

TEARING THROUGH THE WATER LANDSCAPE

*Evaluating the environmental and social consequences of POSCO
project in Odisha, India*



A Study prepared

by

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Needless to state, oversights and lacunae are clearly the responsibility of the authors.

About this study

This study is an effort to deeply enquire into the circumstances and the basis for the approval of the mega POSCO project in Odisha. An array of historical evidence is surveyed to appreciate the rich biodiversity of the Jagatsinghpur region over time and the nature of relationships between communities and forests. On this basis, the environmental and social impact information of POSCO's steel-power-port components is critiqued to expose the fact that regulatory agencies could not have known anything of the short term and long term impacts of the project on the basis of the information that the company supplied to them. This report exposes the disastrous consequences of locating this mega venture in a region known to be the amongst the most vulnerable to frequent cyclonic activity in the world.

While the potential devastating consequences of the mining components of the project is noted with grave concern, its impacts have not been reviewed here. This is because the Odisha Government has only indicated that the proposed mines are to be in the Kadadhar hills of Sundergarh district, but has not identified the exact location. This report also does not review the economic impacts of the project for this has been comprehensively achieved in the report of the Mining Zone Peoples' Solidarity Group entitled *"Iron and Steel: The POSCO-India Story"*.¹

Finally, this is an effort to appreciate the strange nature of environmental decision making in India, as it is also a study of the dissembling of Jairam Ramesh who admittedly "under pressure"² approved the POSCO project thus supporting the comprehensive violation of India's environmental, forest protection and forest rights acts, amongst others.



1 "Iron and Steel: The POSCO-India Story", Mining Zone Peoples' Solidarity Group, 20 October 2010, accessible at: <http://miningzone.org>

2 A few days after he finally approved the POSCO project, Jairam Ramesh conceded that he has been under pressure to overlook environmental violations. Source: I have been under pressure to overlook environment violations: Jairam Ramesh, India Today, 7 May 2011, accessible at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story/jairam-ramesh-violated-environment-rules-under-pressure/1/137396.html>

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