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# Book Reviews

*Globalisation of Food and Agriculture and the Poor*, Edited by Joachim von Braun and Eugenio Diaz-Bonilla, Oxford University Press, Delhi and International Food Policy Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., 2008. Pp. xiv + 370. Rs. 745.00.

The book is a welcome addition to the literature on globalisation. The material for the book is initiated by a workshop and a policy dialogue. The volume is in honour of Dr. Per Pinstrup-Andersen. Globalisation debate related to food, agriculture and poverty remains heated, controversial and never ending. The volume attempts to gather controversies and confront them with research based findings combined with concerns, experiences and insights of some leading experts. The objective of the volume is to further the debate for the benefit of rational decision making on food, agriculture and poverty as related to globalisation. With this as the goal of the volume, it is expected that the first chapter should provide an overview of status/message of current debate and what remains to be debated as looked at in the articles/views by different people and expose the unresolved debate and controversies for further enrichment.

The book is about drivers of change, changes occurring, how they affect the poor, particularly in the developing countries. The dimensions/angles studied and reflected in the book include changes in the roles and powers of various actors, how they are relevant to the poor, how they affect the human health and how the policies (national and international) address the adverse (direct and indirect) effects and strengthen positive ones. Nine chapters of the book analyse the nexus between the globalisation of agri-food systems and poverty and six essays included in between the chapters highlight the primary issues in the ongoing lively debate on the topic. It is good to note that the aim of the volume is not to conclude that globalisation is good or bad, but loudly think about how to make its outcomes pro-poor. It is also good that the book admits two omissions of studies, viz., migration and international remittances and global environmental concerns. However, one more critical dimension missed is increased awareness, skill upgradation and human resource development for optimising human choices for better opportunities. Yet another feature to be noted, particularly in a globalised world relates to uncertain events like the global climate change, global meltdown, etc. which suddenly can divert/vitiate the planned attentions and initiatives on addressing permanent persisting problems. The momentum to attack persistent concerns gets a setback and they continue to remain alive and bothering.

Global food market is expanding and diversifying with the developing countries at the centre stage. For effective functioning of the global food market, global

integration of countries is necessary. But the book states that there is not much integration, agricultural production of developing countries is mostly directed to their own markets and in case of limited exports, the net income of producers has not improved because of decline in food prices. Though the world food prices have risen in the last 1 or 2 years, trade liberalisation has yet to make significant positive impact on the primary producers of developing countries. Therefore, it is rightly suggested that more needs to be done at the national level and much more at the international level in respect of policies and institutions. It should be broad based rural growth covering improving access to health and education services of good quality and adequate safety nets to reduce the vulnerability of the poor. In this context, the suggestion that the inherited organisational and institutional structure of the World Food System – FAO, World Food Programme, IFAD, WHO, etc., requires review makes sense. Similarly the suggestions to review the roles of the traditional global public funding and investment agencies like World Bank, trade agency like WTO also assumes significance.

For effective broad based rural development, the restrictive mandates of the development in developing countries departments should not become barriers for growth. Convergence and co-ordination should take place. Further most of the plans and mechanisms exist in these countries, but are not functioning well on account of fractured democracy, multiparty governance etc. Resources exist, but are not optimally used. Governance mechanisms exist, but with outdated rules and procedures. Reforms in all these areas should be the priority. Finally it is good to suggest the need for a value based approach to continue the construction of a better world. In a competitive, self centered, selfish world, how such an approach is feasible and can make a difference to comfort global poverty and hunger is the question. But the positive note at the end of chapter 1 by the editors of the volume that the process of world economic integration has resulted in creation/accumulation of wealth with which it is possible for eliminating poverty and hunger from the planet is satisfying.

It is welcome that a conceptual framework trying to separate key aspects of globalisation from elements of domestic policy changes and, initial conditions is developed and applied. As with any other major, complex economic issues, divergent assessments exist relating to effects of globalisation on poverty and food security. From the studies it is observed that though globalisation has not harmed poor, its impact on income of poor is not much to cheer about.

Developing countries always were uncomfortable with the advocacy of economic openness while developed countries stressed on it. With economic power at their command, through such mechanisms as WTO etc., they contributed to more competition and globalisation. But it appears that they fear now that competition from low wage countries and outsourcing, whether freer trade and capital flows will result in more poverty in richer nations. The global meltdown mainly initiated in the U.S.A. has further added to this fear and the recent reported policies of U.S.A. restricting outsourcing indicate this panic.

Because of different sources of data and concepts used, the volume reports a mixed picture of development in poverty and food insecurity during globalisation. The suggestion therefore is that, it would be helpful if in future research programmes on globalisation, three methodological approaches be used, namely econometric analyses, model-based simulations and case studies in structured triangulations rather than using them disjointly and in parallel.

Dr. Swaminathan's article on globalisation working for the poor, invokes noble thoughts based on teachings and preachings of Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda in managing science and trade work for the poor. For example, though he is not averse to and surprised by the reactions of the civil society organisations to the biotechnological advances including GM options, he states categorically that BT will not take off unless the regulatory mechanisms are transparent, involve all stakeholders and inspire confidence on the objectivity of the risk benefit analysis mechanisms which are fair enough. On trade, his suggestions to abolish all the existing boxes and introducing a livelihood security box is a new idea and will probably be resisted by the nations of the developed world who see trade as a source of economic empowerment. Similarly the idea of establishing International Patents Bank for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development may not be subscribed to by individuals who introduced IPRs to commercialise science. All these are challenges to science for development. We have to build consensus on these ideas to move forward.

The other chapters/essays in the book prescribe a range of policy reforms with respect to agriculture, industry and foreign trade, tax, subsidies, labour, etc., many of which are being tried. All these presuppose strong political will, leadership and implementation culture which are uncertain and not uniform across countries. Hence, wherever they exist or whenever they exist, they tend to contribute to accelerated and inclusive growth. Countries have to strive for their presence and effective functioning.

*Indian Council of Agricultural Research,* Mruthyunjaya
*National Agricultural Innovation Project*
*Pusa, New Delhi – 110 012.*

*Reforming Institutions in Water Resource Management: Policy Performance for Sustainable Development*, Edited by Lin Crase and Vasant P. Gandhi, Earthscan, Sterling, U.S.A., 2009. Pp. xx + 364. $96.00.

We may begin by tracing the genesis of the present book. This research project, sponsored by the Australian Government, seeks to draw insights from the management reforms of water resources in Australia with a view to identifying those elements of institutional designs which would be useful for successful management of water resources in India. Why Australia? Australia has a reputation for achieving

considerable reforms in the water management sector. In 2003, the Economist proclaimed that Australia was "the country that takes top prize for sensible water management". However, the editors of the book themselves add that judged by recent outputs from the U.N. the Australian achievements appear more modest! (page 8). In any case, reformers in India appear to be affected by what one might broadly call "international best practices syndrome". This is particularly conspicuous in the case of financial sector reforms. We cannot therefore fault the editors of this book, especially when they themselves point out the stark contrasts between the Australian and Indian irrigation settings (page 7). While agricultural growth is central to overall growth of the Indian economy and livelihood of its population it is of marginal importance to overall growth of Australia (see: Centrality of Agriculture to India's Economic Development, N.A. Mujumdar, Economic and Political Weekly, January 7, 2006). The second distinguishing feature of the book is that they are inspired by the recent academic enthusiasm for employing the New Institutional Economics to consider water allocation issues. They quote Alstone on this relatively new discipline.

"An interdisciplinary research program that deals explicitly with the link between institutions, institutional change, and economic performance is now emerging. The now institutional analysis is a line of investigation that departs from but does not abandon neo classical economics. Central to the research agenda is an emphasis on property rights, the transaction costs of measurement and enforcement, and incomplete information. The research programme has been further enriched through cross-fertilisation with law, political science, sociology, anthropology and history" (p.6). The institutional analysis is supposed to provide an elegant means of dealing with the vexing policy debate over the relative merits of markets as a vehicle for allocating resources and state apportionment of water.

The 16 research papers included in the volume are grouped into Four Parts. While the first Part provides an overview of the theoretical dimensions of institutional analysis, Part 2 discusses water resource development and management in India. Part 3, based on field research, provides an indepth examination of water institutions and their relative performance in three states in India, namely, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Finally Part 4 spells out the policy implications for water resource management and related issues in India. In fact the best part of the book is that relating to India. The bunch of these papers have produced hard data emerging from field investigation, provided rigorous analysis of the issues involved and yielded useful inputs for policy formulation. The editors Lin Crase and Vasant Gandhi deserve to be congratulated for bringing together this bunch of papers. No researcher of the Indian economy, not only agricultural economists, can afford to miss this part of the book. The Australian example thus becomes merely a peg to hang the Indian experience on.

This book assumes special significance because future agricultural growth in India has to be necessarily water centric. In this context community–based water harvesting has emerged as perhaps the most important policy thrust. Within the

broad policy suite described as watershed development is the expansion of check dams that are used to irrigate crops and meet other household water requirement.

In an excellent paper by Vasant Gandhi and Suresh Sharma, the check dam movement in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat has been analysed (p.260).

Watershed development projects, both micro and macro, hold out great promise for future agricultural growth: the potential area to be covered is huge, capital investment is modest, they are labour-intensive, and do not require much technical know-how. By its very nature, growth under watershed development is "inclusive". And yet, why despite all the sound and fury, have we not made any appreciable progress? Our bureaucracy is adept, sometimes with a little help from academicians, at mystifying a perfectly simple and workable growth tool. Recently, the Parthasarathy Committee Report entitled "From Hariyali to Neeranchal" has recommended several changes in the normative framework, operational mechanisms and institutional structures governing watershed development. It has pleaded for a co-ordinated approach across ministries and in convergence with similar programmes undertaken by central and state governments. As a result the Government of India has recently issued "The Common Guidelines for Watershed Development Projects" – the first set of guidelines that apply to watershed development projects across three Government of India ministries – Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment and Forests. It may be recalled that earlier, there were no common guidelines between Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Agriculture. The setting up of a national authority for sustainable development of rainfed areas (NASDORA) is a result of recommendation of the Parthasarathy Committee (See Common Guidelines for Watershed Development: Some Reflections, (Economic and Political Weekly, June 7, 2008). Institutional development is thus impressive but where are the results?

It is necessary to demystify the whole approach to watershed development. Considering the humble animal – watershed development – the punditry and complexity of "the Guidelines" is astounding. Take the success stories in this field. Anna Hazare's *Ralegaon Siddhi* project has now become part of the folklore of watershed movement. A more recent case is that of Hirve Bazaar, a drought prone poverty-stricken village about 100 kilometres from Pune in Maharashtra. The efforts of one man Popatrao Pawar have converted this village into a model village. The International Groundwater Association has given to this village the International Groundwater Management Award (For full story see: The Great Magician, Mumbai Mirror, November 8, 2009). Neither Hazare nor Pawar could have read the New Institutional Economics even now; nor can they appreciate the erudition and comprehensiveness of "the Guidelines", referred to above, issued by the Government of India. Yet they were able to evolve their own India – region – location – specific models and emerge as the new *Schumpeterian* heroes of agricultural growth and rural development. There may be similar leaders in Gujarat, Rajasthan and elsewhere. It would be useful to produce the growth profiles of these success stories so that we

may be able to prepare the soil for breeding such leaders. Perhaps the humble animal – watershed development-grows faster on the shoulders of Hazares and Pawars.

*Mumbai – 400 050.* N.A. Mujumdar

*Acreage Response of Oilseed Crops in a Backward Region*, B.D. Engale and V.B. Bhise, Serial Publications, New Delhi, 2009. Pp. viii + 165. Rs. 500.00.

Indian economy is still an agricultural economy wherein about over 60 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture either directly or indirectly. The sector apart from providing food to the ever increasing population provides raw materials to the industrial sector also. The country achieved self sufficiency in food production mainly through green revolution technologies in cereals especially in wheat and rice, but it still lags behind in pulses and oilseed production even after six decades of agricultural development planning. India holds an important position in the world in terms of rich diversity of oilseed crops and in terms of area under it which is about 23 million ha. It accounts for 10 per cent of oilseed production and uses 20 per cent of the world land under oilseeds. Oilseeds constitute the second largest crop after food grains in India grown in 10.14 per cent of the gross cropped area. Although India is one of the largest producers of oilseeds, the edible oil production falls short of the country's requirement. This has necessitated large scale imports of edible oil. The oilseeds have been the major inputs for industries like oil expellers, refiners, soap industries, paint industries, cosmetic and toiletry industries etc. and provide employment to producers, processors and market activists. Hence, the country desperately needs technological breakthrough in oilseed and research and development and consequently their production. In the light of the above, the topic of this book assumes great importance. The authors have studied the growth in area, yield and production of oilseeds crops in Marathwada and acreage response of important oilseed crops on the relative price of oilseeds and factors determining the acreage response of oilseed crops. The study was conducted in Marathwada region of Maharashtra State, consisting of eight backward districts in terms of economic development. Paradoxically, the region has a favourable rainfall, climate and soils for cultivating the oilseed crops under rainfed conditions, but at present agricultural lands are mostly occupied by food grains and commercial crops like cotton and sugarcane. The study used the data for the period 1980-81 to 1999-2000 and is confined to four major oilseeds, viz., groundnut, safflower, sunflower and soybean.

The contents of the book have been presented under six major chapters organised in logical sequence. In Chapter 1, the present status of oilseeds production in India, factors influencing their production and the findings of some earlier studies analysing the supply response in oilseed production and the methodology commonly used in such studies are highlighted. In Chapter 2, the authors have reviewed a large number of past research works, research papers, reports and thesis, related to present work

like selection of research problem, price behaviour of oilseed crops, pattern of rainfall distribution, analytical/economic models (growth analysis and Nerlovian lag model), etc. Chapters 3 is devoted to the description of the study area, particularly the resource availability, strength and opportunities of the agricultural economy of Marathwada region with district wise details about the location of Marathwada region, total geographical area, hill ranges, forest cover, minerals, soil structure, agro climatic conditions and rainfall pattern, river systems, land use pattern, irrigations, population, rural and urban population, population share of males and females in the total population, workers' profile in different industries, details of distribution of workers by activity and cropping pattern. In Chapter 4, the growth in area, production and yields of selected four oilseed crops is worked out for all the eight districts as well as for the region as a whole for two periods based on criterion of reforms in Indian economy. The pre-reform period is referred to as 1980-81 to 1989-90 (sub period-I) and post reform period 1990-91 to 1999-2000 (sub period-II).

In Chapter 5, the estimated results from the Nerlovian lag model using area ($A_t$) as dependent variable and area under the crop in the year in ha ($A_{t-1}$), relative price of the crop in the year ($RP_{t-1}$), relative yield of the crop in the year ($RY_{t-1}$), gross irrigated area in the year ($GI_{t-1}$), sowing period rainfall in the year ($RF_t$) as independent variables for four oilseed crops indicated the relationship between dependent and independent variables with varying degrees and significance. The influence of price on the area was not statistically significant, indicating that price alone was not the deciding factor to go on area expansion of oilseed crops. In Chapter 6, the authors have given the major policy suggestions for promoting the oilseed crops cultivation in the Marathwada region.

However, the book has the following limitations. It merely analyses the relationship between area under oilseed crops and their lag prices and advocates promoting the oilseed crop cultivation and it fails to explore other significant factors responsible for growth. It fails to analyse the effect of minimum support price (MSP), trade of edible oils and comparative advantages, employment opportunities in the cultivation of oilseed crops, marketable surplus in farm household, etc., on the growth performance of oilseed crops in the region. The discussion of price behaviour of oilseed crops is lacking.

In spite these above observations, the book is worth reading for the students, academicians, researchers and policy makers to understand the need of carrying out further research to augment the oilseed production as well as the income of the farmers in the country.

*National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research (NCAP), New Delhi – 110 012.*

B. Ganesh Kumar

*WTO Negotiations on Agriculture and Developing Countries*, Anwarul Hoda and Ashok Gulati, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2008. Pp. xvii + 294. Rs.595.00.

The international community is engaged in discussing and framing rules for international trade and related aspects in agriculture, non-agriculture, and service sectors since 2001 under Doha Round of WTO negotiations. During this seven years period the negotiations have passed through several phases but could not reach at a final agreement. The modalities on Agreement on Agriculture (AOA) covered the three elements, viz., domestic support, market access and export subsidies/competition. Special treatment for developing countries was treated as an integral part of all the three pillars of AOA and non-trade concerns were also included. Despite several meetings and sessions held to come out with a consensus draft, positions taken by different members remain wide apart. The differences prevail over almost all areas like various boxes of domestic support, reduction in domestic support, tariff, tariff quotas, export subsidies and credits.

The reasons for the delay in concluding the new round are the sharp differences among members on various aspects of AOA. Implementation of Uruguay Round (UR) commitments has been a tough task for several member countries and it has exposed the vulnerability of various segments of agriculture to global market forces. In most of the cases expectations placed in UR AOA or promises related to this did not materialise. There is a widespread view that the UR was a disappointment. The promise was that trade liberalisation and implementation of AOA would bring large benefits to developing countries through improved access to developed countries markets, increased trade and better pricing environment for tropical and other products of interest to developing countries. However, reality turned out to be quite different from the promise. The biggest challenge to developing countries agriculture in the post-WTO period was posed by unprecedented and unforeseen decline in international agricultural prices. Because of this, developing countries' exports were badly hit and several countries were taken aback by import influx of those commodities in which they thought they had strong competitive edge. This caused adverse impact on farmers' income and employment. Developed countries could safeguard their agriculture against low global prices by providing huge support to their farmers but developing countries neither had the mechanism nor the resources to protect their agriculture and farmers against such adverse trading and pricing environment. The entire blame for this outcome is put on UR AOA. There is a feeling that developing countries did not bargain properly in the UR Round and developed countries secured the balance of AOA in their favour. Besides being discriminatory the agreement is said to be successfully manipulated by developed countries to benefit their agriculture at the cost of developing countries. This time the member countries have turned highly conscious and are very careful about the minute details of various provisions of any future AOA and they are trying hard to protect their

interest adequately. This has led to hardening of positions particularly relating to high level of domestic support and export subsidies in OECD countries, access to developed countries' market and special and differential treatment.

The book is a wonderful and comprehensive piece on analysis of various provisions of the Agreement on Agriculture and the modalities of the negotiations. It focuses primarily on India's experience in the implementation of Uruguay Round commitments and their effect on competitiveness of Indian agriculture. In order to provide broader perspective on the WTO issues the book also covers Cairns Group, the EC and the United States which are key players in the negotiations. It provides genesis of negotiations and a critical assessment of various proposals made in the negotiations upto July 2006 and proposes various elements of a negotiating position and strategy for developing countries.

The book tries to remove misgivings in India about WTO obligations constraining agricultural policies. It argues that the negotiating position should be based on the assessment of international competitiveness in the principal agricultural products. Accordingly, a major part of the book is devoted to discussion on competitiveness of Indian agriculture. It is not clear how competition can be made as a sole basis when international prices show wide fluctuations and can change the inference about competitiveness. An important message from Indian study is that ability to compete in a liberalised environment crucially depends upon domestic policies and reforms.

In the Chapter on "Issues in the Negotiation" the book reviews all major proposals made from time to time in Doha round and highlights the differences in various positions and difficulties in accepting various proposals.

The book contains a section in Chapter 9 on "The Way Forward for Developing Countries" which is very useful from future negotiations point of view. It makes pragmatic suggestions to developing countries to follow a dispassionate approach based on the ground reality rather than sticking to imaginary requirements like very extremely high tariff walls. Broadly, it pleads for improving competitiveness by asking for reduction in price distorting subsidies in developed countries rather than competing with developed countries in subsidies. The book discusses all elements of AOA and then proposes what developing countries should seek under each element.

Towards the end the book adopts a somewhat radical stance to suggest to developing countries not to acquiesce to a poor outcome on agriculture in the Doha Round. The authors further suggest that developing countries should not be tempted by offers of substantial flexibilities in their own agricultural policies by way of S&D treatment, which, they feel, is not needed by developing countries. In the authors' view a prolonged crisis would be better than a conclusion that perpetuates the existing distortions in world agriculture. This strong conclusion ignores the fact that prolonging the stalemate also gives legitimacy to the status quo and provisions of Uruguay Round which are well known for their distortionary effects.

The experience of last ten years shows that the technical barriers to trade in the form of SPS are being increasingly used as an instrument to keep a check on imports. The book does not touch this aspect, which is mentioned to be outside the scope of the study.

The book provides a very useful and critical reading on various aspects of WTO agreements on agriculture. It follows a clear and systematic treatment of the subject and adopts persuasive approach. Its contents and presentation meet the requirement of a very wide readership covering students, teachers, researchers, activists, farmers' organisation, and parliamentarians. The book is found to be most appropriate for the policy makers particularly those associated with WTO matters.

*National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research(NCAP), New Delhi-110 012.* Ramesh Chand

*Readings in Indian Agriculture and Industry*, K.L. Krishna and Uma Kapila, Academic Foundation, New Delhi, 2009. Pp.643. Rs. 395.00.

As we know agriculture in India is the backbone of the Indian economy as it has very high share in employment even though its contribution to gross domestic product is getting reduced. Similarly industry is also an important segment of Indian economy. Both agriculture and industry have made rapid strides during the last six decades of economic growth and development. There is vast literature available on Indian agriculture and industry in India but this literature is scattered in different books and Journals.

The Academic Foundation had done a signal service to the students of economics by publishing a compact volume covering important development issues involved in agriculture and industry. The book is divided into two parts – Part I deals with agriculture and Part II deals with industry.

In Part I on agriculture there are 10 important chapters dealing with agricultural performance since Independence, policy environment and current issues. These chapters deal with modernisation in agriculture, farm sector performance and the reform agenda, agriculture markets in India, food policy in India and the impact of globalisation on Indian agriculture. The articles in this section have been contributed by eminent economists specialising in agriculture such as V.M. Rao, V.S. Vyas, C.H. Hanumantha Rao and G.S. Bhalla, etc. The agricultural policies have been reviewed by most of the authors in this section on Indian agriculture. But what is most important is that agriculture has not grown in a sustained and sustainable manner. The root cause of this phenomenon has been examined in this book, but what policy framework is necessary to ensure sustainable growth in agriculture has not been fully analysed. If the economic reforms in the country have to succeed agriculture has to grow every year. Along with increase in agriculture there has to be a diversion of

resources towards the management and development of irrigation systems through new projects. In order to achieve and ensure equitable growth in agriculture, it is necessary to have a mix of effective redistributive mechanisms through fiscal transfers, safety nets and greater public investment to reach less advantaged group. We must adopt the policy to promote growth in agriculture at more than 4.7 per cent per year as against 3.8 per cent during 2006-07.

Part II deals with Indian industry. There are thirteen articles in this section. They deal with the progress of industrialisation in India, industrial growth, employment and productivity, issues relating to industrial and trade liberalisation and the major issues involved in competition and regulation. The articles in this section have been contributed by eminent economists specialising in industrial economics such as K.L. Krishna, Suresh Tendulkar, Isher Judge Ahluwalia, S. Chakrabarti, Manoj Pant etc. Over a period of years industrial production has been increasing in a sustainable manner, though in recent years there is substantial decline in industrial production. There could be many factors which could explain the fall in industrial production, perhaps the most important factor contributing to the decline in production is the global recession or meltdown which has brought about a reduction in industrial investment. The most important point to be noted is to promote openness and competition in industry through mergers and acquisitions. As we all know labour and labour laws are indeed a constraint in industrial growth and development. The government will have to persuade labour unions to agree to the introduction of labour reforms through labour market regulation, to promote industrial growth and development. The public sector plays an important role in Indian economy. A time has come to have a fresh look at public sector performance, so that the private sector and the public sector can become partners to promote industrial growth. It is also necessary to have a second look at foreign direct investment flows and their role in development. The government has to clarify its policy towards foreign direct investment flows, so that investors are confident of making new investments in the industry. The industrial policy as a whole needs to be re-examined in the context of globalisation and more particularly in the context of global meltdown.

What emerges from the study of this book is that agriculture-industry cannot be ignored while formulating an agenda for economic reforms in the country. The economic reforms in the real sector such as trade industry and commerce, have to be supported also by reforms in the financial sector in the banking system and the financial system. Unfortunately there is no reference to financial sector reforms in the book. A discussion on the financial sector reforms would have been useful to understand the bottlenecks to industrial growth and development.

The Planning Commission will stand to benefit from the study of this book as agriculture and industry are interdependent.

The editors deserve to be complimented on publishing such an useful book for the students of economics and researchers in Indian agriculture–industry. It would have been better if the book was divided into two separate books one dealing with

Readings in Indian Agriculture and second Readings in Indian Industry. This book is recommended very strongly for the students in economics, specialising in agriculture and industry and policy makers in the government and the Planning Commission.

*Baroda – 390 007.* R.D. Pandya

*Rural Development: Principles, Policies and Management*, Katar Singh, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2009. Pp xx + 348. Rs. 395.00.

Although policy makers and the development community have widely used the phrase "rural development", what constitutes rural development seems to have changed significantly during the last three decades. The approach of rural development has traversed from agricultural development during the seventies to improvement of socio-economic conditions of the rural poor during the eighties, and in the nineties the focus has been on eradication of poverty and inclusive growth with equity.

The present day concept of rural development is fundamentally different from what it was perceived earlier and it goes well beyond improvements in growth, income, and output. The focus has been shifted to holistic progress which includes changes in the quality of life, broadly defined to include improvement in health and nutrition, education, environmentally safe living conditions, and reduction in gender and income inequalities. This makes it essential to go beyond the income-related factors such as prices, production, and productivity to a range of non-income factors that influence the quality of life and hence inclusiveness of rural development. Thus, the economic, social and political dimensions of rural development need to be promoted simultaneously for the overall achievement of rural development. However, this aspect only makes the rural development strategies more complex. In other words, there is a need for wider reorganisation of awareness and updated knowledge of different dimensions of rural development for greater success of rural development.

In this context, the author has made an excellent contribution to the literature of rural development through the book under review. The coverage of the book recognises the changes in the approach of rural development and includes all relevant issues for inclusive development with updated information. The theories, principles and policies of rural development have been dealt with in a balanced manner with focus on the Indian situation.

The book comprises well-sequenced 15 Chapters supported by detailed endnotes and learning outcomes. While the author starts the book with the definition and basic elements of rural development in the first chapter, he explains the future of rural economy of India in Chapter 2. Quantitative measurement of rural development is discussed in Chapter 3. Evolution of rural development paradigms, determinants of and policies for rural development are elaborately discussed in Chapters 4 through 6.

Concepts of sustainable development along with specific strategies and policy instruments are delineated in Chapters 7 and 8. Rural development programmes implemented in India with the focus on equity growth, poverty and unemployment eradication, natural resources and infrastructure development are explained from Chapters 9 to 10. Specific issues relating to planning, organising, financing monitoring and evaluation of rural development programmes are deftly discussed in four Chapters from 12 to 15. As claimed by the author, the readers can easily recognise the author's professional experience in teaching, training, research, and extension activities in the field of agriculture and rural development that are implicitly observed in all the chapters of the book.

There are a number of points in the book which deserve special mention and appreciation. Exhaustive coverage of the multi-dimensional issues of rural development in a single book is a daunting task but the author has broadly succeeded in the task. Most of the issues on definition, measurement, dimensions, programmes, planning etc., of rural development are adequately covered in the book, for which the author deserves special appreciation. The theoretical aspects of rural development starting from the thoughts of Classical economists, arguments of the Capitalist School, Marxist and Gandhian models are compared to provide the readers a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of the idea of rural development. The author has identified the relevant tools for measuring development and presented in a simple manner for easy understanding with empirical examples. This aspect is more important for students and rural development practitioners.

The author has also succeeded in effective comparison of policies being implemented in India for rural development with multiplicity of goals and presented comprehensive analysis for the benefit of the readers. The author has also made a sincere attempt to present the salient features of various rural development programmes being implemented in India. Considering the complexity of explaining the programmes in detail, the author could have restricted himself to only the salient features. However, the coverage of different programmes adequately provides an overview of rural development activities in India, in addition to providing the details of institutional arrangements and its specific roles in rural development.

This book, thus, provides enough resources to claim to be an essential reading for those who are concerned with rural development especially students, practitioners and policy makers. However, due to dynamic and volatile nature, the issues on rural development are frequently changing and hence always new information and new paradigms outdate older ones and any reader will have the feeling of the need for frequent updates. The author as well as the readers of the previous editions of the book also felt the same need. As a result, Dr. Katar Singh has already brought out three editions of this book with lot of addition and improvements. Perhaps the future readers will expect more editions to come to understand the future situation of rural development.

This book is an essential reading and makes significant contribution to the rural development literature and will be a good source of reference for students, researchers and policy makers particularly in India and in developing countries in general.

*Konkuk University* V. Puhazhendhi
*Seoul, South Korea.*