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## Book Reviews

*Stability and Development: Essays in Honour of D.T. Lakdawala*, Edited by Yoginder K. Alagh, Raghuvir J. Mody and Rohit D. Desai, Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi, 1993. Pp. xxxvii+231. Rs. 350.00.

*Sectoral Growth and Change: Essays in Honour of D.T. Lakdawala*, Edited by Yoginder K. Alagh, Raghuvir J. Mody and Rohit D. Desai, Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi, 1993. Pp. xxxv+236. Rs. 350.00.

The two volumes are collections of papers on various facets of India's economic development presented at the seminar held in 1991 to honour Professor D.T. Lakdawala. They cover wide ground: The first volume includes papers on macro aspects of development strategy and the fiscal problems of the centre and the states. The second volume deals with the sectoral aspects, namely, industry, foreign trade and debt, and agriculture. Being written in the midst of the economic crisis, most papers attempt to take a critical look at the past experience, discuss ways in which policies need to be reshaped. It is of course unreasonable to expect a coherent structure or closely woven overall pattern in analysis and conclusions in such a collection. The editors and, to a lesser extent, the rapporteurs have, however, tried to bring out the various strands of argument and perceptions on appropriate solutions to the emerging problems.

Three papers by Kirit S. Parikh, Pronab Sen and V.H. Joshi in the first volume address wider issues of overall development strategy: Parikh favours liberalisation and opening up of the economy on the now-familiar grounds that it will promote more efficient use of resources and faster growth. Sen, while endorsing the argument for dismantling controls, argues for linking imports to export earnings and stresses slow agricultural growth as a major constraint on overall growth. He does not see the inadequacy of savings as a problem because a much faster growth is possible with the present savings rate if investment were more efficient. The importance of values, attitudes and institutions in conditioning the response to economic opportunities is raised, though not really discussed, by Joshi.

The papers on fiscal problems (with the exception of Archana R. Dholakia who outlines a macro model for assessing distribution impact of public expenditure) focus on the deterioration in the fiscal position, factors which have contributed to it and the need for corrective measures. M. Govinda Rao and V.B. Tulsidhar highlight the fact that expenditure growth accelerated in the 1980s largely on account of the much faster growth of current expenditure relative to capital outlays. While the emergence of budget deficits in the 1980s at the centre was due to accelerated growth in both revenue and capital expenditure, the states, being more constrained about borrowing, adjusted to resource squeeze by slowing down capital expenditure especially on economic services. The option of privatising urban infrastructure and services in the context of paucity of resources for the government is discussed by Meera Mehta and Dinesh Mehta. They implicitly assume that public sector cannot do much to improve efficiency or cost recovery. The need for a public regulatory system and encouragement of community participation in urban services is mentioned in passing without much discussion.

The second volume dealing with sectoral aspects includes a useful review by Vijay Kelkar, Rajiv Kumar and Roopa Joshi of the pricing policies for public enterprises in the light of changes in the macro policy environment. K.K. Subrahmanian argues that regulation of technology imports induces firms to supplement import of technology within house research and development, but the incentives for innovation are weak. Liberalisation and ensuring competition stimulate technology upgradation but may result in continued dependence on imported technology. He argues for a socially purposeful and effective state intervention to strengthen internal technological capability.

The papers on specific industries are confined to electronics and textiles both with apparently large export potential. But one is marked by rapid growth and technical progress and the other by technological stagnation. The discussion, however, does not enlighten us much about the underlying reasons why the competitive potential is not being exploited much more vigorously.

In respect of agriculture, N.C. Shah highlights the regional variations in land productivity and the key role of irrigation and fertilisers in accounting for them. Usha S. Sharma emphasises on the need for speedy completion of projects, improvement of irrigation efficiency, watershed planning, better interaction between users and government which are well taken. But to view the problem mainly as one of better co-ordination among concerned departments is erroneous. The problems involved in promoting greater use involvement are not really discussed. Nor is it clear that the shift in priorities favouring small scale works is feasible or would automatically ensure greater efficiency.

Anil C. Shah pleads for a change in the attitude of state forest departments to facilitate a shift from centralised and standard planning to innovative decentralised participatory experiments. Anil K. Gupta highlights some of the areas which need greater attention in research and the necessity for creating pressures and incentives to preserve genetic diversity and promote sustainable agriculture. The need to correct regional imbalances due to divergent trends in the terms of trade of foodgrain and non-foodgrain growers through appropriate price support policy is the main point made by Mahesh Pathak, A.S. Patel and M.L. Jhala. G.N. Joshi finds that in Gujarat there was a net outflow of goods from agriculture to the non-agricultural sector in the 1960s, and that this flow has been reversed in the 1970s. The paper by Dilip Shah on dairying emphasises its potential for promoting employment generation and for providing supplementary income to the weaker sections, and commends the Anand model of integrated co-operatives.

Altogether the second volume is a mixed bag rather disjointed and fragmentary. The rapporteurs' summaries suggest that the discussion at the seminar did not overcome this deficiency. The editors could have been stricter and more selective in their choice and also got the authors to rework their papers to make them better focused and more interesting.

*Soybean System in India*, S.L. Bapna, S.P. Seetharaman and K.R. Pichholiya, CMA Monograph No. 147, Oxford & IBH Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1992. Pp. xii+99. Rs. 135.00.

Soybean which contains about 45 per cent of protein and about 18 per cent of oil can be used as food, feed and raw material for industrial products. This book examines the constraints that inhibited the growth of soybean in India by studying various sub-systems in soybean industry such as consumer, research and extension, production at farm level, marketing and processing. It attempts to cover all the relevant issues with adequate data support as the study of production, marketing and processing was confined to Madhya Pradesh - the largest soybean producing state of the country. The consumption pattern of soya products was studied for rural Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Nagpur. The All India Co-ordinated Research Project on Soybean sponsored by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research catered to the research sub-system.

The study reveals that there is a problem of positioning soya milk as an alternative to cold drink, natural milk or natural fruit juice. So until and unless this problem is resolved, it would be difficult to popularise it among the consumers. Though the potential for the use of soya products exists after more than two decades of its introduction, the market for soya products is still to be developed. The study of the consumption sub-system highlights that a large potential exists but the efforts to exploit the market potential are wanting.

The research reveals that processing is essential for making soya products fit for consumption as soybean contains some toxic substances. The authors have observed that although the processing capacity was twice that of production, inadequate research and extension support in development and promotion of new soya products was the main constraint to the growth of soybean. Although yellow soybean was the most profitable *kharij* crop, yet black soybean, though not as remunerative as yellow, was cultivated by the farmers because of lower working capital needs, different periods of maturing and relatively lesser pod shattering problem. This was considered to be undesirable for the growth of soybean.

The book has been well written on an area of topical interest in the face of large deficit of pulses and edible oils, significant outgo of foreign exchange and rising prices of these commodities. However, certain issues demand some extensive analysis. The various sub-systems discussed in the book lack precise discussion on linkages between them and their implications. Nevertheless, some valuable suggestions have been made by the authors. They have observed some serious problems in the processing of soybean because of inadequate research support, expensive processing technology and odour of soya products. The positioning of soybean as protein crop would go a long way in saving land for production of protein and at the same time oil contents would be used in any case. Therefore, research and extension efforts should be reoriented to develop and promote soya products. The growth of food processing sector, where different soya-based products at low processing cost can be produced and promoted, is the need of the hour.

In a nutshell, the book is a timely and valuable contribution to the literature. It would not only be useful to policy makers involved in planning for research on soybean production and processing but also would be helpful for planning for oilseeds.

*Division of Agricultural Economics,  
Indian Agricultural Research Institute,  
New Delhi-110 012.*

A.K. Vasisht

*Employment, Earnings and Poverty: A Study of Rural India and Indonesia*, G.K. Chadha, Indo-Dutch Studies on Development Alternatives 13, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994. Pp. 294. Rs. 295.00.

There are many studies on the employment and earnings of the poor. This book by Chadha, however, makes a systematic attempt in analysing the impact of economic development on poverty in two highly populous and developing Asian economies - India and Indonesia. This study, initiated under the auspices of the Indo-Dutch Research Programme, examines the changing structure of employment/earnings among the weaker sections in these two countries, in response to the changing levels and nature of development. Here the weaker sections refer to landless labour, marginal and small farmer households.

The author begins with theoretical debate and empirical gaps in the literature (Chapter 1). First, he states that "awareness of the existence of mass poverty was aroused in the beginning of the 1970s when the 'trickle-down effect' of growth was allegedly found to have lost its appeal in many countries" (p. 17). It may be noted that awareness about mass poverty in India was recognised as early as 1938. A National Planning Committee headed by Jawaharlal Nehru was constituted by the Indian National Congress to look into the problem of poverty. Later, the Perspective Planning Division of the Planning Commission (a committee headed by Pitamber Pant) also talked about the mass poverty in 1962. In other words, we want to highlight the fact that India recognised the problem of mass poverty even before International Labour Organisation and the World Bank recognised in the 1970s.

Next, the study provides a broad overview of the changing employment structure in rural India and the changes in the economy of rural Indonesia respectively in Chapters 2 and 3. In rural India, there has been shift of workers to non-farm activities over time. In Indonesia also, there has been a significant shift to non-farm activities. For example, in Indonesia, the proportion of rural workforce employed in manufacturing and services increased from 8.7 and 15.1 per cent in 1971 to 10.5 and 24.9 per cent respectively in 1991. There are, however, some differences between India's and Indonesian agriculture. For example, the arable land per person in 1985 was nearly four times higher in India as compared to that of Indonesia. "Indonesia is, however, adequately compensated in terms of irrigation of arable land; more than 80.0 per cent of its arable area was under irrigation in 1985 whereas only 32.0 per cent was irrigated in India during 1987-88" (p. 64).

The strength of the book, however, lies in the rich micro evidence on India presented in Chapters 4 to 9. The author first delineates three scenarios representing the changing levels of development in rural Asia. Scenario I represents a situation of general economic backwardness; in particular, agriculture is extremely backward. Scenario II represents an intermediate stage where agriculture is 'fairly highly' developed but non-agricultural employment is of very low order. Scenario III represents a combination of 'highly' developed agriculture and a highly developed and diversified network of non-agricultural activities. Each scenario was examined through a survey of six villages each in Munger district of Bihar (Scenario I), West Godavari of Andhra Pradesh (Scenario II) and Ghaziabad of Uttar Pradesh (Scenario III). A total of 1,091 households were sampled over the three field areas: Munger: 371; West Godavari: 360; Ghaziabad: 360. Using a detailed, pre-tested questionnaire, the field data were collected in two rounds, roughly corresponding to the *kharif* and *rabi* cropping seasons during the agricultural year 1986-87. Chapters 7 to 9 provide the

field survey results on on-farm employment, off-farm employment and the poor households respectively.

The Indonesian component of the study is, however, based only on secondary data. Chapter 10 presents evidence on employment/earnings from Indonesia.

The last chapter provides the summary and concluding observations. Some of the conclusions of the study are the following: (i) The first major observation of this study is that in the backward areas, public investment in infrastructure must be accorded the highest priority. The study also lends credence to the view that rural institutions in economically backward areas are generally weak. The Indian field data provide a more glaring example in terms of weak credit institutions. (ii) In both India and Indonesia, there is an adequate evidence to indicate that there is no one-to-one correspondence between days of employment and net earnings as one moves up on the development scale. For example, the study indicates that at the lowest end of the agrarian scale, households in Scenario I type areas appeared to be working as hard as their counterparts in Scenarios II and III type areas. (iii) The increasing share of non-farm earnings among the weaker sections in rural Asia when the economy moves up on the development ladder, testified by the Indian and Indonesian data, lends support to the reality of percolation mechanism. (iv) Non-farm employment and earnings are extremely important to the landless labour class. (v) Scenario III type reveals that a rapidly growing and highly productive agriculture is capable of promoting a highly productive network of non-farm employment avenues inside the village economy itself. This scenario is broad-based, encompassing a wide array of secondary and tertiary activities either within the village or in the nearby villages. In addition, diverse types of urban or 'extended' non-farm employment were also available. The experience of Scenario II, however, cautions that agriculture does not automatically foster local non-farm growth and employment expansions. (vi) The earning superiority of Scenario III over Scenarios II and I has a direct bearing on the poverty profile of the three types of areas. Nearly 62 per cent of the landless labour, 72 per cent of the marginal and 65 per cent of small farming households were poor in Scenario I. The high incidence of poverty was the direct offshoot of a low level of employment and extremely poor daily earning stemming from the general backwardness of Scenario I. In Scenario II the incidence of poverty was low and the percolation mechanism seems to be working. Scenario III revealed an extremely low incidence of poverty. It indicates that agricultural development alone is not the solution for poverty reduction.

One of the policy implications of the study is that mere expansion of employment time, without effecting improvement in productivity levels, has only a marginal impact on poverty alleviation. The productivity levels in the backward areas are so low that even doubling the employment time would not relieve the distress beyond a point.

Secondly, the study equally emphasises that exclusive reliance on agricultural employment cannot be the ultimate solution to low levels of living and poverty. As part of the long-term development strategy, non-farm employment is the more enduring and reliable basis for improving the earnings of rural households including the marginal, small and landless households. The study ends with the message that if growth impulses are in position, the percolation mechanism does operate most demonstrably and the weaker sections are spared the agony of poverty and deprivation.

We mention here the methodological weakness of the study regarding percolation mechanism (or 'trickle down' hypothesis). The author tries to address dynamic relationships

with the cross-section data. If one wants to examine percolation mechanism one should use at least two time-points if not time-series over time. For example, in Scenario III, one has to compare 1986-87 household level with some earlier time-point data in order to talk about trickle down hypothesis.

In spite of this caveat, this study offers very rich micro evidences on employment and earnings of the weaker sections and we are sure that it would be quite useful for the researchers and policy makers.

*Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research,  
Goregaon (East),  
Bombay-400 065.*

S. Mahendra Dev

*The Indian Economy, 1947-92, Volume I: Agriculture, V.M. Dandekar, Sage Publications  
India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994. Pp. 405. Rs. 175.00.*

The book under review is the first title in a three-volume study of the Indian Economy which brings together the selected writings of Professor Dandekar over a period of nearly five decades. Volumes 2 and 3 would cover respectively the writings on the themes: Population, Poverty and Employment; and Production, Trade and Finance. It would have been appropriate to review all the three volumes together. This would have enabled a more complete consideration of Dandekar's assessment of the past and his perspective for the future. However, as the three volumes are not being published simultaneously, this would have meant a delay - possibly a long delay - in reviewing Volume 1 which has been released in November 1994. As a compromise, we thought it best to write a short review chiefly to bring the book to the notice of students, researchers and many others who feel concerned about the problems faced by the Indian economy. Dandekar's analysis of poverty in the early seventies received wide attention going far beyond the circle of professional economists. This is even more likely to be true of the book under review which covers a broader set of issues and deals with them in a simple and comprehensible language, in Dandekar's words 'without much sophistication'.

The book starts off with a brief "Introduction to the Series" providing an overview of the Indian economy and of four decades of planning. This is followed by a preface which introduces chapters in the book. The selected writings on agriculture are arranged in six chapters. Chapter 1 attributes the problems of Indian agriculture to the slow and incomplete transformation of agriculture in India from a traditional subsistence activity to a commercially viable activity. This needs withdrawal of surplus population from agriculture and infusion into it of capital from outside. The main argument of the chapter is that the policies pursued during the last four decades have neither been well-conceived nor pursued with sincerity and determination. As a result, agriculture has been reduced to a parking lot for the poor. The next four chapters cover the following policy areas in detail: Agricultural Administration, Research and Education (Chapter 2), Food Administration (Chapter 3), Agricultural Marketing and Prices (Chapter 4) and Agricultural Credit (Chapter 5). A feature which students and researchers would find particularly welcome is that each chapter contains a thorough discussion of the major policy documents and committee reports starting from the beginning prior to Independence to the most recent pronouncements. This is a boon to

readers, like this reviewer, who on their own are unlikely to explore the decades preceding the planning era. Chapter 6 looks at the agricultural policy priorities for the future.

A short review is hardly a place to go into the details of Dandekar's diagnoses and prescriptions. However, it would be in order to mention a few of the principal ideas underlying his analysis. Firstly, he is critical of several of government interventions in the field of land reforms, fixation of agricultural prices and in procurement and distribution of foodgrains. He believes that giving a greater role to markets, corporate enterprise and large farmers would promote faster growth and development of agriculture. Secondly, government has to intervene primarily to help the poor. Offering employment to the poor at a minimum wage and reaching them foodgrains through fair price shops are the interventions which deserve priority. Thirdly, it should be realised that neither credit could help non-viable producers nor would subsidies provide a lasting solution to the problem of poverty. It should be mentioned that in Dandekar's reformed economy there would be a large and well-organised sector consisting of genuine and viable co-operatives, strong marketing committees to regulate markets and other people's organisations - one may call them together the people's sector - complementing the operations of government, markets and private enterprise. Looking to the future with this framework of ideas and assuming a technologically rejuvenated agriculture, Dandekar identifies two major directions in which agricultural policy should move: "First, remove ceilings, permit land leasing, and allow large-scale commercial farming even at the cost of small and marginal farmers and landless labour; they should be protected by offering a support price for labour. Second, create a marketing apparatus which is effectively autonomous and decentralised in its marketing functions so that the whole country is effectively integrated into a single market and a structure of market prices emerges by normal market processes, prices which are competitive and public, while protecting the weaker sections of the population by means of a system of fair price shops targeted at those who accept the offer of a support price for labour" (p. 390).

It is only to be expected that Dandekar's blueprint for policies would evoke controversies among economists. For example, Dantwala had described some of the policy proposals when they were made as having a dreamland quality. Dandekar has included in the book under review some of the exchanges which he had with his professional colleagues. Controversies stimulate discussions within and across disciplines and, by this token, writings provoking controversies do serve a purpose. A more serious point which Dandekar needs to consider is the implementability of the blueprint he proposes in the prevailing political environment. Let us give an example. Dandekar's perception of the problems of co-operative credit is based on the proposition: "the entire co-operative credit structure has been built on a weak base, namely, the primary credit societies at the village level.... (which) are weak because their lending business is essentially non-viable." On the other hand, Dandekar refers elsewhere (page 355) to the finding of the Study Team on Overdues (1972) that defaults were by and large willful and there was hardly any distinction between small and big farmers in this respect. Would giving credit only to viable farmers ensure better performance on repayment? It should if we go by the economic logic. But, would the farmers' lobby representing the affluent farmers accept this logic? In fact, it would be legitimate to ask why they should accept this logic because a little later on page 391 Dandekar laments that "almost everything in this country is subsidised because almost nobody is willing to pay the full cost of the services he/she receives from the society." He goes on to



refer to instances like subsidy to higher education where "the guilty are the policy-makers." Dandekar could not be unaware of the fact that most of these subsidies go to organised groups who have the means to pay but not the slightest desire as they regard feeding on the government as their fundamental right! In this context, it would be reasonable to ask whether our problems arise from wrong policies or from policies which the numerous and short-sighted organised groups compel the government to adopt. If the latter is the source of our problems, it would be incumbent on a social scientist like Dandekar to supplement his policy analyses with the more challenging task of understanding the behaviour of organised groups and devising ways to influence them.

This is not to deny the relevance or value of Dandekar's writings. In an open society like India, the only way an academic can function is on the basis of faith in the capacity of reasoned, persistent and patient argument to bring about changes in the perceptions and behaviour of people. While Dandekar says at the very outset in the book under review that he is now in the process of closing shop, it would be the hope of all his readers that he would continue to get provoked by what he perceives as follies of policy makers and clever but fallacious reasoning of those who contest his views; but above all, by his deep conviction that it is better to light a little candle than merely curse the darkness. To set the ball rolling, we mention below what seem to be errors in a text which is almost error-free! Were there three Khusro Committees on agricultural credit? While "References" given at the end lists only the 1989 Report of the Khusro Committee, there is a mention on page 367 of an "Informal Group on Institutional Arrangements for Agricultural Credit which the Khusro Committee had set up in 1964, 30 years ago". Again, on page 368, there is a reference to "the Study Team on Overdues of Co-operative Credit Institutions constituted by the Khusro Committee in 1972". For another case, one should turn to page 304, line 6 from top, where 'professorial' has been wrongly put as 'professional' thereby ruining, if our memory is right, a delightful exchange between Professors Dantwala and Dandekar!

*Bangalore.*

V.M. Rao

*Peasant Economics: Farm Households and Agrarian Development*, Frank Ellis, Second Edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., 1993. Pp. xviii+309. £ 15.95 (Distributor: Foundation Books, Daryaganj, New Delhi-2.)

Those familiar with Asian agriculture are aware of the problems of farm households, peasant economy and interlinked factor markets. The author has tried to incorporate all the major aspects of household economic behaviour using a strong theoretical base. In fact, this is a textbook on agricultural economics in the perspective of Third World countries like those of the Indian sub-continent with major modifications. On the whole, the book will be of interest to a wide audience.

The book is divided into four parts, viz., Peasants, Economics, Political Economy; The Theory of Optimising Peasant; Inside the Peasant Household; and Further Topics and Overview. The first part is primarily concerned with peasants, the neoclassical theory of farm production, and elements of peasant political economy. The second part is devoted to define a farm in terms of risk average, risk bearer and elements of institutions. Each part has been explained in terms of optimisation.

The third part discusses the issues relating to the role of women in the peasant household,

mainly focusing on the intra-household economy, time allocation, etc. The final part elaborates various issues with reference to farm size and factor productivity, technical change, environment and peasant economics in perspective.

The author begins by discussing the concept of peasants which centres around two aspects, namely, partial integration into incomplete markets and imperfection of markets. In recent times there are problems in accepting the view. As for example, there is significant difference in the evolution of agricultural systems of those of Northern Europe, North America, on the one hand and that of Asia, on the other. The former system emphasises the importance of increasing productivity of labour and the latter, the productivity of land. Therefore, these two distinct processes involve two different types of technical change. First, the process of mechanisation that substitutes capital for labour is usually characterised by scale economies and saves the labour enforcement cost. This process is induced by the inelastic supply of labour which happened to be a scarce and costly resource in the case of Europe and America. Second, a bio-chemical technology requiring intensive on the spot management decisions per unit of land area would increase the relative efficiency of small farmers in terms of output per area. Thus this new system increases the use of skilled manual labour accompanied by the developments in irrigation, fertiliser use and cropping intensity, thereby in effect substituting labour for land.

Unfortunately, the author perhaps does not seem to be aware of these issues while defining family farm. We thus find it useful to mention some of the important aspects in this regard. In the above background, it is imperative to mention that there are problems in cultivating paddy in many Asian countries exclusively with the help of machines as the field sizes are small and fragmented. Moreover, the design of machines to substitute for finicky manual tasks is complete and expensive. The results from the experimental farms in Japan generally showed that large machinery used in the West was not suitable for use even on co-operative farms where land consolidation has been carried out. Thus, in such cases, the use of large machines improved labour productivity which was often at the cost of a considerable reduction in rice yield.

Thus it can be said that the unit of farming generally remains small in many Asian countries and the farmers are not separated from control of the means of production. These independent small farms are, however, inextricably linked into much large scale co-operative units for the management of water depending on different land elevations.

The book's main drawback is its discussion of farm size and factor productivity, and the nature of interlinked credit market for a theory of peasant economics. A major thrust of research in informal credit markets had originally come from attempts to understand the structure and its nature of market. There are much important writings on this in recent times. As for example, the entry into the informal credit market is not restricted. In fact there appears to be relatively free entry into moneylending and this keeps interest rates commensurate with costs. Similarly, in estimating the relationship between operational farm size and land productivity the usual practice is to treat the entire farm area as a homogeneous unit irrespective of land located in different elevations and whether the same is owned and rented. However, the land may be located in a village at different elevations. Thus the productivity differentials can be explained by varying tenurial agreements and the nature of credit contract. We have a better understanding of why informal credit market operates despite huge formal investment in the rural areas. Still today the village credit market is neither organised nor controlled. Some tenants go in for cost sharing agreements with the landlords to avoid transaction costs of soliciting credit in an informal credit market. Such

tenants invariably show higher land productivity as compared to those farmers who could not avail of the cost sharing arrangements. The author may note that many diverse factors, and not merely farm size alone that affect land productivity across farms.

Of course, there could be a chapter on water management institutions and its relationship with the farm economy in order to make it an ideal book on agricultural economics. For instance, why did collective action succeed only in some villages? Not that collective action and risk are high. It might have various explanatory factors in a farm economy and not the so-called 'supervision cost' or 'disguised unemployment'.

The book may prove useful as a standard text for students of agricultural economics because it brings together the discussions that can only otherwise be found by searching a variety of sources. However, it will be useful to incorporate recent literature with particular reference to rice cultivation. On the whole, those familiar with recent trends in thinking and practice find little that is new but this should not deter them from reading it.

*International Management Institute,  
New Delhi-110 016.*

Arindam Banik

*Role of Fisheries in Rural Development*, Edited by S. Giriappa, Daya Publishing House, Delhi-35, 1994. Pp. 178. Rs. 220.00.

Books on rural development are generally written with orientation on agriculture or rural economics. This book is different in this regard as revealed by the title itself. The endeavour in compiling nine important chapters deserves appreciation. The book begins with an introductory chapter authored by the editor himself. The relationship between management and development is explained well in the first chapter. The book concludes with a chapter on prospects of fisheries development in the rural setting written by C.S. Singh and M. Das. Integration of aquaculture and agriculture is suggested aptly in the concluding chapter. The schematic on fish-livestock-crop integration is presented well. The classification of constraints to aquaculture development and grading of levels of adoption of recommended practices provide a framework for pisciculture development in potential areas and regions of the country. The dichotomy of artisanal sector and mechanised sector has changed and with the introduction of motorised fishing crafts as an intermediate technology the triangle of traditional crafts-motorised crafts-mechanised boats has emerged. The importance of the intermediate sector is clearly discernible. A book that deals with the role of fisheries in rural development will not be complete if fishing technology, fisherwomen and fish marketing are not covered. The book under review has chapters on these important aspects. The role of fisherwomen in fisheries technology and development is outlined in a useful way. The book is useful to students, teachers and administrators as it presents a comprehensive information-package for policy formulation. It will be more useful if aspects such as fish processing, fishermen associations, group action, conflict management, export marketing, etc., are included in the second edition. The effort of the editor of the book deserves encouragement indeed.

*Department of Fisheries Economics and Statistics,  
Fisheries College and Research Institute,  
Tuticorin-628008 (Tamil Nadu).*

P. Selvaraj

*Systems Approaches for Agricultural Development*, F.W.T. Penning de Vries, Paul Teng and Klaas Metselaar, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, The Netherlands in Co-operation with the International Rice Research Institute, Manila, Philippines, 1993. Pp. xii+542. \$ 13.00.

The book under review embodies the research papers of an International Symposium on Systems Approaches for Agricultural Development held during December 1991 at Bangkok. It advocates the introduction of the systems approach in studying agriculture commensurate with the growing use of computers in recent times especially for solving complex problems. In the pursuit to witness sustainability in agriculture and to analyse integrated production system as an entity, we find that multi-level system is highly interconnected to each of the system components at all structural levels which should be supplemented by an understanding of the interrelationship among different processes and sub-systems with full integration of knowledge from other disciplinary sciences.

Under systems approach all the disciplines of agriculture are synthesised into a unique system of total agricultural production environment so that optimisation of a particular sub-system does not prove counter-productive to other sub-systems and the total as witnessed in the case of monodisciplinary research in a narrowly defined system.

Throughout the book and keeping the concept of sustainability intact and alive in their discussions, the notion of decision and the behaviour of decision-maker under the premises of systems approach has been critically examined on empirical sound footing by different authors. The farmer is interested in maximising revenue, use of available labour and in minimising risk. A politician (policy maker) may be interested in defining the procedures that will maximise profits for the farm producers and minimise environmental damage to the region. Agribusiness decision-maker may adjust production or supply of resources to meet expected regional demand. This worthwhile compilation of papers gives a balanced view to resolve such conflicting objectives through systems approach.

For predicting and extrapolating the behaviour of the system and to bring a compromise to conflicting objectives, simulation and system analysis are indispensable tools to understand functional mechanism, within the framework of realistic thinking. Further, models involving simulation and system analysis are generally used and in order to keep the economy feasible and rationally acceptable from a holistic viewpoint, the models are suitably operated, repaired, improved and constructed accordingly. So far system scientists have been successful in simulating different crop models for further research and applications as the models are mechanistic, explanatory and process based under genotypic, weather-related, soil and biological constraints.

In order to grasp the performance of total agricultural scenario, agro-technical research must be embedded with socio-economic considerations. To explore the possibilities of appropriate alternatives of farming research in a better manner and to access the technological innovations, transfer of technology, education and research and other extension services, the model at present is still in the infancy stage.

An expert system should have the capability to adequately understand the scepticism regarding transformation of today's bliss of production techniques into tomorrow's curse specially when new technologies are brought to the farmer's field. In the name of improving agricultural productivity excessive use of pesticides and fertilisers lead to pollution in surface

water and groundwater, soil, air and bioconcentration in food chains and humans. Therefore, all the parameters of technology generation, technology adaptation, technology dissemination and utilisation related to research of natural resources, agriculture and forestry have to be critically examined.

The planning agenda of every nation has a multiple set of objectives to be fulfilled for socio-economic welfare. Obviously, these sets of objectives are inextricably influenced by numerous constraints. For this purpose it is possible to translate policy goals into the objective functions and integrate them in the model by adding biotechnical (engineer's) knowledge and agronomist's knowledge together with politician's knowledge. Therefore, Integrated Multiple Goal Programming (IMGP) procedure in conjunction with linear programming models are well exemplified by different authors in the book.

The authors have richly contributed with valuable findings in detail so far as the research with rice crop is concerned. It is a well known fact that concentration of carbon dioxide and other green house gases may modify our present weather conditions in the next few decades. It appears that the plant breeders are engaged in developing new tropical varieties which are less sensitive to temperature. The effect of weather and climate is confounded for giving a clear picture whether the increased response in crop yield is due to the effect of carbon dioxide concentration or due to advances in biotechnology.

The book meets a vital need not only of the farming community but also of all those connected with the working of the agricultural sector and economic development plans. The basic research, applied research, strategic research and adaptive research have to be oriented with systems information technology with the help of international communication data network so that the present gap in database for model building can be removed. Apart from crops and household decision models, socio-economic database and Geographical Information System (GIS) are required to match biological crop requirements to physical land characteristics to attain user specified objectives. Some of the studies in the book appear to be more relevant because models are well equipped with GIS. It is rightly suggested that agricultural zonation should be properly exercised and demarcated for crop research purposes and distributional pattern of crop production should be judged in a given ecosystem with remote sensing. Wide varieties of biotic and abiotic data are required under the premises of information technology. Thus availability of data is a key factor and the constraint of non-availability of data may be further removed by using Minimum Data Sets (MDS), on the one hand and simulation techniques as are effectively used under System Analysis Research Programme (SARP), on the other.

The book is a well timed contribution because it stresses on developing portable, user-friendly, cost-effective and highly productive computer decision support system that guarantees evidences of improvement by innovations to the end beneficiaries whose livelihood and welfare depends on system performance.

The most remarkable contribution of the book is the capability and accessibility of the models to predict and to answer 'what if' questions posed by the farmer before implementing his crop production plan and decisions. Another advantage derived from systems approach is replacement of costly and time consuming experimental trials. A preliminary look at the papers reveals that the facility of Decision Support Systems for Agrotechnology Transfer (DSSAT) under International Benchmark Sites Network for Agrotechnology Transfer (IBSNAT) is confined to Hawaii (USA) only. Provision of such facilities to the farmers

working elsewhere in the world can be possible only when agricultural system scientists and computer professionals work together. Since systems approach requires proper functioning of software, hardware, manware and orgaware at each level united efforts, organised thinking and active participatory role of multidisciplinary professionals who should extend their services without caring for present prestige and scholarly excellence, are quite necessary. Sustainability in agriculture is a common goal of both developed and developing nations, so international co-operation and co-ordination only can transform this challenging task of human endeavour into reality.

*Division of Statistical Economics,  
Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute (ICAR),  
New Delhi-110 012.*

S.S. Kutaula

*India's Eucalyptus Craze - The God That Failed*, N.C. Saxena, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994. Pp. 264. Rs. 275.00.

There is an urgent need to increase food, fuel, fibre and biomass production to feed our increasing population. The Central and State Governments have launched various schemes and programmes over the years to increase the forest cover so as to raise the availability of wood, fodder, fuel and timber. The government-sponsored schemes such as social forestry and farm forestry have made positive impact on the economy though some amount of failure is noted. Besides the government-sponsored schemes meant to increase the forest cover on the common lands, private entrepreneurs like industrial units (especially paper mills) and farmers also raise eucalyptus plantations on private lands.

In India eucalyptus plantation was started on a large scale way back in the seventies; it picked up very fast as this tree thrives in drought conditions and coppice well. However, it had received resistance from many quarters particularly from the environmentalists at a later stage. The main contentions were desertification of top soil, chemical contamination of the fields and spread of root formation. On the other hand, some have argued that eucalyptus grows fast even under drought conditions, cattle do not browse and it fetches more income. All these points have been well documented in the *State of India's Environment* (1985) published by the Centre for Science and Environment. However, many researchers and experts agree that more scientific research under both controlled and uncontrolled situations on eucalyptus is required to arrive at any firm conclusion.

It is in this context that the book under review highlights the practice of eucalyptus cultivation and the problems and prospects associated with it. The author has made an attempt to study the eucalyptus cultivation and rejection (after certain period) among households in different agro-climatic regions of Uttar Pradesh. The main reason for selecting different agro-climatic regions is to know how far the adoption of new farm technology has resulted in the adoption and rejection of eucalyptus in response to different socio-economic environmental conditions. The author analyses the process of diffusion of agricultural technology in Uttar Pradesh and tries to explain the circumstances under which eucalyptus was introduced.

The methodology on the classification of farmers (eucalyptus planters and non-planters) based on the land owning capacity, caste hierarchy and accessibility adopted in the work

under review helps the readers to understand the issues more meaningfully. The field experience gained by the author has helped to incorporate other related issues in dealing with the rejection and acceptance of the eucalyptus plantation in the study area.

The main hypotheses set forth are: resource rich farmers - large landowners, socially dominant like upper caste farmers and absentee landowners (urbanites) - who are having risk bearing capacity mainly prefer to take up labour saving tree cropping; the regions which are having an history of agrarian dynamism adopt eucalyptus faster than the less agriculturally dynamic regions; and the anticipated price was less than the market price which forced the farmers to abandon the eucalyptus plantation. In the analysis part of the book, the author has tested the above hypotheses and found from the field level data that all of them are observed to be true. Based on the regression analysis and field observations, a strong association between the dynamic farming groups like rich farmers, upper castes and urban landowners (absentee landowners) and adoption of large scale eucalyptus planting has been established.

As the eucalyptus plantation requires less labour input, the farmers in the study regions went in for large scale plantation since 1981-82 anticipating more returns from eucalyptus. But after 1986-87 the farmers realised that eucalyptus, especially boundary plantation, caused damage by shade to field crops which often led to lowering of yields of these crops.

As in the case of any other agricultural produce, the rural market system for eucalyptus also is unfavourable. Unorganised rural market, lack of information, middlemen and restrictions on the movement of eucalyptus are found to be responsible for the low price. The author rightly comments that "the government's policies were themselves a source of exploitation" (p. 198). Therefore, in the process the farmers thought that eucalyptus was a high risk crop and price variation was very high; therefore, the farmers' response to raise eucalyptus plantation in Uttar Pradesh seemed to be weak.

Though this study was carried out under different agro-environmental conditions using scientific methodology, the technical aspects were not covered. It is, of course, a difficult task for any researcher to cover all aspects including the technical issues like the water sucking capacity of eucalyptus, nutrient loss in the soil, effect of shade on the field crops and their resultant impact on the yields of field crops. Hence, the author cannot be blamed for not covering all aspects of the problem.

This study, however, provides a comprehensive picture of the process of agricultural diffusion, where the farmers venture into new enterprise, the difficulties faced, and the decision to change - to reject or accept it. As a senior bureaucrat-cum-researcher, the author could have provided some policy measures for eucalyptus marketing. Notwithstanding this limitation, the book is a coherently produced work establishing logical relationships between important variables connected with the cultivation of eucalyptus plantation. In that sense, the book will be useful to all those who are interested in understanding the economics of eucalyptus cultivation.

*User-Friendly Irrigation Designs*, Nirmal Sengupta, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1993. Pp. 147. Rs. 185.00.

When one talks of irrigation in India the attention immediately goes to modern systems of irrigation like canals and tubewells and, to some extent, to tanks in South India. Besides these sources, there are numerous other systems of irrigation which appear relatively insignificant at the country level, but occupy an important place in the regional context. The book under review provides a systematic account of the lesser known traditional irrigation and water harvesting designs in various regions of the country and highlights the importance of these systems in the irrigation sector of the different states. It also throws light on the historical evolution and development of the traditional systems of irrigation in India.

The book is organised in nine chapters and includes a brief historical appendix note on the origin and development of irrigation structures in India. The introduction chapter, using statistical data, demonstrates the importance of traditional systems of irrigation, grouped under the heading tanks, private canals and the other sources in various states, regions and at the national level. At the national level, these sources are reported to provide irrigation to more than 6 million hectares area and their share in net irrigated area under all sources is about 14 per cent. The author maintains that these traditional sources are the only means of irrigation in many districts of the country. The chapter expresses concern at the lack of appreciation and proper identification of these sources, which are essential to frame policy for their development. This chapter also enumerates the weaknesses and limitations of irrigation statistics on the traditional sources.

The author classifies the traditional sources of irrigation in two groups, viz., diversion works and storage works, and the detailed discussion on them follows in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. Diversion works include *kuhls*, *guls*, *kulo*, *bandhara*, *pat*, *payne* and *kalvai*, and storage works include various kinds of tanks, ponds and surface water harvesting techniques known by different names in the various states. The author beautifully narrates the fascinating methods evolved by the users in designing these irrigation structures to suit the terrain, soil characteristics and other agro-climatic factors.

The author is of the view that the official statistics on area under tank irrigation (reported to be 2.806 million hectares) severely under-estimate the irrigation role of tanks and thus he provides the alternative estimates by adding 0.5 million hectares in respect of Bihar State and 0.3 million hectares for area served by submergence tanks (p. 55). Since the author does not make it explicit how these estimates are derived, the figures appear arbitrary. Secondly, probably to show the importance of the tanks, the author asserts that the area under the influence of tanks is given by the sum of the command area, storage area and catchment area. Accordingly, the author computes that corresponding to 3.2 million hectares area under tank irrigation, the total area under the influence of tanks works out to be 25 million hectares (p. 56). It looks strange that the catchment area is included as the area under the influence of tanks. It can have some justification if the catchment area is developed or maintained to support tank irrigation but the author does not give any such rationale behind this estimation.

The author, based on the estimates of some researchers, reports that the ratio of submergence to the command area for the tanks is approximately 1:1.2, implying that one hectare of land gets submerged to provide irrigation to 1.2 hectares area. Therefore,



corresponding to 3.2 million hectares of net area irrigated by storage works, the submerged area works out to be 2.67 million hectares (given by 3.2/1.2), whereas the author calculates this area to be 3.84 million hectares (p. 55). Moreover, the ratio of the submerged area to the command area appears to be incredibly high.

Chapter 4 discusses how the primary irrigation structures are integrated into the complex structures to meet different objectives. The author presents examples from different parts of the country to demonstrate the rich knowledge of the users and the local communities to design, lay-out and integrate irrigation structure to derive maximum benefit from the available water resource. An interesting aspect of the traditional irrigation designs is that they do not suffer from the maladies experienced in modern irrigation system and they are highly cost effective. Therefore, there seems adequate justification in terming the traditional systems as user-friendly.

Chapter 5 discusses the techniques and practices adopted to check the spread and loss of water in the traditional irrigation systems. The author also describes the beneficiary role of traditional irrigation systems in the abatement of floods by impounding some rain water. Chapter 6 explains the difficulties in management of these systems by the state due to their large number and widely scattered distribution. In regard to the management and distribution of benefits, user group management is found to be superior to the rotational delivery method followed in the state-run modern canal system. The author contends that management by local users is very flexible and is based on more or less perfect match between demand and supply of water, whereas, the state-run canal system follows rigid rotation delivery system which often results in mismatch between availability and requirement.

The study expresses concern about the current trend and decay of the traditional systems (Chapter 7). The scope of extension of irrigation and current irrigation development strategy are discussed in Chapter 8. While proposing an appropriate strategy for irrigation development in this chapter, the author seems to become somewhat 'friendly' to modern irrigation facilities, and admits that given the great diversity of India there are some locations favourable for extension of major canals and dams. The last chapter is devoted to a discussion on economic viability of tanks and it also discusses various options and measures to improve the performance of traditional as well as modern irrigation systems. The author favours farmers' involvement at every stage of irrigation development and management in all irrigation systems.

The author has done a painstaking task to collect information about the traditional systems of irrigation from remote parts of the country. This is the first work which has scientifically documented valuable information about the lesser known traditional irrigation systems in all parts of India. The attempt to portray many attractive features of the traditional system of irrigation is very timely as it projects these systems as another alternative for irrigation development in the wake of serious environmental and economic problems confronting the modern irrigation systems in the country. The book provides an interesting reading and would be useful for planning for future development of irrigation in the country.

*Managing Common Pool Resources: Principles and Case Studies*, Katar Singh, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1994. Pp. xx+366. Rs. 425.00.

Productive management of common property resources is being increasingly recognised as a potentially effective strategy for the sustenance of rural economy, especially of the vulnerable sections of the rural poor. This approach to development has often been justified on economic, social and environmental considerations. The concept of common property resources is, however, not lucid. Different definitions have been put forth by researchers as to what constitutes a common property resource. Notwithstanding the definitional quandary and consequently the differences over the exact magnitude of their availability, common property resources nonetheless constitute a very large part of the country's natural resources.

The author of the book under review makes a distinction between Common Property Resource (CPrR) and Common Pool Resource (CPR) principally on the basis of rights of the holder. While in the former case the rights holder have well defined property rights, in the latter case, on the other hand, such rights may or may not exist. In that sense CPrR constitutes a sub-set of CPR. The book deals with the management of larger set of CPRs.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I which contains five chapters deal with the principles of CPR management. Part II describes nine case studies dealing with the management of CPRs such as land, water, forests and fisheries. Part III gives a synthesis of the first two parts and outlines the major factors that should be considered in formulating, implementing and monitoring an effective CPR management policy. The meticulously organised material in the book makes an interesting reading.

The various case studies presented in the book analyse in detail the process of CPR management and evaluate their outcomes and impacts. After going through the various case studies presented in the book, the important questions that arise are: Have such endeavours in CPR management been effective and cost efficient? Is the case for people's participation in management of CPRs being made on social considerations alone? Is it possible to replicate these micro level experiences in other parts of the country?

While evaluating the impact of any development or management activity, the researcher should be cautious in selecting the control conditions in such a way as to make sure that the derived impact can be attributed to that particular activity. In this book, for example, an evaluation of the impact of tank irrigation management is attempted through a comparison of the performance of the farms located in the command area of the tank with that of farms located outside the command area. A comparison of these two situations need not delineate or isolate the impact of management of tanks *per se* but could also capture other differences between the two different situations - where tank irrigation is available and where no tanks are available. Similarly, in the evaluation of Mittermari watershed development project, the increase in crop yields as obtained by a comparison of 'before and after' situations, cannot be attributed solely to the activities carried out under the watershed project but to the combined effect of a host of other factors. This was also confirmed by the responses of the sampled farmers who attributed such increases in crop yields to the adoption of high-yielding varieties, use of more fertilisers, etc., rather than to the soil and water conservation measures like bunding, levelling, etc., carried out under the watershed programme (p. 180).

Similarly, while comparing the benefits and costs of any such activity, one often tends to overlook some of the indirect costs that would have gone into that activity. In the case of watershed development project, for example, apart from the one-time 75 per cent subsidy given to the farmers for the use of modern inputs and purchase of farm equipment, if one were to account for the cost of technical expertise that went into project formulation and making it workable, is the investment in watershed development still cost effective? Is it possible to provide the same amount of technical expertise at all locations if the experiment is to be replicated at a large number of sites all over the country?

Apart from the issue of cost effectiveness, it is well recognised that the success of any venture in managing a CPR depends, to a large extent, on the active participation of users. A successful CPR management strategy perforce requires the mobilisation of spirit of self-help, self-reliance, and local initiative and inculcating in people an ideological commitment towards a co-operative way of life. This naturally requires identification and cultivation of organisers and change agents. How these change agents can be identified and trained? Are the change agents more effective if they come from the same village or from outside? The replication of any successful strategy in CPR management would depend very crucially upon the quality of leadership provided by these change agents. While at the conclusion of almost each case study, the author rightly makes a common observation that no generalisation can be made on the basis of a single case study, it would have been very useful had the author examined the issues relating to effective enlistment of people's participation in management of CPRs. An examination of such factors by the author would have enabled one to draw important lessons for replication of such people's institutions in other parts of the country.

The several case studies of management of CPRs by the author generally describe the experiences of 'successful' ventures. While dissemination of such success stories is important, it would have been appropriate had the author included a few 'failure' or 'not so successful' stories as well and tried to analyse the reasons for their failure and identify what went wrong, where and why?

The above observations however do not undermine the utility of the book which will be well received by all concerned - students, teachers, researchers, policy makers, and practitioners - working to evolve strategies for the sustainable development of CPRs.

*Agricultural Economics Research Centre,  
University of Delhi,  
Delhi-110 007.*

R.P.S. Malik

*Managing Food Processing Industries in India (In-depth Case Studies of Manufacturer Exporters and Analysis)*, U.K. Srivastava and N.T. Patel, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994. Pp. xi+520. Rs. 525.00.

An agro-industry is an enterprise that processes agricultural materials including field and tree crops as well as livestock and fisheries to create edible or usable forms, improve storage and shelf life, create easily transportable forms, enhance nutritive value and extract chemicals for other usable forms. As the products are both edible and non-edible, agro-industries can be classified into agro-food industries and agro-non-food industries. An agro-industry provides the farm-industry linkage which helps accelerate agricultural

development by creating backward linkages (supply of credit, inputs and other production enhancement services) and forward linkages (processing and marketing), adding value to the farmer's produce, generating employment opportunities and increasing the farmer's net income. Agro-industries generate new demand on the farm sector for more and different agricultural outputs which are more suitable for processing. An agro-processing plant can open up new crop and livestock opportunities to the farmers and thus increase income and employment.

The book under review is designed to analyse the problems and constraints of food processing industry at the enterprise level. The bulk of the analysis follows the case approach where selected units are studied in detail with respect to their investments, procurement of raw materials, processing and capacity use, costing, pricing and domestic and international marketing. The case study units have been selected in consultation with Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and the respective commodity associations.

Divided into two parts, Part I of the book which is spread over nine chapters reviews the structure and performance of agro-processing industries in India and examines the export performance of agro-processing industries, illustrates methods for financial and economic analysis, focuses on working capital and raw materials management, deals with specific problems in processing, packaging and capacity utilisation and problems in the marketing of processed food products, followed by management control and information system in agro-food processing units and strategic issues in managing food processing units and policy recommendations.

Part II of the book contains ten case studies with names of the firms disguised for anonymity. These case studies provide useful insights into the financial structure, product range, management pattern, procurement of raw materials, capacity utilisation, pricing, quality control, marketing channels and policies and financial management of the selected firms.

The book also contains vital information on government policies and incentives for exporters. A wealth of statewise information on capital investment, employment, input, value of output and net value added in agro-food and agro-non-food industries is contained in the Annexures. It also contains information on agro-based commoditywise direction of exports.

On the whole, the book provides very useful insights into the structure and functioning of food processing industries in India. It will prove particularly useful to the researchers, planners and entrepreneurs interested in the development and management of these industries for domestic consumption or for exports.

*Department of Economics and Sociology,  
Punjab Agricultural University,  
Ludhiana-141 004.*

A.J. Singh

*Poverty in India, 1970-71 to 1988-89, Suresh D. Tendulkar, K. Sundaram and L.R. Jain,  
ARTEP Working Papers, Asian Regional Team for Employment Promotion (ARTEP),  
International Labour Organisation, New Delhi, December 1993. Pp. xiii+204.*

The book under review seeks to analyse the structure of poverty, its inter-temporal movements, and determinants of poverty. The absolute poverty line as defined by the authors represents minimum necessary privately disposable purchasing power for the satisfaction of those basic needs which are to be satisfied through private provisioning. Based on the

poverty line, they also estimate and analyse four main measures of social deprivation. The analysis makes distinction between rural and urban poverty, and also poverty among social/ethnic groups. The authors find that (a) rural households in the country depending on manual labour are seriously affected by social deprivation; (b) in urban India, self-employed households suffer from higher social deprivation; (c) female-headed households recorded higher level of poverty in India; and (d) in the 1980s both the rural and urban population recorded an improvement in social welfare.

Analysing the public policy shaping the food economy of India, the authors find that till the mid-eighties the aid-financed imports of foodgrains resulted in increased foodgrain availability at relatively affordable price. With the introduction of seed-fertiliser technology domestic procurement based buffer-stocking and public distribution system (PDS) operations helped in improving the availability of foodgrains but at a very high cost of subsidy to the exchequer. Of late, this burden of supporting production and consumption has become unsustainable. Moreover, in this process the subsidies have remained untargeted, and the food economy remained insulated from international competition. Analysing the centrally sponsored target oriented anti-poverty programmes, Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and wage employment creating Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, the authors find that less than half of the poor households are covered under the IRDP with an investment per assisted household much lower than the investment required to lift them above the poverty threshold. They further find that special wage employment programmes can at best provide temporary relief from deprivation, for the flow of labour between pre-committed agricultural operations and casual labour market in the normal years is low.

Decomposing the changes in social deprivation indices between growth effect and distributional effect, the authors find that between 1983 and 1987-88 when rural poverty declined for all the four indices (headcount ratio, poverty gap index, FGT index and Sen index), it was favourable distributional effect which was responsible in containing or reducing the poverty. Such lowering of poverty indicators during an agriculturally bad year (1987-88) has been attributed to improvement in employment opportunities because of massive relief works. The bottom 30 per cent of the population in the process gained access to foodgrains and hence the per capita consumption of this group was higher than the entire population. Using regression analysis, the authors find that the per capita wage income, price of cereals (in rural India) and unemployment (in urban India) explain substantially the inter-state variations in poverty indicators.

Juxtaposing the above findings, the authors conclude that policy measures (a) which can contain growing production subsidies and help in restructuring the PDS, (b) which have capabilities of generating productive wage employment opportunities, and (c) which result in transfer of such technologies in agriculture which are capable of creating employment opportunities as well as keeping foodgrain prices low will help improve economic well-being of the society.

This reviewer does not feel constrained in raising issues which had consistently hounded him while going through this monograph. In doing so, this reviewer has no intentions either to under-value the worth of this monograph or the rigorous conceptualisation undertaken by the authors. Both the issues that are raised here relate to methods in social sciences.

While measuring well-being over time and space, the authors do not give adequate

emphasis to quality of life, peoples' access to services and amenities, the general environment relating to law and order governing their lives, the social interaction between groups and their access to justice, the environment where they live, the air they breathe, the water they drink, and above all the opportunities that this system provides them for achieving what have been denied to them since centuries which are as important as the poverty measures based either on a headcount or social deprivation. In the absence of concerns for the quality of life, the entire analysis resembles a number game. Poverty, we believe, is certainly not a number. Secondly, in the absence of a holistic frame, policy analysis has been dealt with only in a slender manner. But this is not surprising for when researchers do not work with an adequate frame, their policy analysis reflects only the existing measures taken up by the State. In the process, they become an extended arm of the planning institution.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the book is a valuable addition to the literature. The strength of the monograph lies in the authors' ingenuity in weaving expenditure, employment, poverty reduction programmes, drought and agricultural output, and social deprivation together. Moreover, the authors have taken utmost care in drawing *the right* policy inference from their findings. The book will interest social scientists, researchers and policy makers interested in the development process.

*Centre for Social Studies,  
Surat-395 007.*

D.C. Sah

*Land Reforms in India, Volume I: Bihar - Institutional Constraints*, Edited by B.N. Yugandhar and K. Gopal Iyer, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1993. Pp. 362. Rs. 350.00.

The search for causes of backwardness and its solution is a continuing process. Bihar, a state of fertile land and rich in mineral resources, is becoming more and more backward day by day. One of the basic causes is said to be the institutional constraints in agriculture. Land reforms, the constituent of institutional constraint, are considered pivotal not only for agricultural development but also for eradication of poverty, parasitism, exploitation, misery and ubiquitous relationships. The Zamindari system has been abolished but its follow-up reforms have not been implemented. In this context, the present book under review is important.

The volume contains 24 papers grouped under four sections: Perspectives on Land Reforms, Land Ceiling, Tenancy Reforms and Government/Community Land covering problems of Bihar at the micro level, and macro level experiences of some other successful states along with recommendations made at two seminars. The writers come from various fields - administration, political activity, research and so on.

On the issue of perspectives on land reforms, Prasanna K. Choudhary feels the need for fresh appraisal for comprehensive socio-cultural and economic transformation while P.S. Appu has suggested a modest programme for the nineties. Shankar Prasad has discussed the difficulties, weaknesses and loopholes in the land reform legislations and their implementation. The experience of West Bengal in the implementation of land reforms as discussed by Benoy Krishna Chowdhury and that of Punjab on consolidation of land holdings by Brijpal Singh have been analysed so as to derive lessons for Bihar. Citing the example

of West Bengal, C.S. Prasad advocates implementation of land reform measures in Bihar for increasing land revenue which is declining. However, a paper on theoretical and historical perspective, which one expects particularly from K. Gopal Iyer who has no paper under this broad issue, is lacking for deeper understanding of the problem.

More than half of the total number of papers compiled in the volume is on land ceiling, which highlight its importance. It involves all sections of the society: politicians - the legislature, administrators - the executive, court cases - the judiciary, landlords and beneficiaries - the public. In one way or other all are made responsible for non-implementation. The extent of implementation has been analysed by Gopal Iyer and Indu Bharti in terms of differences between potential and actual and between actual and physical possession of surplus land by the beneficiaries. Many amendments have been made in Bihar Ceiling Act, 1961 from time to time, still many cases have been pending in Supreme Court, High Court, in the courts of Collector and Board of Revenue for a long time (Subash Chandra Mishra). The definition of personal cultivation is virtually negation of policy (D. Banerjee). Legal and administrative bottlenecks are there (Vijay K. Gupta). Legal long drawn procedure (Sunil Barthwal), class character of State power-bourgeois landlord and landlord (D.N. Banerjee), tacit understanding between bureaucracy and politicians (Jagdish Prasad), allotment of land by Zamindars to politicians (Mishra) are also some of the points raised for analysing slow/non-implementation of land ceiling at the legislative, executive and judiciary levels. There is no up-to-date records of land rights without which one cannot proceed. Like land rights, irrigation/water rights are also important (Nirmal Sengupta). Self-interest to protect their rights on land prompts landlords/Mahants to evade/circumvent land ceiling laws. There are farzi transfers and transactions (A.K. Singh), mostly in fake names of individuals, idols, religious and charitable institutions (M.P. Pandey). Even beneficiaries are not to be blamed less. They are not organised but their participation is badly needed (Raj Kumar Purbey). People's struggle is also necessary for occupancy right on share-cropped land (Gopal Iyer). However, in spite of emphasising the need for people's struggle/participation, there is no paper on groups like Marxist co-ordination committee (MCC), Marxist Leninist (ML) Indian People's Front (IPF) which are actively organising people for land reforms in various parts of Bihar.

Tenancy, mainly share-cropping, an issue much discussed in Marxian analysis, is wide spread in concealed form (Gopal Iyer). Tom Brass rightly argues that tenancy leads to bondage/unfree labour which is detrimental to development. To become free, labourers emigrate to other states but employers adopt physical, social and financial pressures to prevent this transformation. The problems of concealed tenancy and granting of occupancy right have been solved in West Bengal under Operation Barga by recording of share-croppers in record of rights and providing them non-land inputs from non-traditional sources (N.K. Raghupathy). However, in view of the importance of the issue, there is not much discussion either at empirical or at theoretical levels. It has got step-motherly treatment.

There is government/community land encroached upon mainly by upper caste landlords. However, it is too scarce to solve the problem of landlessness. The release of land from illegal possession may solve the homestead problem of the landless labourers to some extent (Gopal Iyer). It may also be utilised to collect and preserve water, planting of saplings carried out by a committee of Harijans (Priyadarshi translated by Iqbal Ahmad). There is no better use of such land in a situation of aggravating environmental problems.

On the basis of experiences of land reforms in West Bengal and Punjab, the recommendations and suggestions made in various papers and in the two seminars held at A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies, Patna, we come to the conclusion that for successful implementation of land reforms broad-based interest and involvement of the people, vision and confidence of administrators and commitment of political leaders are required. The solution of other problems, loopholes and weaknesses inherent will follow.

Thus one gathers an impression that land reforms are intended mainly to make agrarian life free from exploitation and social injustice. Development will follow automatically. The difficulty is that every one tries to extract as much surplus as he can from the system. In such a struggle the strong gets the lion's whole share. The privileged resist the change. Secondly, man by nature accept change and that too hesitantly, only when he is convinced that the change is in his interest. In this background we find that there is no conclusive evidence that the future land relations will be development oriented in the interest of all. We all agree that the feudal mode of production is to be broken. But what is in its place - petty mode of production, capitalist mode of production or socialist mode of production. Recommendations, suggestions and discussions are sometimes contradictory. Capitalist development is thwarted by lowering and implementing ceiling and allotting land to the landless. Small holding/petty mode of production hinders capitalist development. However, it does not mean that land reforms are not in the right direction. But studies only of a few districts do not give the whole picture of Bihar and only such institutional constraints may not be made responsible for its backwardness. Besides, no paper deals with institutional constraints and development to justify fully the title of the book. However, the volume consolidates the various problems, loopholes, weaknesses and suggestions facing land reforms in Bihar. It is a valuable addition to the subject.

*Department of Economics,  
Jai Prakash University,  
Rajendra College Campus,  
Chapra-841 301 (Bihar).*

Harihar Bhakta