

Shorter Notices

Raff Carmen. *Autonomous Development: Humanising the Landscape: An Excursion into Radical Thinking and Practice.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996. 244 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 295.00.

This comprehensive book provides a convincing alternative to the current perception and practice of economics and development. Given his field and teaching experience, the author replaces the myths of world development with 'humanising the landscape'. Development described in this book is not something done by outside forces (agencies and experts) but is expressed as the product of an inventive, creative, autonomous human agency.

It is structured in three parts. Part I examines the notions and terminologies used in discussing development. Part II forms the core of the book. It reflects on the concept of autonomy by focusing on the four pillars of autonomous human agency: autonomy in the political sphere; autonomy in the cultural sphere; autonomy in the organisational sphere; and autonomy in the economic sphere. In Part III, the focus is on the interventionist rationale, which has underpinned government and most non-government organisational (NGO) activities for almost half a century.

An original development studies text, it illustrates that people are not worthless. Autonomy is explained while linking theories and methodologies with practical case-studies to bring complex issues to life.

B. N. Yugandhar (ed). *Land Reforms in India: Andhra Pradesh—People's Pressure and Administrative Innovations.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996. 393 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 495.00.

This volume is a collection of sixteen case-studies and thoroughly covers the history, progress, and current status of land reforms in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. A wide range of issues has been covered: for instance, the impact of peasant struggles and agrarian movements in the state; the enactment of legislation and the implementation of land-ceiling laws; the distribution of surplus land; tenancy reforms; and the status of landless labourers. Other topics discussed are the role of state agencies in both framing policies and implementing them; the response of judicial machinery; successful administrative efforts; the status of women agricultural labourers; and the role played by activists and the NGOs.

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The general feeling that the contributors to this volume express is the insufficient impact of these land reforms so far as altering the power structure in Andhra Pradesh is concerned. Therefore, they suggest a number of measures, notable among which are strengthening the official machinery, simplifying and rigorously implementing existing legislation, and seeking active participation of the community. Their opinion is that these will help to counter the challenges posed by the dominant and large land-owners. This book would be of interest to those studying land reforms and agrarian change.

Gaurav Datt. *Bargaining Power, Wages and Employment.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996. 224 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs. 295.00.

Agricultural labour households constitute about 30 percent of all rural households in India. The incidence of poverty among them is about 60 percent. So, clearly, this is one of the most deprived groups in India. The significance of economic outcomes in agricultural labour markets in India is thus more than obvious. Agricultural labour markets in India are studied here with a major focus on the issue of wage and employment determination.

Offered here is a new theoretical model consistent with the key stylised features of agricultural labour markets which determines the wage rate, the level of employment, and the employer's profits. The main idea underlying the analysis is that in village-level labour markets, agricultural wage determination can be viewed as the outcome of collective bargaining between groups of village employers and labourers. A salient feature of the study is the extended version of the model which introduces male and female labourers as separate bargaining entities to explain the gender gap. Empirical estimates of the model provide evidence of significant inequality in the relative bargaining powers of employers and labourers. The bargaining power of the female is found to be weaker than that of the male, which itself is very low relative to the employers'. The results also show that such asymmetric power exerts a significant quantitative influence on distributional outcomes in the village economy.

This is purely a methodological study which provides the reader with a rich analysis of agricultural labour markets. It also notes the neglected aspects of the subject for further research.

Jacques Gaillard, V. V. Krishna, and Roland Waast (eds). *Scientific Communities in the Developing World.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996. 398 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 525.00.

Science and technology have an important role to play in the development of a nation. Much of the science and technology potential in the industrially developed countries is constituted directly and indirectly by the efficient organisation and

functioning of their professionalised scientific and technical communities. This volume explores the constitution and growth of scientific communities and the status of scientific potential in the countries of the South.

With the aid of 12 case-studies from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the book highlights certain issues directly relevant to the developing countries: the colonial and post-colonial experience for the emergence and growth of scientific communities in the South; the role played by the state and scientific elite; the influence of political systems on the growth of science and technology; and the reasons for different results across countries despite roughly similar science and technological expenditures. An important aspect of this volume is that it brings together different perspectives (social, historical, economic, and political) current in studies of science, to understand science and growth of scientific communities in the countries of the South. Even though the focus and the perspectives adopted by the respective contributors are different, there is a basic recognition of certain social and historical processes influencing the growth of science and scientific communities in Third World countries. The country case-studies in the volume provide interesting comparisons for readers such fields as sociology, economics, and science and technology.

Korrie de Koning, and Marion Martin (eds). *Participatory Research in Health: Issues and Experiences*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996. 242 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 295.00.

Participatory research and associated methodologies have become increasingly important in the field of health. This volume consists of 20 articles which present the experiences and thoughts of First World and Third World academics and practitioners in participatory research. The contributions are from countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, and North America. The contributors place participatory research within its historical and theoretical context, and examine its diversity, looking at the practice of, and training for, participatory research in various cultures and settings, at the international, national, and grassroots levels.

The case-studies examine the common experiences as well as the complexities and contradictions that the practitioners face in different cultural, political, and economic situations. The issue of equity in gender, race, class, and sexuality is a major concern of the contributors. Some have critically analysed the research process which provides a valuable perception of qualities, skills, and attitudes required of the practitioners. As the volume brings together much information about different traditions of participatory research, it will be of great use to various practitioners, teachers, and students of this field, particularly with regard to health issues.

Sabur Ghayur (ed). *South Asia: Elimination and Rehabilitation of Child Labour*. Islamabad: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1997. 143 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

This book is an outcome of a Workshop organised by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the Ministry of Labour, Manpower, and Overseas Pakistanis, and the Pakistan Chapter of the Coalition for Action on South Asian Co-operation. Edited version of the papers presented at the Workshop is given here. These papers, from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, highlight the issue of child labour, a phenomenon that is deeply rooted in the socio-economic conditions of the South Asian countries. Recommendations of the book include the need to understand the complexity of the issue. It brings out the fact that the elimination of child labour and children's rehabilitation are not a short-term process which can be dealt with by legislation or application of pressure. Rather, a well-designed and co-ordinated strategy is needed. Only then can the curse of child labour be eliminated.

G. K. Lieten. *Development, Devolution and Democracy: Village Discourse in West Bengal*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996. 252 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 250.00.

The Left Front Government (LFG) in West Bengal is the longest surviving democratically elected communist regime in the world. This fact forced many, including Lieten, to study the performance of this government. He critically evaluates the functioning of the government in the areas of land reforms, rural development, devolution of administration to the grassroots level, and in ensuring the democratic participation of the poorest classes.

The study is based on field research carried out in four villages in two different regions of West Bengal. It examines in detail the composition of each village council in terms of caste, class, gender, and the role of these village councils (*panchayats*) as a mediator between an interventionist state and the grassroots which need to be empowered.

The author notes that the efforts made by the LFG have generally facilitated the improvements in economic and living conditions but that these efforts vary in accordance with the local conditions. He also observes the role played by the politically mature class-based organisations in the filtering-down of development initiatives to the villages. Overall, the study indicates that LFG has done a great deal for agrarian development with the express involvement of the poor people. This case-study with particular focus on decentralised and grassroots-level governance will be of much interest administrators, politicians, and social scientists.

Sabur Ghayur. *Trade Unions, Democracy and Development in Pakistan.* Islamabad: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1996. 129 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

The author emphasises the importance of trade union movements in the democratisation process of a country, provided they play their role properly in policy-making and its implementation which making their own functioning democratic and participatory. Unfortunately, the trade union movement in Pakistan is not only divided into many factions, it is also infected with the problem of ethnicity and regionalism. Its functions are generally limited to collective bargaining and to staging protest rallies.

With the help of both primary and secondary data, the author discusses various topics in detail. These include development patterns, employment and working conditions, political environment, legal framework for unions and workers' welfare, unions and unionism, and the perception of workers and trade union members on socio-economic and political matters. The author concludes that there is a need to change the feudalistic structure of the unions. Their leadership should learn from the workers and members who strongly favour trade union solidarity both at the national and the international levels. And to secure their achievements from any adverse change, the process of improvement must be sustained. Above all, there should be a participatory decision-making environment and accountability to members.

Sabur Ghayur. *Human Resource Development and Utilisation in Pakistan.* Islamabad: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1997. 263 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

This book attempts to focus on various issues related to human resource development and utilisation in Pakistan. It highlights certain issues and provides a number of policy recommendations. The issues discussed relate to educated unemployment, evolution and structure of technical education and vocational training, poverty alleviation with a focus on micro finance institutions, industrial development policy with reference to employment opportunities and working conditions, importance of micro enterprises in absorbing the labour force, labour market information systems, labour laws, and the problem of child labour.

The general conclusion of the book is that there is a need for a well-designed and integrated strategy with full support and participation of the civil society. The process of policy-making and the implementation environment also need to be made transparent and accountable to all.