

Book Review

Regional Planning and Development : Concepts, Theories and Approaches. H. S. Gupta, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi 2017

Regional Planning, in true sense, is an interdisciplinary subject. As such, it requires an author to have fairly good understanding of fundamentals of allied disciplines like economics and sociology in addition to geography. Prof. H. S. Gupta has definitely made appreciable effort in this direction by way of consulting a large number of wide range of books and journals as listed at the end of the text.

The book under review consists of 11 chapters, each comprising sub- topics of related theme. Starting with an introduction to Planning (chapter-1), it elaborates the concept of region in general and planning region in particular along with techniques of regionalization (chapter-2) prior to explanation of origin, definition and scope of the discipline supplemented with types and sub-types of planning (chapter-3). Evolution, functions and objectives form the content of chapter-4, while approaches to regional planning - both general(procedural models and theories) and region-based are discussed in chapter-5.

Acquainting readers with the basic theories and models of spatial organization has been deemed to be a prerequisite to understanding of the concept of development and regional development theories. So chapter-6 is devoted to analysis of various location and central place theories of Von

Thunen, Weber, Christaller, Losch, Taaffe etc. which aim at optimising the spatial pattern of human activities. In chapter-7, the concept of development and sustainable development, its indices, goals, etc are precisely explained. The subsequent three chapters provide a bit detailed account of ten basic theories sub grouped in three chapters: chapter-8 (export-base theory, neoclassical exogenous growth theory, cumulative causation theory of Myrdal and regional development theory of Hirshman) ,chapter-9 (dependency theory, world system theory, Marxist's perspective on regional growth and decline, core-periphery theory of Friedman, Rostove's stage theory ,growth pole theory, modified growth pole hypotheses etc.) and chapter-10 (endogenous growth theory, new economic geography, Krugman's core- periphery model, urban system model, industrial concentration and trade etc.). The last chapter-11 provides an explanatory account of three popularly used analysis techniques-gravity model, shift share analysis and input output analysis.

Prof. H.S.Gupta's quite long experience of teaching regional planning course did help him in identifying the gaps in the literature available in the form of text books. As the sub- title of the book suggests, the focus is on the concept, theories and techniques - the aspects either bypassed or

given casual treatments in most of the Indian text books on regional planning..It thus fills a kind of void. It encompasses practically all concepts and theories related to regional development and planning. The beauty of the text lies in its being precise, well-knit coherent presentation whereas many of other text books appear to be an amalgam of facts gathered from here and there. True, it reflects: Brevity is soul of wit.

The author has indicated at the outset that the book is designed to cater primarily to the needs of PG students and teachers. So it has advanced with presumption that very elementary facts are known to the readers and need not be incorporated in the text. Also, he seems to have all along been conscious of omitting what is often inducted as extra irrelevant material in other text books .This may have led to, at places, extra precision. Here it may be suggested that on the pattern of agro-politan approach of Friedman and Douglass, discussed in chapter 5, some topics like regional planning through Five Year Plans, regional

development disparity, problem areas, etc. may be given a bit more detailed treatment. Diagrams (figures) though few are very useful. Better, these are enlisted along with the contents for convenience of readers. The book looks rather slim. In a demi size with slightly better getup, it would have become more attractive.

Precisely, the book is a kind of necessity for all those interested in serious study of regional planning concepts and theories. It will, in general, be a very useful addition to institutional libraries apart from being a good source of knowledge and understanding for intellectuals as well as policy makers in the field of regional development and planning.

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