



Theme 05: Solutions to Water Crises (Related to Actual Interventions)

(Un)Choked: Reconnoitring 'storylines' across the pillaged hydrosapes of the Adi Ganga

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The recent studies on water in the South Asian context provides a vastly rich exploration of its dynamic hydrosocial and socio-political understanding, highlighting its historicity as well its contemporary efficacy as a tenet of human dominated ecologies. It is this distinction however, i.e., the human-non human schism, influencing the ecological operations in a hydroscape, that encumbers the assemblage of long-term comprehensive solutions in a complex socio-ecological space. While the 'Pluralistic water research' framework integrates the technical and social facets of water to provide for sustainable solutions, the pluralities across the water's social strand itself can provide multiple investigative avenues, as discerned in the case of River Adi Ganga, a distributary of River Hooghly traversing through the urban settlements of Kolkata, India which at present struggles under the burden of human development and reverence.

While the case of Adi Ganga, like most Third World urban river discourses, reconnoitres the vestiges of politics and power hierarchies across the citified water stretch, it also necessitates the integration of technological discourses and cultural anthropomorphisation to provide tenable outcomes for both the river and its partakers. The application of the Historical Urban Political Ecology or HUPE framework, is essential in comprehending the historical unfolding of the river's socio-political and geomorphological emergence while the Environmental Humanities approach captures the enmeshed human-non human interactions, encapsulating the agential role of numerous animate as well as inanimate actors, such as tidal occurrences, sedimentary changes, coliform bacteria, fish etc in the life of the river and her witnesses. These multiple emergent 'storylines' across the river's long habituated stretch, propounds the need for the further probing of the varied 'soft' interventions playing a crucial role in the river's sustenance and coalesce them with big hydrological corrections, to cross fertilize theoretical frameworks across water pluriverses and produce innovative as well as grounded approaches, beneficial to both the river and its manifold participants.

J Mukherjee, *Blue Infrastructures of Kolkata: Natural History, Political Ecology and Urban Development in Kolkata*. Springer. Singapore (2020)