

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

**Manoranjan Mohanty, Richard Baum, Rong Ma, George Mathew (eds.).** *Grassroots Democracy in India and China: The Right to Participate*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. 2006. 498 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 850.00.

China and India, the two postcolonial societies with characteristics of longstanding civilisations as well as of great social diversity, are currently involved in social transformation both horizontally and vertically. This volume, a combined research product by scholars from India, China, and US, has attempted to encapsulate the meaning of that experience. The contributors have examined the grassroots political processes of India and China in a comparative perspective, keeping some theoretical questions relating to participatory democracy in mind. They have studied the political experience in these countries from an interdisciplinary perspective. The idea is to present the nature of the democratisation process, characterised by many similar elements in both countries, especially the trend of rising demands for participation and complex power structures interrupting them. It highlights the significance of the dynamic relationship between political institutions and the socio-economic processes.

After an introduction, the volume is divided in three parts. Part I concentrates on institutional dynamics. There are nine chapters in this part. The first chapter provides a comparative picture of the village committees of China and the panchayats of India, two significant innovations in grass-roots democracy in these two societies. The next two chapters, one on China and the other on India outlines the basic structure of village self-government and provides a historical overview of local political processes in China during the pre-reform and post-reform period, and in India, before the Seventy-Third Amendment and subsequently.

The next six chapters are the case studies three from the provinces of China and three from the states of India. These cases have thrown some light on specific issues of power dynamics at the local level.

Part II reflects on the emerging socio-economic issues. The ten chapters in this part are basically a comparison reflecting on local political economy. The case studies from India and China focus on emerging socio-economic issues relating to gender, ethnicity and religion in the local political processes.

Finally, Part III is the conclusion. The authors in this chapter "Reconceptualising Local Democracy" ruminate on the institutional dynamics and socio-economic processes of local governance in India and China within the broader parameters of the political economy of local democracy. Their focus is on the relationship between the forces of market dominance and global incorporation that are transforming many parts of the world including India and China.

**Peter P. Molinga, Ajaya Dixit, and Kusum Athukorala (eds.).** *Integrated Water Resources Management: Global Theory, Emerging Practice and Local Needs*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. 2006. 403 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 780.00.

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This volume is the first in the series on '*Water in South Asia*'. It reflects critically on the meaning and concept of IWRM (Integrated Water Resources Management) in the context of South Asia. IWRM was recognised globally at the International Conference on Environment and Development in Dublin and Rio de Janeiro (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, or the Earth Summit). IWRM is defined as a process that encourages the coordinated development and management of water, land and natural resources to maximise the economic and social welfare without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.

The volume is divided in two parts. The five chapters followed by an introduction in Part I reflect on various conceptual features of IWRM at two levels: as a concept in the global water policy discussion, and as an analytical concept for understanding water systems in an 'integrated' manner. In Chapter Two the emergence of IWRM in water debates and the political dimensions of it are explained. In the third chapter European experience with IWRM is discussed. Chapter Four discussed the issues that come up while shifting the model of river basin organisations (a central thrust within global IWRM concepts) from developed (where idealised institutional models initially evolved) to developing countries, and highlights the limits of such 'leapfrogging'. In Chapter Five India's water policy is examined to find how much IWRM has become internalised. Chapter Six argued that IWRM should focus more deeply on land-water linkages rather than looking at water alone.

The next six chapters in Part II of the volume present different dimensions of integration. Chapter Seven focuses on four aspects of a basin's water resources: water accounting; water storage and development; hydronomic zoning; and hydrological modelling. These are important inter-related concepts and activities, which are essential to develop integrated hydrologic modelling in a basin context and to utilise the model for efficient use of a basin's water resources to increase productivity of water. The case study presented in Chapter Eight highlights the issues related to integration of hydropower and agricultural concerns in a project in Sri Lanka. In Chapter Nine, the broader theme of intra- and inter-sector collaboration in Sri Lanka is discussed in detail. The case studies presented in the last three chapters focus on efforts made to involve all interest groups in the planning and decision-making on water resources development.

**Arjun Sengupta Archana Negi and Moushumi Basu (eds.).** *Reflections on the Right to Development*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. 2005. 366 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 650.00.

The right to development remains one of the most debatable and controversial concepts. Its emergence is linked to a New International Economic Order, in the 1970s, in which, developing countries demanded for the incorporation of their development needs. This demand slipped off unnoticeably from the international agenda, given the strong opposition from the developed countries. However, it re-emerged in 1986 with the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development (RTD) and the recognition of RTD as a 'Human Right' in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action in 1993. An Independent Expert on the RTD submitted reports to the UN Commission on Human Rights between 1999 and 2003. The papers in this volume contain reflections on and responses to the notion of RTD as articulated in these reports.

Ten Chapters in the volume are broadly arranged in three sections on the basis of their focus. The first four chapters in Section I reflect on the concept of RTD in its theoretical and historical aspects. The first chapter is on the theoretical framework that links human rights with development, of which RTD is an integral part. Chapter Two deals with the normative content of and implementation issues relating to RTD. In the third chapter specific theoretical aspects of the human rights and RTD approaches are discussed. Chapter Four explains the historical evolution of the concept of RTD.

Section II contains four empirical studies reflecting on various aspects of the RTD concept. The first one is on the development process in Sri Lanka viewed from the RTD perspective. The second case study while focusing on poverty in India brings out some interesting observations from an RTD viewpoint. The third study explores development in Kerala via one particular element of the RTD framework, that is, participation. The last study in this section discusses the relationship of the existing international economic regimes and RTD.

Final two chapters in Section III focused on linkages of rights with the 'social choice' framework.

This volume is an important contribution from the developing countries' point of view. It will help deeper understanding of the concept of RTD, and will be useful for those interested in development studies and human rights.

**Susantha Goonatillake.** *Recolonisation: Foreign Funded NGOs in Sri Lanka.* New Delhi: Sage Publications. 2006. 321 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 420.00.

At the end of the Cold War, policy shift in the West encouraged international agencies to sponsor non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the developing world. The objective was to reform the undemocratic and corrupt governments in these countries. Consequently, huge amounts of foreign funds were granted to NGOs to encourage pro-people development. This book is based on the experience of foreign-funded NGOs in Sri Lanka. It reflects on the political economy of NGO activity in the country. It explains how foreign-funded NGOs not only break the basic norms of national sovereignty but also those very standards that they themselves have required Third World governments to follow as desirable goals, that is, transparency and accountability.

The author argues that this NGO penetration has negatively influenced the civil society. To elaborate his arguments, the author discusses the role of NGOs in social development, human rights, international relations, and academia.

The book contributes significantly to understanding the ground realities relating to the foreign-funded NGOs. It would be interesting reading for those in the field of development studies in general, and in the fields of political economy, sociology, and international relations in particular.

**Vandana Desai and Robert B. Potter (eds.).** *Doing Development Research.* New Delhi: Sage Publications in association with Vistaar Publications. 2006. 324 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 480.00.

*Doing Development Research* is a comprehensive preface to the process of undertaking research in the multi- and interdisciplinary field of development studies. The aim of this volume is to serve as a foundation for a thorough initial training for anyone interested in carrying out research in, or on, developing countries. It is a collection of wide range of expert opinion on development research, where contributors have presented an interdisciplinary guide to the core methodologies.

The volume is divided in three parts. Part I is an introduction. It provides an overview of the aims and scope of *Doing Development Research*. In Part II there are twelve chapters. The focus in these chapters is to highlight strategic issues involved in planning and executing sound research. The experience shared in these chapters include both working in the field and working via secondary sources. Both the practicalities and the realities of understanding development research are featured in these contributions. In Part III there are nineteen chapters divided in three sections. The basic aim of this part, in general, is to provide an overview of the main ways in which information and data can be collected in carrying out development-oriented research.

This volume is a useful guide for undertaking development research and a good complement to the existing literature on the subject.

**David Cox and Manohar Pawar.** *International Social Work: Issues, Strategies, and Programmes*. New Delhi: Vistaar Publications. 2006. 421 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 595.00.

Social work originates from humanitarian, religious, and democratic ideals and philosophies. It has been applied to meet the basic human needs and to develop human potential. International social work is defined as international professional practice and the capacity for international action by the social work profession and its members. This book is an introduction to the interesting and challenging area of international social work. The authors have shared their understanding of international social work in the form of this book along with other social workers and development workers.

The book organised in fourteen chapters introduces the concepts of social work and international social work in the first chapter. In the second chapter authors described the conceptual model of international social work via establishing the importance of using an integrated-perspective approach. The third chapter presents the global context of international social work. That context is complex, consisting of range of global problems with numerous agencies established to respond to these problems; and various sets of conventions and policies, all of which reflect on historical realities and the changing ideologies that surround these. In the fourth chapter some key programmes and strategies that tend to characterise intervention in all fields are discussed.

From Chapter Five to Chapter Twelve, four significant fields are discussed. These are development, poverty, conflict and post-conflict reconstruction, and displacement and forced migration. In the thirteenth chapter, the authors highlight the international response to specific needy populations. Finally, in the fourteenth chapter, they put forward some challenges being faced by the international social work in the twenty-first century and provide some suggestions to deal with them.

This well-written book will undoubtedly help those interested in working in the domain of international social work and social development.