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## Book Review

**Khurana, M. R. *Agricultural Development and Employment Patterns in India : A Comparative Analysis of Punjab and Bihar*. Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1992. pp: 283 Rs. 205.00**

The book is an outcome of the author's Ph.D. work and it relates to employment, income and consumption matters of non-cultivating labour households in selected villages of Punjab and Bihar. Thus, the title of the book "Agricultural Development and Employment Patterns in India : A Comparative Analysis of Punjab and Bihar" sounds ambitious but catchy.

The research reported in the book is well done and data collected are, generally speaking, meticulously analysed and meaningful inferences are drawn. The data relate to 1980-81, thus, seem somewhat obsolete. The two strengths of the book are the empirical research on migrant labour in Punjab and the demonstration of trickle down effect of growth in Punjab agriculture when it is contrasted with Bihar agriculture.

Out of the nine chapters in the book, three are devoted to employment and income issues in Bihar and Punjab, one chapter discusses migrant labour in rural Punjab and one chapter is about consumption patterns in Bihar and Punjab. The other four chapters cover objectives, study, area description, methods and conclusions. Clearly, employment and income related research has received more attention than the research on consumption related issues. That is the reason, perhaps, the consumption chapter is somewhat weak, in comparison with other chapters, in terms of concepts, review of literature and inferences drawn. Some examples to this effect follow. Expenditure of marriage ceremonies is included as non-food expenditure. The estimation of demand systems, other than the LES, using the NSS data is not mentioned. It is surprising to see non-food expenditure elasticity of 0.4 for Bihar labour households making non-food expenditure a necessity for them. Consumer unit scales are not mentioned. Economy of scale in consumption is not tested.

It is interesting to see that the practice of regular farm labourers is at low level both in Punjab and Bihar. This goes somewhat against the point, the

author makes, about feudal and semi-feudal structure of society in Bihar relative to that in Punjab. Of course, labour contract is only a part of feudal and semi-feudal structure of society, but is an important one. In a general sense, one would have liked to see some gender specific empirical information, more so on employment, in such a rigorously conducted research. Perhaps, that was beyond the scope of the research reported in the book. Overall, the book is an excellent contribution toward rural employment related research in Bihar and Punjab.

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