

Asia's Population Problems edited by S. Chandrasekar. London: George Allen & Unwin, Limited. Pp.311. 45 shillings (U.K.)

Editors of "readers" (collections of articles focussing on a particular topic) usually tread lightly on the hands of contributors once they have been selected, but S. Chandrasekar's imprint is well marked in this book which contains studies of Seven Asian countries, Australia, an overview of Asia as a whole and two papers on Australia's immigration policy. Chandrasekar's editorship is evident in two ways which make this a unique and valuable collection of articles.

All too often, collections of articles are strung together in a loose way by an often unbounded general theme. The articles are, therefore, uneven, dealing solely with a particular scholar's particular academic interest. This is useful, of course, in some cases, but in a "reader", designed to deal with Asia's population problems, the purpose is better served by a well-structured presentation of discussions having a similar focus.

The first evidence of Chandrasekar's guidance is in the outline which was apparently supplied to the experts selected to write the country surveys. Roughly, each chapter dealing with a particular country along with Chandrasekar's introduction to Asia as a whole is organized (and in most cases so labelled) in three major sections: I—The Facts, II—The Problem, III—Population Policy.

In the "facts" section the authors were apparently requested to deal with selected topics, for the following topics are discussed sequentially in most survey chapters: geography, quality of statistical data, population density, structure,

growth and projections, fertility, mortality, literacy, urbanization and the labour force. Other topics are discussed but are less common to the body of articles.

The problems and policy sections are briefer and the coverage varies more widely here. Obviously the population problems of Japan (an ageing population) are not the same as those of India and Pakistan. Some countries, like India, China, Japan and Pakistan, have formal population policies, and a chapter is devoted to each of these countries. Indonesia has no population policy if we restrict ourselves to family planning, but does have a policy in the sense of urging settlement of the outer islands (transmigration). Among the other Asian countries with an official policy on family planning, Chandrasekar lists Korea but omits it from this volume supposedly because it is not one of the major Asian countries. Yet Malaysia is included, even though it also is not listed as a major Asian country and has no formal population policy as such other than encouraging transmigration.

In this volume there are substantive chapters on Asia as a whole (Chandrasekar), China (Chandrasekar), India (Chandrasekar), Japan (T. O. Wilkinson), Indonesia (Everett Hawkins), Pakistan (A. I. Qureshi), Malaysia (A. C. Caldwell), Taiwan (W. Peterson), and Australia (Robert Horn).

The inclusion of Australia evidences the second unique impact of the editor on this volume for neither he nor the reader would be willing to view Australia as Asian. Those familiar with Chandrasekar's earlier writings, particularly *Hungry Nations and Empty Lands*, need no explanation as to why Australia is included. Chandrasekar views Australia as the major country with a high standard of living near Asia and with an Asian exclusionist policy of migration. Two chapters by Anthony Clunies Ross and Kenneth Rivett (both Australian) detail admirably the history, rationale and recent changes in Australian immigration policy. Changes have been made (March 1966) and the new immigration act is printed in full (Appendix 5).

Ross and Rivett argue that, while the immigration law may be morally unsupportable, Asian migration must be viewed in terms of its historical development, its economic and demographic consequences and its social impact. From a demographic point of view Chandrasekar as well as Clunies and Ross agree that migration cannot solve the population problems of Asia. Moreover it is argued that Australia is not an empty land, awaiting hoards of migrants to plow the unsettled plains, but a land offering little still undeveloped or potentially productive land.

There is, of course, the clear-cut recognition of the problem of assimilating large numbers of Asians. Assimilation hardly ever runs a smooth course as

Americans discovered years ago and as Britons have discovered only in recent years. Assimilation is certainly more problematical the greater the dissimilarity of the host and migrant population. And, in the long run, problems of assimilation and minority/majority relations may be the major factors influencing the selection and number of Asian migrants to Australia. For Chandrasekar notwithstanding, *Australia is not a major country* from the demographic point of view. Australia with its eleven million population (1964) is outranked by 15 Asian countries. Moreover the commonwealth citizens are too familiar with problems which British administrators are facing in preparing the Fiji island for Independence to invite similar new majority groups to arise in Australia.

The new Australian immigration law solves nothing more than the moral issues of Asian migration. It cannot solve the Asian population problem, and because it only allows selective Asian migration. Also, there is the problem of who will be admitted as well as who the Asian countries will allow to emigrate. Those who have criticised Australia in the past will probably continue to do so arguing that this is another case of "White Tokanism".

The book as a whole is an excellent collection of papers, although like all collections there is some imbalance despite Chandrasekar's guiding hand. His own chapter on China suffers from the same problem facing any Sinologist: no data. His chapter on India deals at length with the need and the type of family-planning programme which will slow the rate of population growth in India. We may well have here a preview of what is in store for the Indian population now that Shrimati Indira Gandhi (to whom the book is dedicated) has appointed S. Chandrasekar to head India's family-planning programme. Perhaps sterilizations can be made widely attractive and solve the population growth problem in ten years. If so, we will have added a new dimension to demographic history.

In a review of this length it is impossible to describe in detail each article included in the book, since all of them follow the format described above in a general way but vary in terms of quality and the specialized interest of the authors. Wilkinson's chapter on Japan, for example, includes the most insightful treatment of urbanization presented in the volume. Peterson in his chapter on Taiwan has little to say about "policy" but much to say about the validity of attitude surveys (*vis.*, family planning and desired family size) in developing countries and questions the optimism of recent reports of the Taiwan's family planning programme.

However, the chapter on Pakistan is disappointing. Qureshi's cavalier treatment of the data would lead the unfamiliar to assume that demographic

analysis is a simple matter in Pakistan. So it is but only if the researcher is indifferent to the authenticity of data. In this chapter, not only are factually incorrect statements made, but no interpretation of the population situation in Pakistan is presented.

On balance, this "reader" is an outstanding contribution to the demographic literature of Asia. It is well organized and well written. While the book cannot supplant detailed country monographs, it does provide a quick summary of the demographic situation in several major Asian countries as well as in Australia.

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