

## ***Shorter Notices\****

**K. C. Zachariah and S. Irudaya Rajan (eds).** *Kerala's Demographic Transition: Determinants and Consequences*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997. 367 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 450.00.

The state of Kerala has achieved international fame for its success in several areas of the social sector. The most noticeable among them is the change in the demographic structure of the state (i.e., success in controlling deaths and unwanted births). The enormous success in the social sector in general, and population transition in particular, occurred at a time when the state had a dismal record in industrial and agricultural production and in employment generation. Rapid decline in fertility and mortality, without a corresponding trend in the productive sectors, is thought to be an anomaly.

The purpose of this volume is to draw lessons from Kerala's example for other Indian states and other developing countries.

The volume is divided in four sections. In general, the issues discussed are: the nature of this transition; the role played by education; age at marriage and the use of contraceptives; the causes and consequences of population ageing; the impact of both internal and external migration (an important component of demographic change in Kerala); and possible future patterns of population growth and age structure and their socio-economic implications.

The contributors find that effective social policies and programmes plus the role of female education and general literacy level are the most important factors for this positive transition in the state. Major transition in the productive sectors is not necessary. The book focuses on policy implications and is a useful contribution to population studies.

**Mario Rutten and Carol Upadhya (eds).** *Small Business Entrepreneurs in Asia and Europe: Towards a Comparative Perspective*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997. 334 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 395.00.

In the last few decades several Asian countries have experienced rapid economic growth along with the emergence of new capitalist classes. Most of the research on these countries has focused on their large-scale and national-level business enterprise. Little is known about their small-scale regional-level

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entrepreneurs. Local-level studies point towards the newly emerged classes of rural or provincial entrepreneurs as playing an important role, both economically and politically, and in bringing about the capitalist transformation of the large agrarian economies of Asia. This volume highlights such research.

The major part of the volume (first three sections) brings together seven in-depth case studies of intermediate-level business groups in some of the Asian countries: India, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Korea, and China. It provides a different perspective on the nature of capitalist development in Asia. Although the central thrust of this volume is on the capitalist entrepreneurs in Asia, Section IV, with three case studies, is devoted to the European entrepreneurs.

This comparative study develops a broader theoretical approach to the study of entrepreneurship, encompassing both east and west. It points out the similarities among small entrepreneurs across countries. The case studies selected provide deep insights into the ways in which economic growth is affecting various levels of society.

The contributors to this volume are of the opinion that the Asian miracle is not only the outcome of the interest of multinational corporations and state-directed investments; small-scale entrepreneurs have made a major contribution in this process. This unique book is an excellent addition to the entrepreneurship studies.

**Abdul Aziz and Sudhir Krishna (eds).** *Land Reforms in India: Karnataka—Promises Kept and Missed*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997. 291 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 395.00.

This volume, fourth in the line of books on land reforms in India, critically examines the land reforms legislation in the state of Karnataka. It provides recent data for understanding both the historical evolution and the current grassroots situation of land reforms of the state.

The book is a collection of 16 revised articles (first presented at the Karnataka workshop) written by people from different walks of life, covering various dimensions of the subject. Starting with an overview of land reforms in Karnataka, the volume reflects on the implementation of land-ceilings and tenancy reforms; the social cost and benefits of distributive land reforms; protection of tribal rights and forest lands; management of common property resources; and maintenance, updating, and computerisation of land records. Some of the papers trace the historical developments in land reforms in various regions of Karnataka, while others present a futuristic picture. Each author presents a different perspective.

The contributors to the volume point out the possible options for the state with respect to these land reforms. The options discussed are the implementation of traditional land reforms with renewed force; maintaining the existing laws at the same

pace; and liberalising these laws in line with new economic policies of India. They find political will and public awareness to be necessary to the achievement of success. A significant feature of this volume is its focus on the ground realities. There is much useful material for students and analysts, policy-makers, and administrators.

**Ghanshyam Shah.** *Public Health and Urban Development: The Plague in Surat.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997. 317 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 395.00.

The present study is the response to the plague epidemic in Surat—an event which created panic not only in the city but throughout the world. Though the disease was controlled within a week, yet it raised certain issues concerning the state of public health system and urban development in the country. Thus the study goes beyond the plague epidemic itself and considers it as a socio-political disease related to the value system of the general public, lopsided nature of development, the crisis in governance, and the fragile and fragmented civil society.

The book first analyses the development of the city government's resources and the state of its municipal services—doctors and the urban public health systems. Against this background, the author describes the outbreak and spread of the disease; the condition of the plague-affected areas in the context of the public services and environmental conditions; socio-economic and living conditions of the victims and their comparison with the non-victims; people's perceptions and responses to the epidemic; and the management of the crisis by the local authorities and the government. In-depth discussion is offered on the collapse of the political system in India; the questionable legitimacy of the state in managing society; and the lack of social consciousness. The reasons described for the incidence of such diseases are the environmental degradation, poverty, and ignorance. The author observes the rapid pace of urbanisation in India in the absence of any proper urban policy. The country has to rely on regulatory laws which offer no remedies against a breakdown. Suitable policies are suggested in the concluding part to minimise the risk of such deadly diseases in the future. This is an interesting book from the viewpoint of an anthropologist, urban planner, and public health professional.

**Shanti George.** *Third World Professionals & Development Education in Europe: Personal Narratives, Global Conversations.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997. 325 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 395.00.

Every year, thousands of students and professionals from the Third World travel to the First World to study the subject of Development. So far very few studies have assessed the impact of such education on these Third World nationals. This book attempts to find out how the students get transformed when they learn about the problems of their own countries in the West.

The author of this book travelled to 18 countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America for the study assigned to her by a development institute in Europe, the Institute of Social Studies at the Hague. She extensively interviewed around 112 men and women who had been students at the same Institute during the previous 40 years, and she examines the impact of European development education on their everyday and professional life.

In her broad analytical study, the author comes to the conclusion that development education in the West is not simply formal academic learning but a multi-purpose process, covering learning from daily-life experiences and from the society at large. It is not an easy process, the individuals have to cross cultural and political barriers to have an insight into other realities. The book also describes how the individual perceives development issues when learning about them at the Institute, supported by 'global conversations', i.e., sharing the experiences of classmates from around the world.

**Amy O. Tsui, Judith N. Wasserheit, and John G. Haaga (eds).**  
*Reproductive Health in Developing Countries: Expanding Dimensions, Building Solutions.* Washington, D. C.: National Academy Press, 1997. 314 pages. Hardbound. Price not given.

This book is the final report prepared by the Panel on Reproductive Health in Developing Countries, established in 1994 under the auspices of the committee on Population of the National Research Council. The geographic focus of this report is the low- and middle-income countries of Asia, the Pacific islands, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean basin.

Particular significance is attached in the report to the view that reproductive health concerns the entire life-cycle, and is not just confined to what are considered the reproductive years. Some health problems have their origin in insufficient investment in nutrition, health-care, and education. The report outlines in detail the magnitude and patterns of reproductive health problems. It reflects on the likely costs and effectiveness of interventions to improve reproductive health. Finally, it recommends priorities for programmes and further research.

The report concludes that many investments in women's reproductive health can yield substantial improvements in health in relation to cost. It recommends more efficient spending of resources that are already devoted to family planning and mother-child health programmes. With no increment in public resources for the sector, serious reforms and improvement are difficult to envision. Therefore, what is needed is to mobilise private sector funding alongside the public funding of health-care programmes.

**Leela Dube.** *Women and Kinship: Comparative Perspectives on Gender in South and South-East Asia.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997. 214 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 275.00.

Gender relations vary from culture to culture. Kinship systems are an important context within which gender relations are located. This book highlights the issue of kinship which is generally ignored by most scholars. Kinship is important for gender issues as it influences a variety of basic matters in daily life, such as the allocation of resources, division of labour, production relations, and specific ideology of gender. The author looks at aspects of family and kinship among some populations of Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand, in a comparative perspective.

The basic argument developed is that the differences in kinship systems and family structures are responsible for some critical differences among societies in the ways in which gender operates. Topics covered include: entitlement to and rights over resources, i.e., inheritance; marriage and conjugal relations; discrimination in education; nutrition and health; seclusion and segregation; and the management of female sexuality.

The main focus of the book is on the principles of kinship systems. The changes induced by modernity and the economic and political upheavals are slightly touched on. Most of the analytical discussion is based on ethnographies of rural areas and small towns for these depict the lives of the bulk of the people of the region. Highly educated urban segments are only touched on. Rich in information and insight, this stimulating book will be valuable reading for those in the field of gender studies and anthropology.

**K. L. Sharma.** *Social Stratification in India: Issues & Themes.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997. 218 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 295.00.

Social stratification is a multi-faceted and multi-causal phenomenon and requires a multidisciplinary analysis and understanding. This volume is the outcome of a survey of literature concerning the sociology of social stratification in India. An effort is made here not only to report trends in the study of social stratification but also to emphasise an understanding and explanation of the ideology, the structure, and, the process of social inequality, both temporally and contextually. An attempt is made to analyse the theoretical and methodological issues by hammering to dissolution the antinomies like caste and class, caste and power, power and class, structure and culture, and structure and process; as they could all be seen together as interacting components at the conceptual as well as the empirical levels, they are not seen to be reducible to each other.

The study discusses culture and stratification, nature of social stratification in different segments of society in India—such as the rural-agrarian and the urban-industrial settings. The discussion of social stratification among the weaker sections (such as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes), and of gender, enriches such a comparative perspective of the society.

An explanation of social mobility shows that the culturological perspective suffers from serious inadequacies. The structural perspective alone is unable to explain the entire series of structure and change in relation to social inequality. It is suggested that the caste-class-power nexus approach, rather than any causal and dimensional approaches, is relevant to analyse social stratification and mobility.

This book offers a deep understanding of the complexities of Indian society by analysing the historical, cultural, and political bases of social stratification.

**Louise Lassonde.** *Coping with Population Challenges*. London: Earthscan Publications, 1997. 173 pages. Paperback. £ 14.95.

Despite the worldwide decline in the population growth rate and a considerable reduction in fertility, it is expected that the momentum of past growth will have almost doubled the world's population by the middle of the next century. The heart of the population problem now lies in the commitment and ability to build a sustainable world for ten billion human beings. Simple balance in the number of human beings and available resources is not sufficient. A new approach, the ethical—which is both normative and qualitative in nature—is needed.

In Cairo, in 1994, the international community adopted a 20-year Programme of Action on Population and Development. This book examines the Programme in the light of the challenges of past and present demographic change for states and individuals, and its implications for action. It discusses the Programme's focus on women's issues, reproductive choice, and the notion of the individual. It also assesses the negotiations, emphasising the differences in perspective and interpretation as regards the results. The book highlights a number of important aspects which are not sufficiently dealt with in the Programme of Action, and draws attention to some of the inconsistencies that will need to be resolved if the Programme is to be implemented.

The author identifies the Programme's implications and puts forward some ideas to reformulate the problems and define an appropriate economic framework for their solution. In the conclusion, the author brings to light the underlying ethical dimension of all choices relating to the population issue.