

Forest and Tribal Life

by ROHIT SHUKLA, AMBUBHAI T. DESAI, A. B. VORA, R. B. LAL and K. M. KULKARNI

Concept publishing Co. New Delhi, 1990, pp. 141, price Rs.125/-

This is a research monograph, based on a pilot study of the socio-economic traits of the tribals which sustain the eco-system, by an interdisciplinary group with members drawn from Sociology, geography, anthropology and botany. The study is still at a very exploratory stage. It focusses attention on the tools and traditions of the tribals particularly the Garasia Rajputs and Bhil Garasias with their 24 clans

on the basis of the four sample villages studied in detail. The book has a reasonably good account of the tribal society, but does not quite succeed in clearly demonstrating its relationship with the environment, both traditional and the contemporary. Yet, it is a good introduction to the relationships of the Garasias with their environment.

K.R.Dikshit

Waters of Hope : Himalaya-Ganga Development and Cooperation for a Billion People

by B. GEORGE VERGHESE

Oxford and IBH Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1990 Price Rs. 295/-

Politics today is not confined to only the socio-economic issues of a country. Issues related to the environment have recently come to the attention of political leaders even in the poorer countries of the Third World. This has been in response to the demands of ordinary people for greater responsibility regarding environmental affairs. The late Prime Minister of India, Mrs Indira Gandhi said 'Poverty is the greatest polluter'; a stark truth now supported by many environmentalists. The writer of the book under review pays tribute to the same view with his firm belief that poverty is the 'greatest engine of ecological flight'.

The author B. G. Verghese was educated at Delhi and Cambridge universities; originally began his career as a journalist but is now actively engaged in research with the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi. He is also associated with several grassroot level movements on environmental issues. The essence of Verghese's book is mutual cooperation and

complementarity among the five poor countries of South Asia in their search for economic development and environmental improvement. This, according to him, is possible through a unification and joint use of the Himalayan rivers : Ganga-Brahmaputra-Barak -Meghna systems. These rivers carry waters of hope. There is an unusually futuristic outlook running through the book; a rare and grand burst of imagination.

The book is quite large; sixteen pages of preface and 446 pages of matter of which the main text covers 402 pages. The rest contains a 21 page reference and a 23 page index. In addition, there is a very informative section on the names of rivers crossing international boundaries. For example, most of us know that the Brahmaputra is known as Dihang (or Siang) in Arunachal, and as Tsangpo (or Yalu Tsangpo) near its source, but that the part of Kosi Tibet is called Arun or for that matter Tamur in Nepal is information indeed. Other