

Book Review

Fertility Policies of Asian Countries, edited by K. Mahadevan, Sage Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1989, pp. 320, Rs 225.

This is the first ever edited and published volume in India providing an exhaustive account of the evolution of fertility policies, strategies and programmes to monitor population growth in the Asian region. There are 12 essays in the book written by different authors. While the first chapter presents a multi-dimensional approach to population control policies together with an overview of the various facets of fertility policies—both pro- and anti-natalists, there are eleven chapters focussing on the case studies of the fertility policies in eleven different countries which the editor treats as representative of the Asian Region.

The editor himself is, however, conscious of the limitations of the volume as it does not include discussions on the fertility policies of some major countries of the region, namely, Indonesia, Nepal and South Korea. On the other hand, countries of Australia, Kuwait and Iran do not seem to be good fit in the compendium of giant anti-natalist countries of China, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Australia is certainly an outlier. Not that the editor is unmindful of these anomalies, the volume is aimed at a broad readership.

The authors of each chapter have notably emphasised on the need for more specific policies relating to (a) child survival, (b) eligible couples and the status of women, (c) security and benefits for the elderly, (d) promotion of suitable and effective strategies and adoption of the modern management techniques for successful implementation of the family planning programmes. Most of the twelve essays are quite informative and lucidly written. Chapters one and two are quite masterly written. Overall, this volume presents a comprehensive and careful account of the fertility policies currently adopted and implemented in the Asian region.

This is indeed a laudable effort to assemble a body of knowledge in understanding the evolution and implementation of the population control policies in the developing countries in general. The book is a useful and interesting addition to the books on population dynamics and population policies. As such, it will be of an immense help to the scholars in population science, policy makers and planners. Cost of the book is, however, excessively high.

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