

been adopted. Strangely, after expressing such serious apprehensions about the authenticity of census data, Sinha still uses this stereotyped information of doubtful validity, instead of opting for the functional data he has so painstakingly collected from field work, to arrive at the functional classification.

In the final chapter, while making a case for developing urban function to initiate rural development, Sinha could have probed a little beyond providing a suitable inventory of functions which he suggests ought to be located at the three

hierarchical levels; development centres, development nodes and development points. Here, one looks for some insight into the different kinds of constraints (institutional, economic, physical or otherwise) which operate as stumbling blocks in the development of these urban functions in the area.

Finally, though Sinha veers little from tradition, his contribution should prove a valuable starting point for those embarking on research on central places.

— Jaymala Diddee

Nature and Structure of Rural Habitations

BY S. K. CHANDHOKE

Concept Publishing Co. New Delhi,, 1990, pp XXXIV + 352 index, price Rs. 300/-

The book is a case study of the village Chhatera, a village 40 km north of Delhi, in Sonapat district, wrapped under a title which clearly suggests a theoretical text. Mark the word 'habitations'. A subtitle would have proved more illuminating.

Divided into 4 parts and 12 chapters, with a forward by Professor Rappoport, an introduction by Prof. Roy Burman, a note of presentation by Prof. Dias Souza and finally a preface by Chandhoke himself, the book carries more padding than pith. The first chapter acquaints the reader with the work on habitations done by architects, sociologists and other social scientists, perhaps to provide a theoretical background to his village case study that follows. It is a jumble of quotes from all possible sources. An account, often a mere mention, of human habitations in Sanskrit literature appears to this reviewer neither contextually relevant nor informative. The reader has to contend with quotations ranging from

Acharya, Vedas, Buddhist literature, Puranas, and what have you, a profusion without much significance.

The subsequent eight chapters discuss at length the origin, structure, social space and organization, followed by an elaboration of the patterns of inhabitations at the macro and micro level. The locational history of the village, its social structure, castes and their groups down to the level of **Kunba** give an idea of the village social organization and changes over the decades. The physical aspects of the extent determined by social groups and hierarchy and emerging into what are locally known as **Khap**, **Bakhal** and **Bagors** present a refreshing relief from the disjointed and bumpy blocks of quotations, though as one leafs through the pages, one soon realizes that Chandhoke's excessive fondness for quotations never leaves him. Economic aspects of the village are briefly described. The 'ghar', particularly 'Chaukband ghar' a type-house of a well-to-do Jat family

in Chhatera is discussed in detail with an outline plan. This is, by far, the most important chapter and can be considered as the main contribution of the author. The elements and patterns of habitation at the macro and micro level, forming the subject matter of two chapters, are a continuation of the earlier discussion on Ghar, and take in their fold the functional usage and cultural features of common interest in the village, like a well, a grazing ground, a pond, a Dharmashala or a manure-pit. A reconstruct of different counterposing relations like centre-periphery, inner-outer, north-south, closed-enclosed, but with an accent on centre periphery duality, is illustrated with the locational behaviour of caste Hindus and **Harijans**, land holders and landless, and levels of proximity with the permissible residential space in the 'ghar' in terms of sanctity and security in the house itself. How these centre-periphery relations operate is a mute point, yet a recognition of a multipolar or multilevel organization suggests a hierarchy in locational preference, based on social hierarchy. This aspect is well brought out. A very striking feature of the text, the profusion of vernacular words, besides those that have attained the status of

technical terms, is perhaps borne out of a conviction that the words, like **Bhagwan** for God, **Prem** for affection, **Bhit** for wall, **Beah** for marriage, or **Beti** for daughter, and **Bhojan** for meals, have no exact equivalents in English. There is no merit or even aptness in using the word **Aag** for fire in a text written in English. The saturation of the book with vernacular words neither improves the quality of the book nor does it make it more meaningful and readable.

One may round up by saying that the large bulk of the book is unwarranted. The entire text could have been more lucidly presented in half the number of pages without sacrificing the quality of the book. The author leans heavily on quotations as if he is not convinced of his own observations and perceptions, and does not live up to the credentials he has garnered in the preliminary pages. The book is neither an evidence of the author's scholarship nor of his craft of book writing.

The book gives an idea of how a Jat village in Haryana is socially organized and how it functions in space.

K. R. Dikshit