

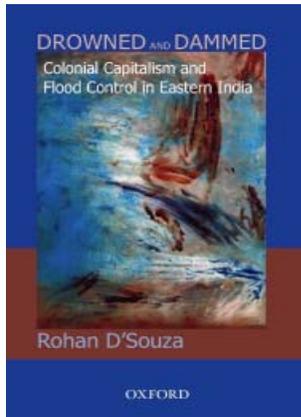
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DROWNED AND DAMMED

Colonial Capitalism and Flood Control in Eastern India

ROHAN D'SOUZA

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Drowned and Dammed comprehensively reconsiders the debate on the colonial environmental watershed and its hydraulic legacy. It also questions the enthusiasm for flood control in post-independent India.

The author argues that the British assembled and deployed the idea and practice of flood control in order to anchor their presence in the Orissa Delta. It was principally a political project, deeply implicated in the social, economic, and political calculations of capitalism in general and colonialism in particular. Through the rubric of flood control, colonial rule sought to organize systems of land revenue, institute capitalist private property and shape the region's hydrology with physical infrastructure such as embankments, canal networks, and inevitably the Hirakud Dam.

In seeking to dominate the delta's many rivers, colonial capitalism brought about an unprecedented ecological rupture by transforming the Orissa Delta from a flood dependent agrarian regime to a flood-vulnerable landscape. This ecological rupture revealed the particularities of colonial capitalism in its relationships with the natural world.

'...an engaging symmetry of exhaustively plumbed historical record, theoretical rigour and comparative insight...demonstrates that there are no context-free interventions in ecology. — *Seminar*

Readership:

This book will interest scholars, policy makers, activists, and students concerned with environmental history, political economy, water conflicts, and development.

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