

Vipul Singh is Associate Professor at the Department of History, University of Delhi. He is an environmental historian trained in early modern history and his major area of focus has been ecologically harsh zones of India such as arid western Rajasthan and the flood plains of the Ganga. He has been a Carson fellow of the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Ludwig Maximilians Universität, Munich, Germany.

Jacket illustration: 'S.W. view of the Fakir's Rock in the River Ganges, near Sultangunge.' Coloured aquatint by Thomas and William Daniell, 1800. By: Thomas Daniell, after: William Daniell published: 15 April 1800. Image credit: Wellcome Library, London.

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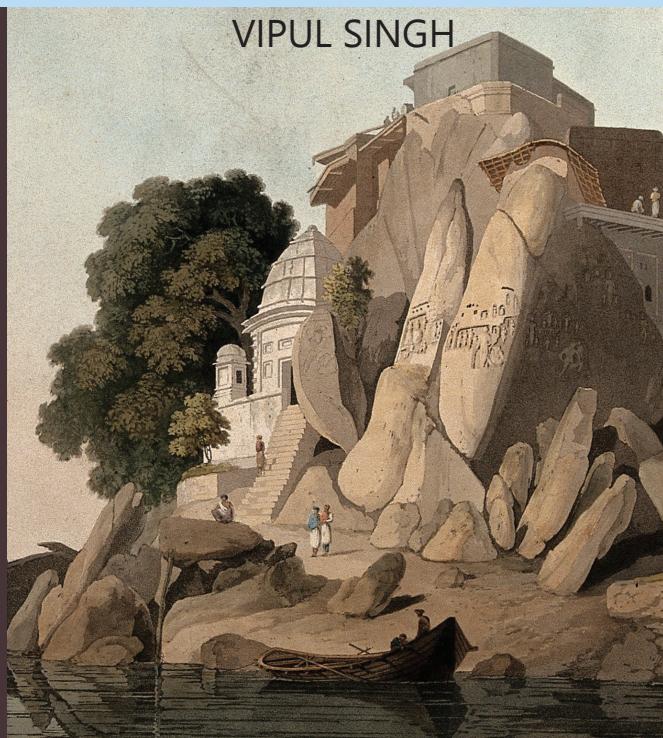
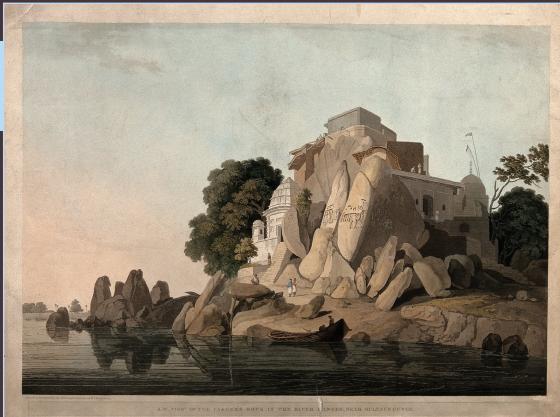


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SPEAKING RIVERS

Environmental History of
a Mid-Ganga Flood Country, 1540–1885

VIPUL SINGH



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RIVERS

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The question of water and human dependence on river systems has become a major public concern of the twenty-first century. Based on a long term historical study of a flood country in the mid-Ganga basin, *Speaking Rivers: Environmental History of a Mid-Ganga Flood Country, 1540–1885* looks at the changing perception of the people from a useful to a problematic river. Based on environmental, agricultural and cultural histories it explores the British colonial policy that altered the age-old relationship between the people and the river, and the long-term landscape transformations and cropping pattern changes that have been taking shape since early modern times. This book journeys through the flood plains of Bihar where Sher Shah's ideas of local governance and ecological regime were altered by the Mughals and reversed completely by the European notion of a regimented Greater Bengal. Vipul sees a strong connection between economy and environment and goes on to question the presumed relationship between flood control and modernity, and explains as to why even today ecologically vulnerable diara land remains as the centre of conflict and dispute.

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