

Book Reviews

Bhaskar D. Misra, *An Introduction to the Study of Population : South Asian*. Publishers Private Ltd., New Delhi. 1981, pp. ix + 360, Price Rs. 19.75.

WITH the increasing importance given to the teaching of Demography at the Universities, the need for appropriate text books which could meet the specific syllabi requirements began to be keenly felt. Often Demography is offered in Indian Universities as an optional subsidiary or as part of a course in Economics or Sociology, packing into a single paper or two, both the substantive and technical aspects of the subject. Prof. Misra's book could meet these needs.

The book is addressed to the Indian students and the author has taken pains to present the demographic situation of India against its social context, but he has not totally neglected other situations. Of particular interest are the chapters on socio-cultural aspects of population growth in India and Population policy in India. In a rather extensive chapter Prof. Misra has brought in caste, religion, marriage, family and even the poverty syndrome to explain the trends of population growth in India. Though the author has succeeded in depicting the inter-relatedness, he has, with too much details, hasty inferences, repetitions and at times with a few contradictions, made the subject matter confusing. Similarly, the chapter on Population policy in India gives a good coverage of the historical developments, presents different aspects of policy implementation and projects some of the problems of family planning programmes. But the chapter is too long and is structured in such a way that the teacher may not find it easy to formulate questions that he should pose to the student. These chapters could have been condensed to bring the subject matter into better focus. These comments, however, do not belittle the value of these chapters to a person looking for a comprehensive summary of the Indian demographic situations against their socio-cultural background.

The author has tried to cover most of the basics of Demography in 11 chapters. But a break up shows that four chapters mainly deal with population

growth, two chapters on policy, four chapters on measurement and one on estimation and projection. The chapters on measurement have presented the standard measures and these have been exemplified with numerical examples, which will greatly facilitate a student who is not strong in Mathematics to understand the use of rates. The sections on fertility measures derived from census data, measurement of urbanisation and population projection are particularly good. In choosing his examples, Prof. Misra has taken care to cover demographic examples of other societies as well. The reason for including a separate chapter on mathematical models, however, is not clear. For, this chapter has discussed only four models, one of which is on life tables which could have been easily included in the chapter specially devoted to measurement of mortality and life tables and thus avoided repetition. The second model is on stable population theory. Though the salient features of the theory are covered it could have either been included in some other chapter, say, fertility or population growth, as the whole treatment is short, or expanded into a single chapter with more matter. The other two models of this chapter are mathematical in nature and do not fit in with the general pattern of the book. One would be provoked to ask as to why these two models alone were included, while there are so many other models that have greater relevance to demographic measurement.

A demerit that strikes a reader of the book is that the chapters are not uniform in content, style or volume—some are extremely long, some are moderately short. Some chapters are sociological and descriptive while some others are measurement oriented or are a mixture of both descriptive and technical demography. In some chapters we find that certain aspects have been dealt with extensively at the cost of omitting important portions which a text book cannot afford to do. For example, the demographic transition theory has received detailed attention. But Malthusian theory along with other theories of population growth are not mentioned at all. Similarly while socio-cultural aspects are dealt with at length, the changes in the vital rates of India and of the States, could also have been presented to provide a proper perspective of the demographic changes in India. Again, a methodology oriented text book on population should have included a chapter on the sources of demographic data, their characteristics and limitations. Some passing references are made of the Census and Sample Registration, but the author has not elaborated these aspects.

There are several organisational lapses. The most serious one is that the author has not seriously attempted at systematic presentation, so essential for a text book. New concepts are often not motivated or defined but have almost always been started off with remarks and comments—very often the descriptions are interspersed with the author's personal opinions. Absence of systematic presentation has resulted in the loss of rigour. And often the reader would be at a loss to understand the relevance of the argument and would like

to ask, "so what?". Throughout the book one can find here and there statements which are questionable and at times meaningless. For instance, the author's statement that "Infant mortality rate is a measure of mortality among infants", (p. 141) is but one example of casualness. There are a few inaccuracies too. The calculation of age specific death rate under 1 year as presented in Example 2, page 135 is not correct and can mislead the student. Measures like index of dissimilarity (p. 116) and school dropout rate (p. 120) should not have been introduced as demographic measures.

After going through the book an Indian teacher will find it a useful one, but will realise that the value of the book has been reduced through lack of proper editing and reviewing. A close revision can enhance the real value of the book. A book of the present type is a much needed one for Indian graduate students offering Demography as a special paper.

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M. M. Patnaik, *Fertility Behaviour*, Janki Prakashan, Patna, 1985. viii+209 p., price Rs. 120.00.

THIS study is a useful piece of research work which provides valuable information on various aspects of human fertility in India in relation to socio-economic environment. The analysis relates to the data collected by the author through a field survey conducted in and around the city of Patna in Bihar in a sample of 800 couples. Of these 583 were drawn from the city of Patna and 217 from a nearby village Nagarnanosa of Nalanda district.

Of the six chapters, the first, introduction, deals with the genesis of the study and then briefly reviews fertility studies conducted in Bihar as well as in other parts of India. The second chapter is devoted to the analysis of differential fertility by socio-economic status. Among the variables considered here are the type of family, place of residence, religion, caste, educational level of husband as well as of wife, occupation, income and employment status of wife. The couples own status and the status of their parents have been separately considered. The analysis presents both univariate and bivariate results. It is to be noted that by and far the results obtained here are in line with those of the other studies on the subject. The occupational status of husband, the level of

education of both husband and wife and the caste hierarchy have all been found to be inversely related to fertility. The lower fertility of the working as compared to non-working women is also clearly brought out. Further a close positive correlation between the fertility of couples and that of their parents is also indicated.

Chapter III is devoted to the analysis of age at marriage and its impact on fertility behaviour. The bivariate analysis here has been attempted to show the effect of age at marriage on fertility net of socio-economic factors. The relevance of cultural attitudes like early marriage, preference for large families, son preference and the like for fertility behaviour has been demonstrated in chapter IV. The results clearly reveal that such cultural attitudes bear importantly on the fertility behaviour independently of socio-economic factors.

The impact of infant mortality on fertility level is discussed in the last substantive chapter V. The analysis reveals that infant deaths lead to more births and this is true among all sections of the population. It has been shown that the birth interval following an infant death is much shorter than the one following the birth of a child that survives infancy.

The summary of findings is presented in the concluding chapter VI. Here emphasising the need to check population growth rate, the author makes a plea for effective implementation of the legislative measure for increasing age at marriage. Ameliorating the economic conditions of those responsible for high fertility and inculcating small family norms among the illiterate masses are further suggestions offered on the basis of the study.

This study is thus a comprehensive piece of analytical work and provides lucid information on fertility and its relationship with a whole gamut of socio-economic and cultural factors represented by a wide variety of variables. Read along with similar other studies on the subject, it adds significantly to our understanding of fertility behaviour and its socio-economic determinants. It may be mentioned, however, that the study has used the routine analytical design and has presented the results in the form of simple univariate and bivariate tables. Several techniques of multivariate analysis are available and these could have been deployed for a better insight into the nature of relationship of different variables to fertility. This, however, does not discount the utility of the study as an additional piece of information on a subject which still has not been fully explored.

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Tim Dyson and Nigel Crook (eds). *India's Demography—Essays on the contemporary population*, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 1984, 235 P.

THIS volume is an outcome of a conference held under the auspices of the British Society for Population Studies (BSPS) at Worcester College, Oxford, during 14-16 December 1982 in which several scholars from India participated and contributed papers on various aspects of India's demographic scene. The papers were solicited in order to investigate the current size of the population and its rate of growth since 1971; to judge if there had been a major fertility decline; to assess the relative reduction in different states; the importance of the status of women; to judge the contribution and the limitations of the family planning programme; the effects of the Emergency; to suggest new directions programme could usefully take; to investigate the apparent stalling in mortality reduction; and to consider its possible interrelationship with fertility; to delineate future patterns in the changing causes of death structure; to evaluate the health delivery systems and health policy; and finally, to outline directions for future research. Apart from the introductory chapter, where the editors have tried to answer the questions posed before the conference, the contributions have been grouped into five sections, namely (i) levels and trends in mortality and fertility (ii) regional surveys (iii) health policy (iv) family planning and (v) village level studies. The contributed papers, however, do not appear to be written with the theme of the Conference in view.

In the introductory chapter the editors, Tim Dyson and Nigel Crook, have very ably put down some of their own views of India's current population situation at times drawing upon the work of other contributors to this book and have tried to answer the questions posed before the conference.

On the first question relating to the rate of growth of population during 1971-81, they have tried to show that the rate of growth is smaller than 2.2 per cent per annum during 1971-81 and that it had in fact declined from that prevailing in the decade 1961-71. This is based on a flimsy ground that the 1971 census count was specially deficient in coverage than either the 1961 or 1981 census. Further, they have tried to reconcile the incompatible conclusions from the first two papers in this volume to lend credence to their hypothesis. In the second paper, Jain and Adlakha conclude that 1971-81 decade witnessed a fairly significant decline in the birth rate whereas Ruzicka's thesis in the first paper is that the decade witnessed only a slow pace of reduction in death rate. Dyson and Crook have not taken note of the postponement of the census in 1971 by one month, resulting in an increase of one month during 1961-71 census decade and a decrease of one month during 1971-81. If that is taken into consideration, the rate of growth during 1961-71 gets reduced by 0.2 per cent whereas

it increases by 0.2 per cent during 1971-81. The pronounced undercutting of age pyramid in 1971 than the usual is again witnessed in the 1981 census also. In fact the rate of growth appears to have increased somewhat during 1971-81 as compared to the 1961-71 decade.

On the question of fertility decline, Dyson and Crook have used the 1981 census data on children, to indicate decline in fertility using mean children born per woman and child woman ratios, without considering the fact that the undercount of children in 1981 census was quite large. Jain and Adlakha applied Bongaart's model of proximate determinants to estimate change in fertility from changes in marriage, contraceptive use, incidence of abortion and duration of breast-feeding and come to the conclusion of a decline in fertility of 9 to 15 per cent during 1971 and 1978. Together with the analysis of SRS data and the two national surveys of 1971 and 1978, they indicated a decline in the crude birth rate of about 8 to 14 per cent during 1972 to 1978. This decline was primarily a result of actual changes in age-specific fertility rates. The fertility decline during the 1970's in younger age groups reflects the effect of rising age at marriage, whereas the substantial decline among women over age 25 reflects increased use of fertility control methods. This pattern is strongly reflected in Kerala as shown by Zachariah and Kurup in another paper.

Although the future trend of India's birth rate is very difficult to predict, but the three papers in this book on family planning programme bring out clearly that (i) Past achievements in reducing the birth rate owe a great deal to the programme, and (ii) that the set-back due to the Emergency has been largely made up. However, the editors of this book rightly point out that the changes in the age structure of the population can be anticipated to operate against the reduction in the crude birth rate.

Veena Soni in her article brings out forcefully the need to lay greater emphasis on non-terminal methods of contraception for younger couples wanting to space rather than limit births and points out in this connection waning of the Nirodh programme and suggests revitalising of this programme to obtain a balanced mix of methods. For disseminating information and services and for effective implementation of the programme, the role of the non-governmental sector has rightly been highlighted by Veena Soni and Avabai Wadia. The latter has also laid emphasis on community participation in the expansion of health and family planning services. But it cannot be said that India's family planning programme is on the right lines in view of the setback experienced by the laparoscopic programme (L.T.T.) after 1982-83.

Ruzicka points out an increasing resistance to change in the mortality levels in the past decade (1971-81) and indicates the decline of only 2-3 per thousand in contrast to a decline of around 4 per thousand suggested by the analysis of the census data. Ruzicka also puts forward a controversial point that the infant mortality is not a good indicator of changes in the health situation in countries like India where fertility remains high, and maternal and child health is gene-

rally poor. Regarding the rural health care system he rightly points out that often the area of effective influence of a medical institution lies within a radius of 5-6 kilometres and large parts of the rural areas do not benefit from this system. He points out that like many other measures, health programmes were originally designed to assist the needy where ever they are. However, often they have ended up in providing subsidised services to the better off sections of the population.

In the section of health policy, Radhika Ramasubban points to the continuation of the colonial tradition of centrally administered crash programmes, and suggests that the health services run by the state have remained weak in finances and administration and that health occupies a low priority, as indeed do all social services in developmental planning. Margaret Hardiman picked up four projects from the vast range of on-going experiments in India, involving larger community participation as an effective approach to the understanding of the local culture in the field of health and family welfare. This paper very nicely points out the potentials and usefulness of such projects and brings out how these experiments provide material for trying out new ideas in the fields of research and evaluation, training potential, the time factor and commitment of leadership.

The question, why the demographic picture is different in different states has been examined in a limited manner in the section on regional surveys. In this section one paper compares the demographic trends of Bihar and Rajasthan and the other is on determinants of fertility decline in Kerala. On the whole this book is useful to those interested in the current demographic trends and population policy.

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