

River Control in India: Spatial, Governmental and Subjective Dimensions (Advances in Asian Human-Environmental Research)

By Ravi Baghel

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Large river systems throughout the planet have been dramatically transformed due to river control projects such as large dams and embankments. Unlike other major human impacts like anthropogenic climate change, the alteration of river systems has been deliberate and planned by a small, powerful set of experts. Taking India as a case study, this book examines the way experts transform the planet through their discourse by their advocacy of river projects. This book identifies the spatial aspects of the norms through which the ideal river and the deficient river in need of control are produced. The role of governmental rationality in explaining the seemingly irrational and counter-productive effects of large projects like Kosi river embankments is considered. Finally using autobiographical material, the subjectivity of expert advice is examined, questioning its presumed objectivity. By examining the different subjective stances arising from the same body of expertise, this book discusses the consequences this has for river control specifically and for the relation between expertise and environmental change in general.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover
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About the Author

Ravi Baghel is a postdoctoral researcher at Heidelberg University, Germany. His current research examines the production of Himalayan glaciers as sources of environmental knowledge. This research was conducted under the auspices of the interdisciplinary research group ‘Waterscapes’ funded by the Cluster of Excellence: Asia and Europe in a Global Context. Dr. Baghel obtained his PhD in Geography from Heidelberg University in 2013, supported by a scholarship from the Cluster of Excellence. He had previously received a Masters degree in Social Sciences from the University of Freiburg, Germany, and the University of KwaZulu- Natal, South Africa, and a Bachelor’s degree in Chinese from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. He is a fellow of the Earth System Governance Project, and his research interests are in the interaction of knowledge and space, South Asian environmental issues and highly skilled migrants.

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