

What we allow to dis-integrate: Ruins of development in South Asia

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Abstract

Ruins are everywhere. In South Asia, socio-economic development has led to the rapid transformation of the environmental, social and economic landscape. Led by a diverse range of actors, these transformations have informed the creation of new forms of ruins and ruination, the disintegration of recognisable forms whether they be material, ideational or institutional. Objects and institutions generate social effect in their preservation as well as their destruction and disposal. Thus, what we allow to disintegrate, to fall into ruin, is as powerful an assessment of our collective lives and histories as those we preserve and allow to flourish. Ruins of development call for a wider conceptualisation that locates their materiality within wider social, political and economic contexts. Focusing on hydropower development, ruins and life amidst these ruins in the eastern Himalaya, the talk will discuss how institutions, politics and people co-produce and even accelerate the production of new ruins and ruinations.



Biography

Dr Mona Chettri is an Australia-India Institute Research Fellow at University of Western Australia. She received her PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, in 2014. She is the author of *Constructing Democracy: Ethnicity and Democracy in the eastern Himalaya* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017) and has published widely on urbanisation, ethnicity, politics and development in the eastern Himalayan borderlands of India and Nepal. Her current research focuses on the intersections between gender, labour, urbanisation and infrastructure in the Sikkim-Darjeeling Himalaya, India.

Thursday, 7 May, 4-5 pm

Zoom session ID: 980 6692 4025

Password: 026413

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