

Kuttan Mahadevan and Prameswara Krishnan (eds). *Methodology for Population Study and Development*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. 1993.

The main concern of this volume is to explore various aspects of the research methodology relating to population dynamics. The authors belong to different disciplines, and in the nineteen contributions here which are categorised under five major themes, they examine various avenues relating to the assessment of population issues from their own perspectives.

The first two papers ("Implicit Theoretical Assumptions in Research Designs" by Hubert M. Blalock Jr. and "Conceptual Models in Population Studies" by K. Mahadevan) emphasise the need for greater sensitisation of the researcher to a broad range of implicit assumptions in the research design for data analysis, and to the utilisation of appropriate conceptual frameworks for modern empirical research. Blalock rightly points out the general tendency of researchers to develop what he terms "intellectual blinders" to overlook the shortcomings of the design they adopt, and the tendency to stress the weaknesses of the unfavoured design strategies. He is also concerned about the generalisability issues when convenience of choice in the subject's location in social psychology is excused on the grounds that it is also done by most others. He observes that the exposure of graduate students to the methodological literature is brief and, in many cases, it is only a "nuts and bolts treatment" of measurement issues with "a rather heavy emphasis on whatever technique happens to be fashionable at the time, or at their own universities, rather than a more thorough grounding on the nature of the theoretical assumptions that undergird the particular technique. As a result, they know how to use and churn out research papers that enable them to display their expertise. But they are not being trained to examine the approach in question from the standpoint of gaining a deeper understanding of the theoretical rationale that underlies it". (p. 34).

The second paper's emphasis on appropriate conceptualisation of a model, is no doubt an essential requirement, but the comprehension, experience, and skill of the researcher in handling it is of critical importance, as it is also of relevance to the discussion in the third paper ("Causal Modelling in Population Studies" by J. Jayachandran) which reviews some causal analysis techniques in demographic applications for cross-sectional data, as well as the need for understanding the basic conditions necessary to establish causality among variables.

The fourth paper ("Comparative Historical Demography: Dynamic Categorical Analysis of Life Histories" by J. Dennis Willigan) which deals with research in comparative historical demography, proposes that the life-course, conceptualised as a temporal sequence of interactions of the individual, demographic event, and situation, is the most appropriate conceptual and methodological framework.

Pointing towards the diverse circumstances of societies, the fifth paper ("Some Approaches to the Study of Human Migration" by A. K. M. Nurunabi and P. Krishnan) seriously questions the adequacy of a single migration theory encompassing all aspects of the process. Instead, the paper places an emphasis on the need for a series of migra-

tion theories, each of which caters for the needs of an area and its people. The paper emphasises some interesting and useful considerations for understanding the migration phenomenon from the perspective of different disciplines.

The authors of the sixth paper ("Sociology of Population Research" by K. Mahadevan, Jayasree and S. Sivaraju) highlight the salient and specialised contributions made by sociologists in particular and other social scientists in general for understanding various aspects of the population. The authors of the seventh paper ("Population Decisions: Psychological Models" by Vaida D. Thompson) review a number of psychological models and the conceptual issues relating to their theoretical formulation for understanding decision-making or the lack of decision-making processes concerning fertility and migration. The discussion provides a useful basis to assess the motivational and behavioural aspects relating to population dynamics.

The eighth paper ("Geography and Population Studies" by Loszek A. Kosinski and Feroz Kurji) throws light not only on the geographic perspective of population measurements but also provides an important exposure to demographers involved in studies relating to the distribution and redistribution of population.

The discussion in the ninth paper ("System Science Developed in China for the Study of Population Problems" by Jinguang Yu, Chi-hsien Tuan and Guangtian Zhu) concerns mainly the development of serious and systematic efforts (referred to in the paper as "population systems science") in China for the study of population problems through the initiatives of systems analysts and mathematicians.

The tenth paper ("Mathematics and Population Research" by P. Krishnan) provides an overview of some of the attempts made at developing mathematical representations of the demographic phenomenon. It stresses the need for a good understanding of demographic theories along with a good working knowledge of mathematics, statistics, and computer skills.

The eleventh paper ("Epidemiologic Methods in Population Studies" by Lory M. Laing) focuses on epidemiological methods in population studies. The paper provides a useful review of some selected epidemiological approaches and indices for assessing the burden, distribution, and trends of disease, as well as its associated factors.

While the importance of anthropological approaches in the study of demography is emphasised in the twelfth paper ("Anthropology and Population Studies" by R. D. Sharma, A. K. Koshy, M. S. R. Murthy and N. V. Nair) the thirteenth paper ("Loglinear Models for Qualitative Dependent Variables" by Alfred Demaris and K. V. Rao) discusses log-linear modelling within the context of developments in the multivariate analyses involving the qualitative dependent variables. The fourteenth paper ("A Computer Programme for Macro-simulation in Demography" by N. M. Lulu) has computer programming for macro-simulation in demography as its theme. It presents a computer programme to trace the changes in the age-sex composition of a population, and any characteristic which depends on the age structure.

The fifteenth paper ("Third World Development and Quality of Life: Towards a Holistic Model" by K. Mahadevan, Baha Abu-Laban, Mclrvn Sharon and M.

Sumangala) provides an alternative conceptual synthesis from existing literature in the form of a holistic model of social development and the quality of life in Third World countries. By applying the headship rate approach, some of the methodological and related conceptual issues in developing household and family projections for Canada have been addressed in the sixteenth paper ("Projecting Households and Families in Canada by the Headship Rate Method" by M. V. George and J. Perreault).

In the seventeenth paper ("Strategies for Dealing with Uncertainties in Estimating Survivorship at Higher Ages" by Charles J. Mode and Herman E. Gollwitzer) the authors Mode and Gollwitzer report on some of the recent experiences in dealing with the problems of inconsistency between the census and death registration data, and suggest strategies to deal with such problems while estimating survivalship at the higher ages. The eighteenth and the nineteenth papers ("Successful Diffusion Through Satisfied Adopters" by K. Mahadevan, and "Population Education Through Integrated Development" by K. Mahadevan) both by the same author, concern themselves with the communication of family and action research. While the eighteenth paper deals with action research on the diffusion of family planning adoption through the communication of satisfied adopters with non-adopters, the nineteenth paper proposes action research of population education through an integrated development in some selected rural areas. For this purpose, the author suggests the use of teachers and students by giving them different types of incentives.

On the whole, this book is very useful for researchers who are involved in various aspects of population research. The volume's contents are all contributed by different authors who provide a wide view of the demographic research; indeed, a reminder to the population analyst that there is a variety of tools from which he/she can benefit, towards a more realistic understanding of demographic and related issues. However, it would have been more useful if the editors of the volume had given a brief description of the purpose of inviting all these papers from different scholars. An introductory note before each paper, noting the relevance of a specific topic to the main theme as well as the concern of the respective authors, would have been useful too. While useful still, the papers vary in scope and utility.

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