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REVIEWS IN BRIEF

District Planning in India, Sudipto Mundlc. Pp. viii + 95.

Planning Process in a District, Kamal Nayan Kabra. Pp. ix + 110. Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi-2, 1977. Rs. 30.00 each.

Both these publications cover a common theme which is concerned with the various aspects of the process of district planning and its desirability and practical feasibility in the context of integrated spatial planning in India. The first publication considers a set of four distinct but related issues, *viz.*, the rationale for district planning, identification of its domain in a multi-level planning scheme and of the major tasks involved in district planning, the intended model of district planning and its actual experience on the field. The study outlines in Chapter 2 the desirable process of district planning and identifies the major tasks involved in the process of district plan formulation, which include (1) generation of the data base of the plan and structural analysis of the spatially disaggregated and aggregated information, (2) ranking of districts according to explicit criteria for State level assistance, (3) construction of district social accounts, (4) formulation of sectoral programmes and (5) programme network for complete district plan. The chief merit of this study is its critical evaluation attempted in Chapter 3 of the Guidelines for the formulation of district plans developed by the Planning Commission in 1969 and the identification in Chapter 4 of certain features in the actual operation of the district planning process that stand out in sharp contrast to the intended model of the Guidelines. The Guidelines postulated the concept of integrated area planning and enumerated the activities which can be covered in the domain of district planning to include programmes of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and allied activities, adequacy and locational suitability of facilities for storage, agricultural processing, marketing, credit, etc. But significantly enough, the strategy of rural development which is implicit in the domain of the Guidelines did not recognize the central importance of land reform, land redistribution and rural employment schemes for this sector. It is pointed out that this eclecticism towards the system of agricultural production constituted a major inadequacy of the intended model. The process of plan formulation in the intended model also ignored certain basic realities of India's field administration, in particular the relationship between the State secretariat and district collectorate. Attention is focussed on the need for structural changes in the systems of administration at the district level. An examination of the operation of the district planning process has identified certain gaps in the operating model, which it is observed, are derived from the intended model. These relate to the preoccupation with target setting for agricultural activities, lack of guidance on the technical methods of designing and planning public programmes of rural development, resulting in the absence of any careful and rigorous programme planning in most areas and non-existence of in-

infrastructure facilities and expertise for planning at the district level. The last chapter presents the conclusions of the study. The appendices deal with the form of data collection for district planning and the suggested format for district plan document as presented in the Guidelines, the course content of training for district level planners and guidelines for collecting information relating to irrigation schemes.

The second publication analyses the various aspects of the planning process in a sample district in India in terms of its role, objectives, agencies, decision-making processes, tasks and their implications. The theoretical framework for the study is formulated in terms of official policy concerning district planning as set out in the Plan documents of the Planning Commission. The study is based on field work conducted by the author during 1973-74 and focusses attention on the process of formulating the Fifth Plan for the district. The theoretical background of the new approach to district planning is discussed in the second chapter. It brings out the contrast between the narrow limited concept of district or lower level regional planning (pre-Fourth Plan concept) and the broad basic concept of lower level spatial planning (Fourth Plan concept) in which an integrated strategy of development is evolved and applied for designing and implementing concrete and balanced programmes and projects. The third chapter analyses the model as prescribed by the Planning Commission and the Department of Planning of the State Government for formulating a district plan. A set of hypotheses concerning district planning process is presented in the fourth chapter. The results of the empirical exercise are presented in the next chapter in which an attempt is made to build up an operative model of district planning for the sample district by identifying the similarities and dissimilarities between the prescribed model and the operative model. The last chapter contains the summary and conclusions of the study. An important conclusion of the study is that district planning as evolved is more a formality than a reality. The district planning as practised in the sample district is primarily a process of data collection at lower levels in which the implications of such data for various programmes are worked out (informational decentralisation) and final decision-making is not delegated to lower levels (absence of decision-making decentralisation). Co-ordination at the district level under such a pale variety of planning is found to be superficial. It is plausible to attribute the operational failures in agricultural rural infrastructure and social services programmes to lack of real effective planning at the lower levels. In the process of plan formulation at the district level, it is observed that an analysis of the socio-economic situation was not undertaken for suggesting a strategy of economic planning for development. Both these studies will be read with interest by students of district development administration.

Field Data Collection in the Social Sciences: Experiences in Africa and the Middle East, Edited by Bryant Kears, Agricultural Development Council, Inc., Research and Training Network, New York, U.S.A., 1976. Pp. xxiv+200. \$ 4.50.

This report is based on the papers and memoranda submitted by 20 social scientists from different academic disciplines in Africa and the Middle East to a seminar organized by the Agricultural Development Council under its Research and Training Network programmes in co-operation with the Ford Foundation, International Development Research Centre and the International Centre for Corn and Wheat Improvement (CIMMYT) in Beirut, Lebanon in December, 1974. The seminar discussed the problems of field data collection in the social sciences in the above-said two regions with a view to stimulating a more satisfactory exchange of social science field data collection experience. The report has made an attempt to excerpt or summarise or highlight the points from individual papers and from the subsequent seminar discussions. The invited papers and the discussions at the seminar covered the following 11 major themes, each of which forms the subject matter of a separate chapter in this report: (i) research approaches and aims of the study, (ii) steps in area familiarisation and reconnaissance or baseline surveys, (iii) choice of sampling methods, (iv) local support and co-operation, (v) developing and using data collection instruments, (vi) problems with specific quantitative variables relating to measurement of land, estimation of labour input, measurement of capital and managerial input and problems in dealing with qualitative variables such as knowledge, practice and attitude, (vii) recruitment and qualifications of interviewers/enumerators, (viii) training interviewers and directing their work, (ix) interviewing techniques and problems, (x) winning co-operation of respondents and (xi) pre-coding, coding and some preliminary steps in analysis. The contribution of each participant/paper writer is identified in this report with a parenthetical note of the country or region where the work was done on which his quoted observations were based. The editorial committee deserves to be congratulated for assembling the research material into a useful compact volume which adds to the body of experience about practical field data collection problems.

Marketing Farm Products: Economic Analysis, Geoffrey S. Shepherd, Gene A. Futrell and J. Robert Strain, Sixth Edition, The Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa, U.S.A., 1976. Pp. 485. \$18.00.

First published in 1946, this volume has run into six editions. The success and usefulness of this volume can be judged by the fact that the third, fourth and fifth editions carried through second printings. The volume presents a theoretical framework for analysing marketing problems with particular reference to the United States. It examines the particular marketing problems and systems for the major commodity areas. It consists of 31

chapters grouped under three major parts, *viz.*, consumer demand, market price and marketing costs. It includes two new chapters on dairy marketing. The chapters on grain marketing, poultry marketing, seasonal price movements and the marketing system that brings supply and demand together are extensively revised. Data are up-dated upto the year 1974.

The first section outlines the conceptual framework for analysing the marketing problems and for appraising markets and marketing performance. It begins with the study of demand for the product, proceeds thereafter to study prices and then costs, dealing within each of these with time, place and form with a view to maximizing real incomes of goods and services of producers, distributors and consumers. The framework outlined in the first section is used in the second section to examine the overall agricultural marketing problems common to agriculture as a whole, cutting across commodity lines. The third section examines the problems of specialised commodity markets for livestock and meat, dairy (fluid) milk and manufactured dairy products, poultry and eggs, grains, cotton and fruits and vegetables. The last chapter sums up the patterns of marketing progress in the U.S.A. as they have evolved over time.

Tracing the major developments in agricultural marketing in the United States, it is noted that in regard to the demand for most farm products, the change in demand has taken place towards more highly processed goods as a result of the general desire of the housewives to spend less time in the kitchen. It is visualised that the trend towards more processed foods would lead to a net saving of labour for the economy as a whole—an increase in efficiency permitting a fuller satisfaction of wants in the economy as a whole. Another significant feature of agricultural marketing is the tendency for the price differentials that reflect the consumers' preferences for different grades of products, as for example, in the case of hogs, eggs and cotton to narrow down on their way back to the producer with adverse effects on the economy. In the wake of decentralisation of the market for farm products, the need is felt for more accurate and detailed market news about prices and grades. A revolutionary change has also taken place in retailing from personal service in the small corner grocery store to self service in the large super market. In the field of marketing costs, a prominent feature is the trend towards larger operating units with reduced operating costs achieved through economies of scale and improvements made in the transportation of products. A negative feature of agricultural marketing is price discrimination which continues to be a threat to fair competition in the food industry among buyers, and in some cases among sellers. The need is emphasized for group action by farmers to adjust sales more uniformly to market demands at reasonable prices, to improve the quality of the product and uniformity, to negotiate with buyers and to protect themselves against trade practices and abuses of market power to which they are otherwise vulnerable. Though this volume is intended for the use of the sophomores in the United States, it will prove to be an invaluable

reference guide to students in the universities and colleges in India. Inclusion of a table of contents would have been useful.

Agricultural Credit, Sector Policy Paper, The World Bank, Washington, D. C., U.S.A., May, 1975. Pp. 85.

This brochure examines the issues and problems associated with the use of credit on the farm and with institutional lending with particular reference to the agricultural credit activities of the World Bank and the guidelines to be followed by the Bank in providing credit to small farmers. It is divided into three chapters. The first chapter describes the evolution of current approach to agricultural credit practices, volume and nature of institutional credit, development of World Bank participation, and the types of credit projects assisted by the Bank and discusses the problems of agricultural credit markets and the technological and socio-economic factors affecting the use of credit in agricultural development. The second chapter discusses the design of credit programmes and the financial viability of the credit agency and the third chapter deals with the systems for delivering agricultural credit and the principles that may serve as guidelines for choosing the agencies of credit. The need is stressed for better information on all aspects of rural credit and its impact on production and incomes.

Rural Electrification, A World Bank Paper, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., October, 1975. Pp. 79.

This brochure reviews the progress of rural electrification in developing countries, the extent, costs and uses of rural electrification, its aims and the outlook for investment. It then presents the World Bank's current thinking on approaches towards investment with regard to economic justification procedures, project identification, means of finance and technical and institutional problems. The implications of this study for World Bank policy in regard to the pattern and content of lending operations, identification of countries in need of rural electrification, the lending programme and the operational procedures are succinctly brought out. The study indicates that there is large scope for successful investments in rural electrification, provided that they are properly selected and prepared. An approach for undertaking such investments is outlined.