journals, Vasudha is the author of the book *The Anti-Politics Machine in India* (Anthem Press) and co-author of *Governance, Theory and Practice* (Palgrave Macmillan).

David Singh is a researcher in sociology and geography of development at the CSH. He holds a joint PhD in development studies from the University of East Anglia (United Kingdom) and University of Copenhagen (Denmark). He is also an associated researcher to the Centre des Etudes Sud-Asiatiques et Himalayennes (CESAH, Paris). His research focuses since 2019 on issues of territorialisation, resource politics, citizenship, land access, and energy infrastructures in India. He has published in numerous journals and co-edited a volume on *the Indian Farmers' Protest of 2020-2021* (Routledge). At CSH, David is leading a new research project on the social and political transformations linked to India's expanding energy transition and extractive economies.