

## Common Futures?

Globally there is a mounting tension between Environment and Development. If natural resources are becoming scarce, what are the political implications of this? Is it now possible for emerging powers, such as India, to follow a high-consumption development path?

Rather than approach these questions from 'above', in terms of States and International Relations, I would prefer to look at the picture from 'below'. I mean this in terms of how organisations engaged with development issues operate in relation to such public debates.

I would like to look at these public debates and the work of one particular Non-Governmental Organisation, Keystone Foundation in Tamil Nadu, are related. I am proposing to spend two years in India investigating the relationships between this organisation and media and political debates at the local, regional and national level. This will form the fieldwork component of my Phd Program.

By doing so I hope to improve the understanding of what goes on in the nexus between activist groups and political debates, particularly in relation to environmental issues. Whilst there has been some work on the relationships between the Indian Media and environmental issues (Chapman et al., 1997) there is little work to date about the relationships between NGOs and these debates. Chapman et al.'s work suggests that NGO representatives operate as freelance reporters for many of India's cash-strapped publications. This suggests that these relationships are close ones, worthy of further attention.

These social relationships are bound up with debates on environment and development. An understanding of them is likely to be useful. Since India is the world's largest democracy with the world's largest print media, as well as a future superpower, such an understanding might help in debating the possibilities of progress at every level, from the local to the global.

I hope to approach these questions through detailed ethnographic observation of Keystone Foundation over the course of a year, alongside interview and content analysis work aimed at getting a sense of the wider debates they are involved with. I propose to spend a year before this ethnographic phase, learning Tamil and familiarising myself with the relevant groups of people.

### References:

Chapman et al. (1997) Environmentalism and the Mass Media: The North-South Divide, London: Routledge