

India's Invisible Waste Streams

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Ensuring environmental sustainability emerges as a major challenge for the contemporary Global South. As the second-most populous country in the world, India, in particular, is confronted with massive environmental challenges including air, water, land, waste, and energy management. Waste management studies in developing countries and emerging economies are unfortunately too inadequate to inform major policy decisions. In my project as an RCC Landhaus fellow, I focus on electronic waste (e-waste) and textile waste in the Global South in general and in India in particular. Both are still invisible, ignored, and understudied waste streams in the Global South that are characterized by their inherent toxicities and by having detrimental consequences for human health and the environment, e.g. heavy metals in e-waste and dyes in textiles. Considering India a representative of the emerging economies and the Global South, I examine the country's e-waste and textile waste governance approaches and their different traits and individualities in this project.

The goal is to complete a book in which e-waste and textile waste are viewed through parallel theoretical lenses addressing diverse socio-economic, political, and environmental attributes of production, consumption, and disposal. The complexities associated with e-waste and textile waste governance call for an interdisciplinary research approach. With my background in environmental science and science and technology studies (STS), diverse disciplines such as political science, environmental justice, and environmental history comprehensively inform my study. E-waste and textile waste management aspects such as the Global North-Global South waste trade, the engagement of the informal waste recycling sector, and existing policy instruments are of particular research interest in the current project. With more than 13 years worth of experience in working on waste management and governance in India, the proposed manuscript will provide a single, all-encompassing reading on two overlooked waste streams in India. This will be a novel attempt considering the dearth of literature on the topic, especially from the perspective of social sciences and environmental humanities.