

rural settlements, viz. the processes of settling, pattern of folk-houses and farmsteads, and the field types. The major focus of the book is aimed at providing a holistic view of the forces which operate in the transformation of the natural landscape into a cultural one, in the context of simpler agrarian societies. The underlying assumption being that in different ecologies, different cultures set into motion diverse culture-ecological processes, to create a corresponding wide spectrum of cultural landscapes, which would find expression in the rural (settlement) landscape patterns.

In the introduction, the author briefly summarises the personality of the study area and the methodology adopted, while spelling out the hypotheses which require validation, Ms. Sharma chooses a single district-Solan-in the lesser Himalaya to verify the various assumptions made and questions raised. Her main argument in defending her choice of area is that though compact, the region possesses remarkable physical and cultural diversity, by virtue of its location at the tri-junction of three states — Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

The ten chapters which make the book have been arranged in two separate sections. Chapters one to six, in section

A, deal with generalisations and prepare the necessary background, while impressing upon the reader, the importance of the different elements of rural settlements. In section B, with the help of detailed and empirical surveys, conducted for five uni-clan settlements, belonging to Brahmins, Gujar and Kanetes, the three major culture/caste groups in the area, Ms Sharma examines the validity of the various assumptions made earlier. Paying attention to the minutest detail, Ms. Sharma painstakingly and with remarkable skill unravels the evolutionary processes operating in the formation of the culture-landscape. The author is alive to the processes of cultural landscape, — and that is her forte — as is clear from her sensitive portrayal of the inter play of culture and ecology in shaping the unique features of rural settlements observed in the area.

In the overall analysis the book is bound to attract the attention of both, the serious student, as well as the casual reader, who is looking for a well conceived, documented and penetrating survey of rural settlements, in the lesser Himalayan realm. written in a cogent and racy style. The extensive bibliography cited in the text should be valuable to those whose interest lies in cultural geography, though the maps unfortunately have lost clarity in reduction.

Jaymala Didee

Disha Guides : MADRAS

Orient Longman, VIII + 166 pp. (includes maps and gazetteer), Price Rs. 15.-

This is perhaps the first of the series of the 'Disha Guides' planned by Orient Longman, as it is clear from the absence of any mention of any other 'guide' any where in the book. This little booklet though intended for a tourist is a mine of information. Elegantly brought out, it gives a brief history of the city growth in the introduction and includes informa-

tion on a variety of themes like transport, conducted tours, museums and library, art sports, shopping, restaurants, accommodation, annual events and travel. The booklet does not confine itself to Madras city, but talks equally of the places of interest, towns and monuments on different routes followed in a tour of Tamilnadu. Thus there is a description

of Mamallapuram and Kanchipuram, Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Anaimalai Wildlife Sanctuary, and Nagercoil, and many places far remote from Madras. A welcome addition is a set of five itinerary planned for a tourist, which includes i) Tamilnadu temple tour, ii) Coromandel coastal tour, iii) hill stations and health spas, iv) Tamilnadu and Karnataka and v) Tamilnadu and Kerala. The book ends with a directory of services and hotels, banks, hospitals, cinemas, restaurants etc. . . A special feature is the sketches of places, monuments and other unique features of the city, beautifully drawn and well reproduced. The artist and the printer, both deserve compliments.

The most appealing part is a set of twenty maps, well adjusted to the size of the booklet, on a relatively large scale 1:22,000 (1 cm = 220 m), with a grid reference in the beginning. The maps are clear, well arranged, no folding and twisting involved, and carry enough details. A linear scale on every map (as on the key to maps) could be useful to a layman. Binding could be better.

The book closes with an index to facilitate quick reference.

This is a good guide book and Orient Longman have done a splendid job. They could follow it by publishing guides for other important cities as well.

Jutta Dikshit

Climatology

By D. S. LAL

Chaitanya Publishing House, Allahabad, 1986, 376 p. incl. 63 p. of maps and diagrams, price Rs. 50,-

The book addresses itself to a larger readership of geography students and students of related disciplines. Hence the language is kept simple and mathematical expressions are avoided. The different topics of climatology are logically arranged in twenty chapters starting with introductory definitions, followed by the treatment of fundamental elements of meteorology and climate. The later chapters focuss on more complex elements of climate, climatic classifications and the very actual topic of climatic changes. The chapters on monsoon and tropical disturbances are of special relevance to Indian students. Each chapter begins with a concise introduction and is then subdivided into suitably titled sub-chapters and paragraphs thus being both, comprehensive and clear. This will enable the students to use the book both as a textbook and as ready reference.

inclusion of the illustrations at the appropriate places in the text would have enhanced the didactic structure of the book. Also the printing quality of the figures could have been better. Certain diagrams could appear clearer without the unnecessary grey background. The absence of an index is partly, though not wholly, compensated by the very detailed list of contents.

This book of nearly four hundred pages, priced at Rs. 50/- only, is cheaper than most school and university textbooks. This remarkably low priced edition satisfies the long felt need of an affordable, good university textbook in climatology, and the author deserves to be congratulated for this exhaustively written book on climatology, a field relatively neglected by Indian geographers.

The text of the book is followed by a large section of maps and diagrams. The

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