

Shorter Notices^{*}

Bhargavi V. Davar (ed.). *Mental Health from a Gender Perspective.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000. 427 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 595.00.

Not much research has been carried out in India with respect to the mental health of the second sex. This gender gap is significant because of the increasing awareness about the mental health requirements of women. This book tends to fill the void in the knowledge on this special subject.

The volume is divided into four major sections, each section having a number of original articles. The introduction reviews gender and mental health perspectives from different viewpoints. The second section, titled “The Body, Reproduction and Mental Health”, examines a number of issues related to the linkages between psychiatry and reproductive health, and has some feminist perspectives on the experiences of rural Tamil women and of gynecological morbidity and mental disorders in low-income urban women in Mumbai. The third section deals with violence and mental health. In particular, the impact of child sexual abuse is analysed. Other articles in this section deal with sexual violence and mental health, an all too common problem in the developed countries but now being more openly talked about in the developing world.

The last section looks at women, society, and mental illness. Specifically, two articles are of interest in this section. The first deals with women and the law on unsoundness of mind and the second discusses the media and women’s mental health. Overall, the approach to the problems is eclectic, with various articles following different social science methodologies that highlight the impact of the psychological, political, and social forces influencing the mental health of women.

Maarten Bavinck. *Marine Resource Management: Conflict and Regulation in the Fisheries of the Coromandel Coast.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000. 394 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 595.00.

This book forms part of the series on the core issue of “Livelihood and Environment”, which is part of the research programme of the Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Conflict has always existed between groups over access to and utilisation of natural resources. In present-day circumstances, this conflict is becoming all the more acute, threatening the livelihood and social fabric of the poorer segments of society in developing countries which rely largely on the traditional economy to meet their

^{*}By Mir Annice Mahmood, Senior Faculty Member, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad.

economic needs. The regulatory role of the state in this conflict over access to and use of natural resources has not been pro-active and successful. Consequently, the whole issue needs urgent attention. In this connection, the author has used India's inshore marine fisheries resources along the Coromandel coast as a case to study and highlights the conflict and its possible resolution—over the access to and use of natural resources.

The study is a detailed one and can be divided into three areas which deal with various legal and other aspects. The first area looks at the traditional fishing sector, its rules and regulations. The second section discusses the mechanised or modern sector, keeping in view the format followed in the traditional fishing sector. The third area outlines the official policy of the Fisheries Department—the strengths and weaknesses of its regulatory policy, and what could be proposed for its more effective functioning. Overall, the study employs a multidisciplinary approach to an issue that is of great concern in the area of environment and livelihood. The issue of who has legal right over the resources of the sea, and their exploitation by the traditional and modern sections, is limited to social theories that attempt to explain people's struggles. To conclude, this book is aimed at a wide audience, especially those agencies which deal with conflict resolution, the sociology of law, social anthropology, institutional economies, and public administration. Although a difficult subject, the book is well-written, concise, and readable for the specialist rather than a lay audience.

Gurli Jakobsen and Jens Erik Torp (eds). *Understanding Business Systems in Developing Countries*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000. 260 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 225.00.

This is an interesting book that examines a rather intriguing topic relating to the role that private companies can play in promoting development in the less developed countries. The book consists of seven articles by different authors which review the central theme of the book. The firm or private company can not be considered to be organised on a universal basis but varies from country to country and society to society. In other words, it is not necessary that a successfully operating private company or firm in the West be replicated and organised in a society that does not reflect Western values. Businesses need to meld with local culture and tradition if they are to be successful. Thus the organisation of private businesses and their operation vary from country to country and society to society. It is necessary, therefore, to find that optimum mix where private companies can contribute significantly to economic development.

In this connection, there are a number of case studies that highlight the operations of private companies in the developing world. The countries selected for these case studies include Malaysia, South Korea, India, Indonesia, and Ghana. These case studies look at some of the issues which are important in validating the theoretical underpinnings on which this book is based. The business systems approach is

examined in detail in the article by Richard Whitley, "Developing Capitalism: The Comparative Analysis of Emerging Business Systems in the South." The article studies the manner in which industrialisation took place initially in the East Asian economies and, then, it is similarly analysed in the context of the Western European road to industrialisation. The development of indigenous business systems is also analysed in the case studies presented in the book. Although a slim volume, the book does dilate on an important issue, that of the evolutionary role business systems play in the development process. The book covers such areas as the management of technology, the development of technology, and inter-firm linkages and related topics. It is addressed to those who wish to analyse the behaviour of business organisations, management, and development studies.

Kanchan Chopra and S. C. Gulati. *Migration, Common Property Resources and Environmental Degradation: Interlinkage in India's Arid and Semi-arid Regions.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000. 163 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 350.00.

This volume examines the linkages between the following: distress outmigration, poverty, and environmental degradation in India. The central thesis of the book is the development of a system of property rights to protect the rural people from being forced to migrate. In this connection, institutional intervention can play a key role in preventing distress outmigration. The authors of the book start their analysis by reviewing the scale of the problem of the degradation of common property resources in India with special emphasis on the arid and semi-arid regions of the country. Their analysis of the problem is supplemented by field-level data and further refined by the use of econometric techniques. The results of the analysis presented by the authors show that institutional change brought about by non-governmental organisations has a beneficial effect on outmigration from the rural areas. Thus, if property rights are clearly defined with a suitable mechanism for their enforcement, distress outmigration from the rural areas would decline. This book is interesting in that it not only highlights the linkages between distress outmigration, poverty, and environmental degradation but also actually proves this linkage through the use of econometric techniques. This approach validates and reinforces the main thesis of the authors from which researchers in environmental issues, common property rights, and natural resources can benefit.

Prema Clarke. *The Culture of Pedagogy.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 223 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 250.00.

This book deals with the interplay between culture and education. More specifically, it examines how teachers perceive their work, roles, and responsibilities along with their output in the classroom. Teaching is the centerpiece, and various

models—in particular the cultural model—are used to highlight the teacher's perceptions and responsibilities in the classroom. These models help describe the objectives teachers set for themselves as well as for their students. Interactions between teachers and students are not unique but multi-faceted, each governed by different rules. However, the author identifies four common factors present in teachers. These are a common worldview, a hierarchical establishment within a controlled social framework, knowledge, and a sense of duty. This is what the author calls “the culture of pedagogy”.

As the book deals with India, this culture of pedagogy is examined with particular reference to the Indian educational establishment. The adverse effects of colonisation are attempted to be mitigated by an indigenous approach both in the area of curriculum design and teacher education. However, the book also highlights the view that not all of Indian education came under colonial influence. This is what makes the book an interesting read. Furthermore, the book reveals that there is a divergence between official policy on education and the actual ground realities. This divergence is often ignored, thereby reducing any attempt to reform the situation, which could in the long-run prove detrimental to the educational system of the country. Another issue raised in the book deals with repetition and rote learning, ignoring analysis and reasoning. This is another weakness that needs to be done away with, so that the “culture of pedagogy as outlined in the book may be reformed and brought in line with modern-day requirements. Teachers have to be trained in imparting educational skills that encourage thinking and reasoning among pupils.

However, to reiterate, the interesting feature of this book is the application of various cultural models to highlight the culture of pedagogy in India. These models also suggest the possibilities and efficacy of any reforms that need to be undertaken to improve the standards of education in the country. The book would be particularly of use to sociologists, psychologists, and educationists.

G. S. Bhalla and Gurmail Singh. *Indian Agriculture: Four Decades of Development*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 308 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 450.00.

This book is an in-depth study which examines the agriculture sector in India. Like Pakistan, the agriculture sector plays an important role in the Indian economy as it provides employment to a large segment of the country's population. Therefore, given its position of pre-eminence in the economy, Indian policy-makers prioritised agricultural development to attain the goal of food security. The policies followed have boosted agricultural production in India, yet serious variations in the development of agriculture across regions remain.

The authors of this book critically review the growth of agricultural output at the district and state levels. In all, 289 districts and 17 states form the basis of their study.

The time-period covered is 1962–1993, disaggregated into four segments: 1962–65; 1970–73; 1980–83; and 1990–93. Their analysis suggests reasons for the change in cropping patterns, the use of land, and labour productivity, keeping in view new techniques and technologies available to the agriculture sector in the time-period under reference.

There are six substantive chapters in the book. Chapter 1 outlines the scope of the book. Chapter 2 analyses the spatial pattern of changes in Indian agriculture. Chapter 3 discusses the yield levels of crops at the district-level. Chapter 4 is also a district-level analysis of the patterns of growth in output. Chapter 5 deals solely with the productivity level of male agricultural workers. And, finally, Chapter 6 concludes with a discussion of the results of the research conducted by the authors. This chapter also highlights appropriate policy measures that need to be taken in the light of the research findings of the authors.

Overall, this is a very detailed study of an important topic. The authors follow a focused approach outlining the strengths and weaknesses in Indian agriculture. The book would be useful to those interested in rural development and agrarian issues.

Imrana Qadeer, Kasturi Sen, and K. R. Nayar (eds). *Public Health and the Poverty of Reforms: The South Asian Predicament*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 547 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 700.00.

In recent years, the World Bank and the IMF have stressed the efficacy of structural adjustment programmes in the developing world. These programmes have certain common characteristics, such as a diminished role of the state in intervening in the economy, trade liberalisation, privatisation, currency devaluation, etc. This economic prescription began to be applied to the South Asian region in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The consequences of these structural adjustment policies on the health sector in South Asia are the subject matter of the book.

The book is divided into six sections. The first section looks at the concepts and presents the historical underpinnings that connect neo-liberal economic policies to public health. The second section reviews the development of specific policies and their lack of relevance to the people concerned. Section Three discusses the shifts in health services and health financing. Section Four examines the issue of decentralisation in health care. Section Five reveals the problems faced by doctors in the area of public health. The last section consists of case studies in the domain of public health. In all, there are 33 original articles supported extensively by tables and figures that highlight the problems created by the structural adjustment programmes in the field of public health in South Asia. The book is comprehensive in its approach to the problem. The thrust is generally critical, the central message being that these programmes have caused a negative impact on the well-being of the people. Those interested in the political

economy of the provision of public health services would benefit from the discussion of the issues raised in this book.

Satu Kähkönen and Mancur Olson (eds). *A New Institutional Approach to Economic Development*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 353 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 595.00.

This volume consists of two parts. Part I, which is comprised of ten articles, looks at a broader and brighter approach to economies and societies. Part II, consisting of six articles, gives applications of this broader and brighter approach to India.

It is highlighted that in recent years, some economic approaches have spilled over into other professions such as law, history, sociology, demography and other related disciplines. The tools and techniques of mainline economics have also been applied successfully to these other disciplines in trying to understand human behaviour. What this book does is to trace the growing interlinkages between the social sciences. These interlinkages are not limited to the developed countries only, but can also be observed in the developing countries. If we look at one non-economic aspect such as governance, we realise that good governance can play a significant role in attracting capital for investment from the developed world, leading to faster rates of economic growth. On the other hand, weak or poor governance can detract from the rate of economic growth. Therefore, the articles in this book stress the importance of governance—that adopting appropriate, consistent economic policies can lead to high rates of economic growth. Thus, good governance, along with established and well-functioning economic institutions, is the *sine qua non* for the foundation of sound economic development.

Part II of the book applies this interdisciplinary and broader approach to India. Various facets such as the influence of corruption in politics, public finance issues, the organisational establishment of government, and other related concerns are discussed in this part. What makes this book significant is the contributions by well-known and reputable economists and social scientists such as Axel Leijonhufvud, Pranab Bardhan, the editors themselves, and Oliver E. Williamson, to name a few. The book is well-written and brings together the recent developments in the field of social sciences, and in the process, highlights the pre-eminent contribution of economics in development. This broader approach does explain the changes that are occurring in the developed and developing societies.