



WE WANT TO BECOME A
REAL PARTNERS
FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SIKKIM

DEVELOPER:

[blacked out] S ENERGY PVT. LTD.
(96 MW JORETHANG LOOP HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT)

Dr. Mona Chettri (Aarhus University, Danmark)

THE DE-FACTO SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE IN THE EASTERN HIMALAYA LIBERALISATION AND TRANSFORMATION IN SIKKIM

The eastern Himalayan borderland is experiencing rapid economic, social and spatial transformation as a result of accelerated economic liberalization, converting it into a lucrative investment enclave for pharmaceutical companies and hydropower projects. These totems of 'development' also perform the supplementary function of incorporating one of India's most strategic borderlands – Sikkim – within the fold of the Indian nation-state in ways that are more compelling and lucrative than state control. Capital, routed through private companies, binds a historically and culturally distinct Sikkim more closely to mainland India and its markets. Sikkim does not fall under the official category of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), but the flow of private investment under opaque rules, immune from strict state and national laws – many of which are applicable only to border and ethnic minority regions – has transformed it into a de-facto SEZ. Hydropower projects and pharmaceutical companies

are very specific, independent economic 'constellations' bound together by only a skeletal framework of perfunctory governmental regulations and benefitting (logistically and financially) from Sikkim's strategic location. Economic 'constellations' and their evolving socio-economic assemblages represent spaces where migration, urbanization, globalization, ethno-nationalism and development are interconnected in complex ways. The lecture will focus on the proliferation of pharmaceutical and hydropower projects in Sikkim to discuss three important questions. First, how have private finance and infrastructural development transformed an 'isolated', 'backward' borderland into a resource frontier; second, what are the social and spatial impacts of this transformation of Sikkim and third, what does the Sikkimese experience with liberalisation illustrate about the changing state-building trends in the peripheries of modern South Asia.

Freitag, 10. November 2017, 15 Uhr (ct)

INSTITUT FÜR SÜDASIEN-, TIBET- UND BUDDHISMUSKUNDE // Seminarraum 1

AAKH, Hof 2.7 // Spitalgasse 2–4 // WIEN 1090