

BOOK REVIEWS

Research Methods and Techniques in Geography : Dr Har Prasad; Rawat Publications, Jaipur and New Delhi; 1991; Diagrams, maps, tables; pp. 241; Rs. 250/-.

The purpose of this short review is to bring to the notice of our younger geographers a very useful publication that would promote their interest in research and enhance their competence in handling research themes. Dr Har Prasad of D.B.S. College, Dehra Dun, is a physicist turned geographer, and as such he elegantly brings in the disciplines of both the sciences in this presentation. The first three chapters : Nature and Status of Geography, Changing Paradigms in Geography, and Philosophy and Theory of Geography, provide a good background for understanding the place of research in Geographical Science. The next chapter 'Nature and Trends in Geographical Research' is a useful survey of the shifts in research interest from time to time. The next five chapters : 'Nature and Base of Research', 'Research Design', 'Field Techniques' and 'Data Collection', 'Processing and Analysis of Data', and 'Preparation of Research Report', form the core of the monograph : the

reader will find hints at every stage : Identification of the problem, preparing bibliography, hypothesis formation, secondary and primary data collection; role of questionnaire and sampling; quantitative techniques and most important of all : how to prepare a research report and present it to an audience, and how to make it suitable for publication. The last chapter : 'Research in Geography' in India is a very interesting analysis of some research themes which the author evaluates on a quantitative scale and provides comparisons between these which are good and others that are not up to that level. This is painstakingly and objectively done. The three appendices, glossary and bibliography add to the value of the book. Every department of geography in universities and post-graduate colleges ought to have a copy, and the earnest researcher will find it a useful investment.

C. D. Deshpande

Once upon a far hillside : Brenda Kidman, Century Publishing,
London; 1985, pp. 215, 10.95.

Though published in 1985, this study of a Konkan village still savours the life and times of an Indian village. The author has a distinguished association with BBC Woman's Hour, and chanced to visit Borlai Pachatan on

the Konkan coast, not far away from Bombay. She did so via an Indian family settled in London and its associates in South Africa; a young Muslim girl marries an elderly Indian and migrates with him to this ancestral village.

Though she avidly wishes to return to South Africa, events prevent her from doing so, and she ripens into old age, after begetting her children; her grand children too peg her down; all through the decades of poverty and squalor. She fights adversity with determination, is helped by her relations and neighbours. There is amity between Muslims and Hindus; and neighbourly help in times of difficulty. Epidemics visit the village; local medicine and talismen fortify the sufferers. The village life is fast changing; from the British rule to Independence, with woes of Partition thrown in. There are noble souls working as village doctors; traditional landlords—Brahmins—take a lead in the village uplift. But the growing metropolis of Bombay has a sweeping influence; there is migration to Bombay. The old lady continues

to live undauntedly and refuses to go back to South Africa where her earning sons are beckoning her : “Much better I stay here on the ground where Allah has put me”.

Brenda Kidman visited the villages and lived among its people. The narrative is laced with interludes of the political changes that are taking place in India. The village survives. The chief merit of this book is it breathes life and environment. This, in the reviewer's opinion, is real human geography; an animated picture of man-environment relationship. Geographers will find much that is useful to make Indian Settlement Geography meaningful and useful for planning and uplift of Village India.

C. D. Deshpande

Physical Geography : Savindra Singh; Prayag Pustak Bhavan, Allahabad, 1993,

pp. 547, Price Rs. 140/-.

This book is a significant addition to the books on Physical Geography. Although there are many books dealing with this branch of Geography, more often they are beyond the reach of a common student as they are heavily priced. This book by Dr Savindra Singh is the most comprehensive, and illustrative book and every student of Geography can easily purchase it. Moreover, it contains numerous examples from our own country, gives references to places, a geography student can visit and study the landscape. There is no doubt that it will be equally useful to the students appearing at different competitive examinations.

The subject matter is presented under major themes, such as lithosphere (Geomorphology). Hydrosphere (Oceanosphere) and Atmosphere (Climatology). The chapters under each theme are, however, not conventional.

The discussion of Lithosphere begins with a chapter on ‘Origin of Earth’ followed by ‘The Age of the Earth’. Both these chapters deserve special mention, as the author has tried to cover every single aspect of the theme.

Theories regarding the origin of solar system are discussed very well. The geological clock and the geological time scale is a welcome trend in a book on Physical Geography. One must also appreciate the masterly treatment of theory of isostasy and the concept of cycle of erosion.

The section on oceanography (Hydrosphere) deals with properties of ocean water like temperature, salinity besides oceanic deposits. The chapter on coral reefs and atolls considers almost every aspect of this unique formation.

‘The mechanism of solar radiation’ is also