

Book Review - 2

Glimpses of Kerala through Maps

Srikumar Chattopadhyay and S. Suresh Kumar

Centre for Earth Science Studies, Thiruvananthapuram; 2013

Srikumar Chattopadhyay and S. Suresh Kumar, *Glimpses of Kerala through Maps*, Centre for Earth Science Studies, Thiruvananthapuram; 2013, with 32 maps and explanatory notes, pp. 93 price- not stated

Nearly 30 years after the Centre of Earth Science Studies (CESS) in Thiruvananthapuram brought out the *Resource Atlas of Kerala* (scale 1:1,000,000), the Centre has published a new atlas- *Glimpses of Kerala through Maps*. The atlas contains two sections, the first consisting of 32 colour plates and the second the explanatory notes, including 21 tables and the references. All the colour plates use the same base map (scale 1:2,270,000) with district outlines. This facilitates a quick comparison of the contents of different maps. Fifteen of the 32 maps are multi-thematic. Though a few maps like the administrative divisions, the drainage, soil or rainfall maps, are based on the *Resource Atlas of Kerala*, they are fully updated and revised. Some of the maps carry the imprint of individual scientists like the Geology map (K. Soman), and the map of Planation Surfaces and of Landscape Ecological Zones (S. Chattopadhyay). Most of the maps, however, have been the outcome of team effort and based on the results of different research projects of the Centre.

The explanatory notes for each map are short, to the point, and offer occasional background information. Tables form an important part of the explanatory notes. Some plates, i. e. Landscape Ecological Zones would be less meaningful without the detailed table. About one third of the plates relate to what the authors call Biophysical Set-up with two plates referring to biosphere and ecological zonation, and the remaining seven depict the physical features of Kerala. The plate 'Decrease in Annual Rainfall', is based on the comparison of rainfall, during the two periods of forty years each, from 1901-1940 to 1941-1980. Transport and Population form a small part of the atlas with only five plates. The map "Spatial trend of internal migration in Kerala" skilfully represents a problem specific to Kerala. The eight tables that follow present the agricultural landscape of the State, including the "Size of operational landholding in the State". The change in the total cropped area, the decline in the area under paddy, the spatial variation in the area under coconut and the expansion of rubber plantation are well brought out. The last nine maps refer to social infrastructure and levels of deprivation and development using different parameters. This could form the a priori base for, development planning.

The colour scheme is slightly on the bright side, some following harmonious gradations of greens, blues or red, some more multi coloured. One important aspect of the maps is that they are not overloaded with information and together with the explanatory notes, provide a good overview of different facets of the geography and economy of Kerala.

The atlas would be decidedly useful to planners, teachers and students as well as those interested in the physical and socio-economic landscape of Kerala.

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