Centre for Studies in Science Policy

CSSP SEMINAR SERIES

Book Discussion with the Authors

Churning the Earth: The Making Of Global India  Aseem Shrivastava & Ashish Kothari

CHURNING THE EARTH takes a comprehensive view of development under conditions of “globalization” in India. While acknowledging the impressive economic growth rates of the last few years, the book questions whether such growth is socially, politically and ecologically sustainable. The book discusses concrete alternatives to current policies and practices, and argues that fundamental political reform is needed towards a radical ecological democracy.

On the Authors

Aseem Shrivastava is an ecological economist with a doctorate from the University of Massachusetts. He has written extensively on themes associated with globalization.

Ashish Kothari is a well-known environmentalist with decades of research and activism behind him.

The Discussant will be Dunu Roy

(Anubrotto Kumar Roy popularly known as Dunu Roy is a Chemical Engineer by training, social scientist by compulsion and political ecologist by choice)

Venue : Room Number 227, CSSP, SSS-I
Time: 4.30 pm
Date: February 12th, 2013
Radical Ecological Democracy

Escaping India’s Globalisation Trap
Today’s vision of ‘development’

Violence against nature, people, and cultures
Economic globalisation: intensified development violence

1991-onwards…

- Trade (export-import) liberalisation
- Foreign direct investment
- Delicensing / single window clearances
- Privatisation
India’s ecological deficit (mirroring world trend)

- World’s third largest ecological footprint
- Using twice what can be sustained by our natural resources
- Decline in capacity of nature to sustain us, by almost half

(Global Ecological Footprint and CII, 2008)
Impacts: India’s ‘development’ refugees, growing inequities

- ‘Development’ has dispossessed many millions of land, water, natural resources, livelihoods
- Over 60 million displaced in last 50 years (over 40% adivasis)
- Population below poverty line: 38 to 55%
- World’s largest no. of malnourished children
- Disproportionate -ve impact on women
- Uncontrolled consumerism by elite
- Wealth inequities
  *
India the new Coloniser (joining China, Japan…)

Karaturi Global: 360,000 ha. in Ethiopia for floriculture, sugarcane, palm oil, etc

Eurovistaa: 10,000 ha. in Tanzania for cotton, 55,200 ha in Indonesia for palm oil
India (& China, etc) on the path of ‘globalised development’?

Gandhi: ‘if India to take Britain’s path of ‘development’, it...
If something is fundamentally wrong with development model, do we have alternatives?
Towards alternatives: Radical Ecological Democracy
Two imperatives....

- Ecological security (ecosystems, species, populations, ecological functions…)
- Livelihood security (esp. of those most directly dependent on ecosystems and natural resources)
Towards tribal self-rule, with conservation: Mendha-Lekha (Maharashtra)

All decisions in gram sabha (village assembly); no activity even by government officials without sabha consent

Informed decisions through monitoring, and regular study circles (abhyas gat)
Conservation of 1800 ha forests, now with full rights under Forest Rights Act

Earnings from sustainable NTPF use (over Rs. 1 crore in 2011-12), and use of govt schemes towards:

- Full employment
- Biogas for 80% households
- Computer training centre
- Training as barefoot engineers
Community Forest Rights (FRA)

Several hundred claims accepted in Maharashtra (>6 lakh acres), Odisha (>70,000 acres) & Andhra

126,998 acres in Baigachak, MP

 Assertion of CFRs against industrial projects (e.g. POSCO), mining (e.g. Vedanta), logging (e.g. Baigachak), plantations (Odisha)
Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Sanctuary & (illegal) Tiger Reserve, Karnataka

Community Forest Resource titles to Soliga, over half of sanctuary; community-based wildlife/tiger conservation plan process initiated
Food security: sustainable agriculture
Deccan Development Society (AP): integrating conservation, equity, & livelihoods through sustainable agriculture

- Reviving traditional diversity, promoting cultivated and wild foods
- Creating community grain banks
- Empowering women/dalit farmers, securing land rights
- Creating consumer-producer links (Zaheerabad org. food restaurant)
- Linking to Public Distribution System
An individual revolutionary...

Natwar Sarangi
Narishu vill, Cuttack dist, Odisha

Growing 360 varieties of rice

Seed albums and banks

GenX: Jubraj Swain
Water security: decentralised harvesting & distribution
Arvari Sansad (Parliament), Rajasthan: water and food security through landscape governance
Livelihoods and jobs
Economic democracy...

Livelihood security through community-led cooperatives, self-help groups, producer companies:
Dharani, Andhra Pradesh; Kachchh Mahila Vikas Sanghatan / Kasab, Gujarat; Nowgong APCL, Madhya Pradesh; Nyoli, Uttarakhand; Swach, Pune; Aharam Traditional Crop Producer Co., Tamil Nadu)
The Village and the City ...
Gram swaraj: outmigration is *not* inevitable

Ralegan Siddhi and Hivare Bazaar (Maharashtra), Kuthambakkam (TN)
Towards sustainable cities

**Bhuj (Kachchh):**
- reviving watersheds
- decentralized water storage and management system
- solid waste management
- livelihoods for poor women
- adequate sanitation

(Hunnarshala, Sahjeevan, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, ACT, Setu)
Bhuj (contd):
dignified housing for the poor
building capacity amongst poor to become self-reliant
information, awareness, education re. 74th Amendment

(hunjeevan, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, ACT, Setu)
Dignified livelihoods for urban poor

Kagaj Kach Patra
Kashtakari Panchayat
&
Swach (Pune)
Other alternatives

Education: traditional and modern, oral and written, local and global

- Pachashala, AP
- Jeevanshala, Narmada
- Adivasi Academy, Guj
- Beeja Vidyapeeth, Uttarakhand
- Bhoomi College, Karnataka
Other alternatives…

Technologies to reduce ecological impact, reach the poor (*malkha cotton weaving, AP; Hunnarshala housing, Kachchh; innovations in materials*)

Energy: decentralised, renewable (*Ladakh solar; Bihar integrated*)
Spaces within the system...the government responds...

- **New laws:**
  - Right to Information Act
  - National Employment Guarantee Act
  - Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006

- **New programmes:**
  - Organic farming policies / programmes in 16 states
  - Kerala decentralised planning / Nagaland communitisation / Jharkhand’s Jharcraft
Radical ecological democracy (RED)

• achieving environmentally sustainable human welfare, through governance mechanisms that:
  - empower all citizens to participate in decision-making
  - ensure equitable distribution of wealth
  - respect the limits of the earth and the rights of nature
Radical Ecological Democracy:

A NEW POLITICS

Decentralised decision-making: ‘localisation’ and embedded landscape institutions

Ecoregional planning across states/provinces and countries … political boundaries aligned with ecological and cultural ones?

State accountability through citizens’ charters, public hearings, social audits, right to participation, policies …
Radical Ecological Democracy: A NEW ECONOMICS

Mindful of ecological limits (sustainability): freshwater, climate, biochemical cycles

Equity as core principle and outcome

Indicators of human well-being: food/water/energy security, dignified livelihoods, happiness/satisfaction, social relations, health and learning … post-2015 ‘sustainability/equity goals’ to replace MDGs

Facilitation of local currencies and non-monetised exchanges
Fundamental values & principles of RED

- Biophysical sustainability
- Equity (inter/intra-generational, inter-species)
- Decision-making access to all
- Diversity and pluralism (of ideas, knowledge, ecologies, economies, polities, cultures…)
- Self-reliance for basics
- Cooperation, collectivity, and ‘commons’
- Rights with responsibilities/duties (sense of ownership)
- Dignity of labour
- Respect to subsistence
- Qualitative pursuit of happiness
- Simplicity
- Respect for all life forms
Post-2015 Goals for India?

1: Integrity of natural ecosystems and biodiversity
2: Access to safe, adequate resources to fulfill basic needs (food, water, energy, shelter)
3: Access to dignified, sustainable livelihoods
4: Sustainable and equitable production and consumption
5: Sustainable and equitable infrastructure
6: Service and welfare sectors geared to sustainability and equity (incl health & education)
7: Macro-frameworks of economy and polity geared to ecological sustainability, human security, and socio-economic equity
But beware of false or superficial solutions.... REDD/REDD+, CDM, geoengineering, carbon trade, etc
A word of caution…

Not a call for blind revival of traditions (often socially oppressive, fatalist)

Not fundamentalist environmentalism (saffronised green; tiger vs. tribal... )
Some issues to resolve….

Will big industry be needed? Under whose control?

Will profits remain an incentive, will private sector have a role? How will public control be maintained over public sector?
Consumerism: how to bell the cat?

**Personal actions:** choices in use of materials, energy, transportation, etc

**Social actions:** policies providing incentives for responsible consumption, disincentives for wasteful consumption
An end to globalisation?

- Global flow of ideas, cultures, materials will continue, but on principles of Radical Ecological Democracy:
  - Primacy to local self-reliance in basics
  - Ecological sustainability
  - Social, economic equity

NO IMPOSITION OF ONE MODEL ACROSS WORLD!
Scenarios for 2060…

**Business as usual**: widespread ecological collapse, worse social inequities, water/resource wars, xenophobia, fortress mentality

**Managerial responses** (tech/market fixes, better laws/policies): collapse is slowed down, not averted; inequities persist

**Radical ecological democracy**: full-scale collapse averted, seeds sown for dramatic paradigm shifts, bioregionalism and localisation gain over nationalism
India is uniquely positioned to evolve alternative models like RED.
For more information....

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