

The Populist Rhetoric: The Symmetry of Environmentalism and Gandhianism in the Indian Mainstream Academia

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Abstract : Environmental problems are considered a vital social issue in terms of the world's problems with pollution, environmental degradation, and resource depletion. And populism is about appropriating the social issues according to the social condition for mobilizing a mass and constructing a 'general will'. Populism encourages a move towards a common cause, it channelizes the emotions of the 'common people' towards a nation and nature. The Gandhian ideology has been received as a dominant ideology and the 'only' solution to environmental problems. This paper strives to understand the symmetry of environmentalism and Gandhianism. i.e., how the debate on the environment in India has been primarily studied through the Gandhian ideology. The Indian Social Sciences visualize the broader issues of the environment from these perspectives, thus, making it a hegemonic approach. Being anti pluralist rhetoric is major rhetoric in the becoming of a populist. This paper shall focus on the idea that how this hegemonic construction of Gandhian ideology in the debates on environmentalism has contributed to the making of anti-pluralistic rhetoric. This anti-pluralistic rhetoric has eliminated the possibility of a pluralistic perspective in the debates on the environment. The quest for a moral inspiration embedded in Gandhianism, whose situatedness is found in the Hindu Social order, seems to have been completely rationalized through the larger politics of knowledge and thus making it appear as the only way forward when it is not.

Keywords : environmental populism, gandhianism, populist rhetoric, environmentalism

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