Paper ID	016
Author(s)	Vipul Singh
Title	Decommonising Rivers in South Asia: The Canal Act of 1864

Abstract

Decommonisation refers to the process of transforming shared resources, such as rivers, into regulated commodities, often through legal frameworks and state control. In South Asia, this shift was notably exemplified by the Canal Act of 1864, which aimed to establish a formal system of irrigation and water management. The idea of modern canal construction first surfaced in 1853 when Colonel C.H. Dickens proposed the creation of the Sone Canal in colonial Bihar to provide water during dry months. The Sone Canal became a model for the rest of the colonial empire in South Asia.

The central focus of this paper is the analysis of the decommonisation process in the historical transformation of rivers in India, with a particular emphasis on the Sone canal. By the late nineteenth century, developments in India increasingly centred on commercial and economic activities around canals. The paper also explores the historical factors that led to the formulation of canal act and examines the potential adverse environmental consequences of such measures. It also investigates the long-term effects of decommonisation on riverine ecosystems, providing insights into the dynamics of excludability and subtractability in the context of rivers.

Keywords	Commonisation; Decommonisation; Colonial Anxiety; Canal Act.

Paper ID	205
Author(s)	Ankur Parashar
Title	Colonial ecology of water scarcity in Shimla

Abstract

Despite recurrent water crisis events in the Himalayan cities, the relationship between urban space and water scarcity remains unexplored. The question of water scarcity can't be separated from the question of the space in whatever way we see the relationship between the urban water crises with the space, be it the deterministic approach or the constructivist approach. The water scarcity is rooted both in the water infrastructure inherited during the pre-colonial and colonial periods meant for the population of that time and embodying in itself the exclusions and biases of that time. In the context of countries like India, or what we collectively call Southern Urbanization, the historicity of the cities needs to be taken into consideration to start any meaningful conversation about their present. Although colonialism is not the only major force to shape urbanization in the Indian context, it is still prominent, even more so in the context of mountain urbanization in India, where many new urban centres like Shimla, Darjeeling, Murry emerged as the new centres of the colonial domination. To understand the water crisis, we need to understand the specificity of mountain urbanization. The urban space of the region should be looked at as the production of a specific socio-temporal form rather than just a geographically contingent thing. In this paper, I will look at the interaction between water scarcity and the urban through the lens of political ecology. I am going to contextualize water scarcity in the context of Colonail urbanization, where the scarcity of the urban space is intertwined with the colonial configuration of the urban space in the case of Shimla.

Keywords	Colonialism, Water, Himalaya, urbanization

Paper ID	197

Author(s)	Satoshi Murayama
Title	Water construction in a little rain region: commons and labour supply in early modern Sanuki, Japan

Abstract

Paddy rice cultivation requires the right amount of rainfall and sunshine at the right time. In the low rainfall region of Sanuki, now Kagawa Prefecture, Japan, many reservoirs have been constructed since ancient times to ensure adequate water supply. The purpose was to ensure a reliable water supply and to ensure that the population had sufficient food through the production of rice, a cereal crop. However, reservoirs vary in size from huge to small, and in location from mountainous areas to mountain foothills and plains. While most are recognised as commons that guarantee water supply to a certain area, some reservoirs are small enough to provide enough water for a family's production, while others are large enough to supply water to a vast area. When considering the commons from the perspective of labour supply, the story does not end with the single logic of building reservoirs due to water scarcity. This presentation aims to provide new insights into the logic of the commons itself by reviewing the historical development stages of reservoirs and the typology of reservoirs in a new light.

Keywords	Water, Foods, Plants

Paper ID	211
Author(s)	Prateep Kumar Nayak
Title	Transitioning toward viable commons through commonisation-decommonisation

Abstract

This paper focuses on the question of how to make commons dynamic by emphasizing the role transitions in articulating the challenges of sustaining the commons. It highlights the concepts of commonisation and decommonisation as a way to understand commons as a process and offers analytical directions for policy, practice and theory building that can potentially help maintain commons as commons in the future. Here, 'commonisation' is understood as a process through which a resource gets converted into a joint or communal use regime under commons institutions that deal with excludability and subtractability, and 'decommonisation' refers to a process through which such a resource loses these essential characteristics. Both commonisation and decommonisation are continuous and potentially two-way because they are influenced by the prevalent social, cultural, economic, ecological and political history and traditions of the area, and the influences of several internal and external drivers. Focusing on commonisation and decommonisation as analytical tools useful to examine and respond to changes in the commons, the paper explores how environmental and natural resources are commonised and decommonised through the influence of multi-level internal and external drivers that are systemic and rooted in the history, power dynamics and politics across disparate geographical and temporal contexts. It concludes that understanding commonisation and decommonisation processes relies on a proper understanding of the history that enables successful commons for the future.

Keywords	Commons; Commonisation; decommonisation; history; power; politics, viability