CHURNING THE EARTH: THE MAKING OF GLOBAL INDIA

Book release and Introduction

On the book

CHURNING THE EARTH takes a comprehensive view of development under globalization in India. The period of sweeping economic ‘reforms’ has just celebrated its 20th anniversary, an appropriate occasion to closely examine what it has meant for 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. It argues that the high growth has been of a predatory nature. While it has enriched already privileged classes, and enhanced the opportunities of the richer top quarter of the population, it has done so by rapidly increasing inequities and hurting the livelihoods of vast numbers of people. It has damaged the ecological basis that makes life and livelihoods possible for hundreds of millions of farmers, forest-dwellers, fishers, and others. It has often done so by appropriating land and water resources from such people - for purposes ranging from mining to industrialization, infrastructure, and even real estate speculation. Aggressive land acquisition has spawned a large number of protests, some of which have taken violent form. Such movements are questioning the model of development that India has been subjected to since the early decades of independence.

This situation is aggravated by tying India very closely to the global economy at a time when the latter is more volatile than ever. As climate change worsens and conflicts over water, land and natural resources grow, the prevailing form of globalization threatens the future of India as a civilization.

Urgent steps are needed to forestall a rapid descent into socio-ecological chaos. The book discusses concrete alternatives to current policies and practices, and argues that fundamental political reform is needed towards a radical ecological democracy. Many solutions are already emerging from a range of grassroots movements and initiatives, as also from ongoing policy changes, but much more needs to be done. Such alternative paths would be based on fundamental principles of ecological sustainability, social equity, universal livelihood security and the revival of crafts.

On the authors

Aseem Shrivastava is a Delhi-based writer. He wrote his doctoral thesis in Environmental Economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He has taught economics for many years at college and university level in India and the US. Most recently, he taught philosophy at Nordic College, Norway. He has written extensively on issues associated with globalization.

Founder-member of Indian environmental group Kalpavriksh, **Ashish Kothari** has taught at the Indian Institute of Public Administration. He coordinated India’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan process, and has served on Greenpeace International and India Boards. He served as co-chair of the IUCN Strategic Direction on Governance, Equity, Communities, and Livelihoods (TILCEPA), and was on the Steering Committee of two IUCN Commissions, CEESP and WCPA. He has been active in various people’s movements and civil society networks relating to destructive development, conservation, and natural resource rights. Ashish is the author or editor (singly or jointly with others) of over 30 books.

BOOK DETAILS: