

area specific situations. In fact, several authors have already cautioned against the indiscriminate use of ideas from the demographic transition model, without a proper understanding of the situational context. The varying experience of different types of countries has further demonstrated the limitations of cultural transferability of the model.

The other demographic attributes, viz., population composition, literacy and urbanisation have been analysed in the next three chapters. In all cases, the world trends have been presented alongside a thorough description of the Indian Context. The Chapter on population and resources is a welcome addi-

tion, as it serves to focus attention on the deteriorating population resource situation, in the face of mounting population pressure. A regeneralisation scheme of population resource regimes following Ackerman is presented here.

In the overall analysis, going over Chandna's book leaves one more than satisfied. It fulfils the Indian student's requirement for a compact low priced reader, replete with examples and illustrations from India and other developing countries. Its simple and concise style makes it easily comprehensible and highly readable to a wide cross section of readers. It is highly recommended to those whose interest lies in population studies.

Population Growth, Environment and Development : Issues, Impacts and Responses

Edited by K. N. SINGH AND D. N. SINGH

Published by Environment and Development Study Circle, BHU 1991. pp. 375, Price Rs. 350/-.

The collection of papers edited by K. N. Singh and D. N. Singh is the outcome of two seminars : one national and the other international, held at the Department of Geography, Banaras Hindu University, in the summer of 1988 and 1989, respectively. The sweep of the papers cover a wide spectrum of issues related to population growth, environment and development.

Examining the contents of the volume in some detail, the twenty-odd papers have been arranged in four sections, each devoted to specific issues of rapid population growth in developing countries.

Section I, the prologue, introduces the reader to the various dimensions and significance of problems related to unabated and rapid

population growth, its many ramifications and the repercussions for developing countries. The first paper in this section by Dinanath Singh is in the nature of a review of the various views on the subject in which the basic issues as well as certain paradoxical situations in the context of rapid population growth have been outlined. Here, Singh makes a strong plea for adopting a multi-dimensional approach, arguing that 'population variables are not only complex, but their interrelatedness require an inter-disciplinary perspective for a better understanding of the growth processes to emerge. Ambika Singh in the following paper, quoting extensively from the flood of alarmist literature, believes that modern technology has a great role to play in meeting the challenges posed by rapid population growth.

Section II with six papers, further elaborates on, and discusses at length, the various aspects of the focal theme. Nearly all the authors time and again, reiterate the need for adopting a more comprehensive approach for a better appreciation of the population question. Kayastha in the first paper voices concern for environmental protection by highlighting the population-environmental-development crisis, which according to his perception manifests itself more on account of lack of wisdom in managing development and not only due to pressure of population on resources and the ecosystem. Dominic on the other hand, stresses on the need to improve the performance of the family planning program to control fertility, the chief culprit in rapid population growth. Raghubanshi and Singh in their paper, demonstrate how explosive population growth can lead to anthropogenic climate change, with far reaching consequences. Ramchandran's paper in this section is largely a perspective on the demographic and socio-economic implications of population growth for India as it enters the 21st century. Thapa and Weber, citing the specific case of the hilly areas of Nepal, identify the causes and consequences of environmental deterioration. Continuing in the same vein, Sattar looks at the problems facing Bangladesh due to unprecedented population growth.

In section III, the majority of the papers highlight the role of fertility, the most critical issue of Indian demography and its impact on rapidly growing populations. In addition, population projections, processes and their population characteristics have also been discussed here. Premi in his paper in this section, reviews four different population projections for India : United Nations, World Bank, Indian Statistical Institute (B. S. Guha-Roy) and those of the Registrar General of India to make an assessment of the future course of

fertility and mortality trends, which in the long run would affect growth rates. Chandna in his essay, further extends the critical role of fertility in the Indian demographic context, commenting on the spatial disparities in fertility rates which characterise the different states. Continuing the same debate further, Pathak and Murthy, analyse fertility changes in selected south-east Asian countries. An appraisal of the age-sex structure of the Indian population by Tara Devi Singh, is yet another contribution to the broader area of fertility. B. K. Roy in his paper examines the concept of demographic state, a concept similar to the demographic transition, and tries to show how this is related to the demographic balance between vital rates and the general demographic state of the population. In the last paper in this section, Kanungo examines the problem of ageing in the context of the Indian population and its impact on the age-structure, which in turn affects the growth rate.

Section IV includes eight papers dealing with the responses of technology to rapid population growth on the one hand and the different strategies and possible solutions to set right the deteriorating ecological balance on the other. Two very thought-provoking papers in this section by Karan Singh and Kashinath Singh, rather vividly portray a very realistic picture of the catch 22 situations, between rapid population growth and development. Singh, looking at the population problem through a wide-angle lens, unfolds the nitty gritty of rapid population growth, points out that it is the widely varying perceptions of the problem of population growth that elicit the different kinds of responses which one comes across among different groups on population classes. Karan Singh in his brief and pithy paper very aptly titled "Population, the forgotten factor" very succinctly brings out the Indian government's stance on the whole issue of population control and planning pol-

icy which, due to vested interests of political groups has been relegated to the background and that too at a time when rapid population growth is the single-most important problem facing the country and which has consistently nullified the benefits of growth in the Indian economy from filtering down to the vast sections.

The book contains some excellent papers by acknowledged experts in their respective fields which makes it a useful source reference to

those looking for a more holistic picture of the problems emanating from rapid population growth and its wider implications for developed countries.

At Rs. 350/- the book is somewhat overpriced and one would expect a better quality publication - atleast a more attractive get-up : which reminds one of the old adage : judge not the book by its cover because delving deeper can be quite a rewarding experience as this reviewer has found out.

Urbanisation : Trends, Perspectives and Challenges

Edited by JAYMALA DIDDEE AND VIMLA RANGASWAMY

Published by Institute of Indian Geographers, Distributors Rawat Publications, 1993. pp. 238,
Price Rs. 300/-

Reviewers generally find it difficult to review edited volumes which include a large number of papers on disparate themes. Happily, this first number in the thematic series of the Institute of Indian Geographers (IIG) does not pose this problem. The editors have done well in arranging the contributions in four sections, each devoted to a particular dimension of urbanisation.

Section I deals with the urbanisation scenario in the Third World. Section II focuses on the Indian urban context; section III is devoted to some vital dimensions of Indian urbanisation; and section IV draws attention to the urbanisation experience of some selected countries outside the Third World.

Urbanisation studies in social science research have by now reached a point of maturity. Beginning with urban historians significant contributions have also been made by demog-

raphers and urban sociologists. The geographers' foray into this domain is also quite significant which is clearly reflected in the research trends in population and urban geography. The initiative taken by the IIG in bringing out the present volume also bears a testimony to not only the importance of urbanisation as a theme of inquiry but also the focussed attention it has received from Indian as well as foreign scholars. While the editors have carefully arranged the articles on the basis of overriding perspectives into sections, this is not indicated in the contents. Also (because of the anxiety of the editors to bring out the volume as per schedule !) there is error in page numbers indicated against each article.

Considering the tremendous labour which must have gone into the writing of individual papers contributed to this volume, it may be useful to examine the contents in more detail. Shrestha