

Book Review

Population Policy and Reproductive Health, edited by K. Srinivasan, Hindustan Publishing Corporation (India), New Delhi, 1996, Price Rs. 450.00.

THE family welfare programme in India is currently at the crossroads. . . Programme orientation has changed from the present form of provider-driven to client driven to meet commitment India had made at the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994. . . In order to help in this transition, the Population Foundation of India organized a seminar in December 1995 on "Policy Direction and Strategy of Action in Population and Reproductive Health in India". The proceedings of this seminar have been brought out in the form of [the present] very useful book..., I would like to congratulate the Foundation and its Executive Director... this publication will generate further discussion on the issues and will greatly benefit the programme.

. . . This book puts together 16 papers. . . covering thinking on the current programme and how the new nuances can be brought about in it. Besides, it has a section devoted to comments on programme and its strategies by political leaders. . . and by the Executive Director of UNFPA, Dr. (Ms) Nafis Sadik. The analysis of the programme and its various emerging issues have been well represented. . . In this sense, this publication has great relevance and usefulness. . .

. . . it (the book) has devoted half of its length. . . to demographic scenario of the country. . . two papers by Drs. K. Srinivasan and Mari Bhat are very useful; they give a good deal of insight into the programme issues and perhaps strategies. . . [However,] they are too long in the overall context of the book. . . But overall, four papers included in the first section on 'Demographic Scenario' are very useful and provide detailed demographic picture of the country analytically as a background to main papers.

The third section is a mixed bag of basically two sections. One section covers views of. . . leaders of different political parties in India and the other presents recommendations which emerged from the seminar. . .

The recommendations given on pages 354-361 are of general type, many of which have been made in earlier such seminars/workshops also. They would have been more useful (than before) if the editor had [considered] their feasibility and practical nature... Somebody has to help in their meaningful implementation. The Population Foundation of India is

best suited for this task. . . An alternative approach is that the Government of India should form a task force to . . . make efforts to translate them into programme action.

Overall this book is very useful and compiles several meaningful papers under one cover. They not only analyze demographic scenario of the country but highlight several population programme issues. A large set of papers discuss the family welfare programme in the post-ICPD context — how the current programme services should be modified in order to integrate health services in it.. All persons working with family welfare programme will find this volume extremely important and . . . like to preserve it is a reference material. In this sense, the Population Foundation of India deserves thanks from the community of professionals and programme managers.

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