

have been enhanced significantly by including a few business examples from the corporate sector.

The last chapter presents some additional discussion on DEA. These discussions are important from the perspective of establishing the appropriateness of the DEA approach to problem solving in a particular case. Some of the issues covered are: need for considering homogeneous DMUs for evaluation, selection of appropriate inputs and outputs from the exhaustive original list and adoption of an appropriate DEA model to match the problem situation. The most important section in this chapter is the discussion on the strengths and limitations of the DEA approach.

Overall, the book is well written with greater emphasis on giving a detailed account of the basis of DEA methodology. The innovativeness is in terms of using the same example throughout the book in order to explain the DEA preliminaries, methodology, basic model, variations in models and related issues. This greatly helps the reader in assessing the strength and weakness of a particular model variation, selecting the appropriate model to suit the situation and also developing a greater understanding of the whole approach.

This book can be recommended as a textbook for students of management and industrial engineering. The exercises presented at the end of each chapter provide an opportunity for students to explore further on DEA methodology and applications. This book especially will be useful for those who would like to acquire advanced knowledge in quantitative techniques for management decisions. This can be used as a textbook for a full-fledged course on DEA or as part of any advanced course in operations research for students aiming at specializations related to management science. The book serves as a reference material in DEA methodology and is best purchased by libraries.

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People of India – Kerala, Parts 1, 2 and 3, vol. XXVII. K. S. Singh (General Editor), T. Madhava Menon, Deepak Tyagi and B. Francis Kulirani (eds). Anthropological Survey of India and Affiliated East–West Press Pvt Ltd, 105 Nirmal Tower, 26 Barakhamba Road, New Delhi 110 001. 2002. 490, 1132 and 1704 pp. Price: Rs 2015

The Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI), Government of India was established in 1945 to conduct anthropological studies on people of India and advice the Government on policy matters, especially with reference to the tribal affairs. The British and Indian ethnographers and administrators such as H. H. Risley, E. Thurston, J. H. Hutton, L. K. Anantha Krishna Iyer and H. V. Nanjundayya have done pioneering ethnographic work on the people of India.

However, the anthropological works done by them were not revised and updated for a long time. K. S. Singh, a historian by training and the then Director General of AnSI took up the gigantic task of providing an updated version on the people of India in 1985 and launched the People of India (POI) project. The purpose was to generate brief ethnographic profiles on all the communities of India. A team of about 500 scholars, mostly anthropologists, drawn from AnSI, other research institutes and university departments were all involved in data collection, analysis and report writing on 4694 communities. The study was carried out for about seven years, and was completed in 1992. As stated by Singh in ‘A note on the series’ (p. xiv), ‘the investigators spent 26,510 days in the field, which works out to be 5.5 days per community studied...’. The bulk of the data were collected from 24,951 key informants, which works out to be about five key informants per community (Ibid). Information was collected from two or three places for larger and dispersed communities.

The present volume has three parts. Each part starts with ‘A note on the series’ (five pages) and a foreword (22 pages) by the General Editor. It is followed by ‘An acknowledgement’ (13 pages) and an ‘Introduction’ to the volume (138 pages). The next part consists of descriptions of each community (about 2000 words on an average), arranged in alphabetical order. The three parts contain eth-

nographic descriptions on 225 communities of Kerala: A to I forms part I (352 pages); J to O forms part II (642 pages) and P to Y forms part III (464 pages). Part III contains an appendix on the current status of polyandry and matriliney in Kerala (eight pages), a glossary of indigenous terms (34 pages), a bibliography (27 pages) and an index (38 pages).

The ‘Introduction’ to the volume (given in part I) is an elaborate account on the major aspects of life of the people of Kerala. Some of the major topical areas covered in this section are geography and environment, bioanthropology, demography, economy and development, prehistory and history, languages and dialects, food habits, dress and ornaments, music and dance, religion, political organization, reform movements, and development programmes.

A review of the present volume cannot be taken in isolation as it was produced under a general framework provided by the Project Director (Singh). Hence, the present reviewer, deems it fit to make some general comments as well as some specific comments on the Kerala volume.

Methodologically, the entire project lacks anthropological perspective and the rigours of ethnographic research. If we compare the ethnographic works of Risley, Hutton, Thurston, and L. K. A. Iyer to the POI volumes, the latter works which were undertaken almost a century later, appear inferior in quality. The POI investigators have not added much in-depth data to the ethnographic details which were already available in the classic works, except adding some new communities to the list.

Data collection and report writing were done on the basis of a 15-point interview guide containing about 776 cultural traits. Singh has unfortunately failed to distinguish the various research tools used by the ethnographers such as schedule, interview guide and questionnaire (rarely used). The statement ‘questionnaire contained in the schedule guideline’ (p. xvi) is a mirror to the confusion which prevailed throughout the POI project. He also failed to understand the distinction between ethnography and ethnology which is evident in the statement, ‘Ethnography in those days was generally synchronic rather than diachronic’ (p. xxi). The POI project is primarily an ethnographic endeavour and none of the investigators ventured to write an ethnological account of the community which they studied.

The very concept of the ethnographic fieldwork has been abused in this project. Singh states that an average of 5.5 days per community were spent by the investigator to collect data. The bulk of the data were collected from about five key informants per community. The places of fieldwork are also not mentioned. Any worthwhile ethnographic study, even in its new avatar of rapid ethnographic research, requires at least 6–8 weeks.

In the ultimate analysis, the reports look highly monotonous with a heavy recycling of old data and with only some cosmetic changes. It may be useful for administrative purposes to distinguish the communities for awarding some reservation benefits. The serious researcher hardly gets anything worthwhile from these reports.

Another anomaly can be found in the statistical presentation of certain data. It is stated that 'the percentages relate strictly to the responses made by the informants to the questionnaire (*sic*) contained in the schedule guideline (*sic*)...' (p. xvi). As already pointed out, the investigators were required to record the responses of only five key informants. What kind of percentages can be derived from these responses for communities with one lakh or more population? For example, how can the statement, 'education is favoured by 139 communities for girls and 167 for boys' be justified? Is five a representative sample for every community? (see pages 136–139 for such unscientific statements).

The volume under review contains a number of categories which are improperly defined. The designers of the project have failed to clarify certain key conceptual categories. The 225 communities mentioned in the volume are supposed to be endogamous groups. They also include communities such as Andhra or Telugu Brahman, Tamil Brahman, Tulu Brahman and Jains. These are not endogamous categories, but they are linguistic or religious demonstratives for certain clusters of endogamous groups. Another generic term Yadava is used for Maniyani, Erumakar and Gosangi. These three communities are different endogamous groups inhabiting different regions of Kerala. The reviewer hails from the place of Maniyani and hence can say with confidence that the descriptions given under Yadava are mostly not applicable to them. Maniyani were matrilineal with virilocal residence till 1956, the traces of

which can be found even today. It is mentioned that the Yadava community is spread over five districts, but in the map they are shown in three districts (No. 220 in the map and in page 1592). Some of the authors and the editors have failed to identify the endogamous communities among clusters of endogamous groups. Another anomaly is the inclusion of Jains under the community list. Jains have several endogamous groups in Kerala.

Discussion on linguistic groups, viz. Kannadigas, Andhra (*sic*)/Telugu and Tamils along with other communities makes no sense. Further, the issues discussed under these categories are mostly repetitive. Intricate issues of the linguistic minorities are not discussed objectively. There are also some contradictory statements, especially on Kannadigas and some irresponsible and false statements on Tamils and Kannadigas. They are described as immigrants in Kerala. Kannadigas and Tamils have been residing in the same place for centuries (both areas were under Madras Presidency until 1956) and they happen to be a part of the geographical unit of Kerala. Branding them as immigrants by the editors, is unjustified (p. xxv and p. xxvi). The author on 'Kannadigas' has rightly pointed out that 'Most of the Kannadigas in Kerala were there from time immemorial. In the past, the present Kasaragod area was known as Tulunad, meaning Tulu Land' (p. 572).

The listing of endogamous groups is still incomplete. At least one endogamous community, Hebbar Brahmins residing in Kasaragod district, is missing. There may be other communities also which could not be located by the ethnographers. Some endogamous groups are spelt differently in different pages (e.g. Bhillava in p. 269 and Billava in p. 1605).

The editors have happily accepted the cultural zones of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore (second map) made by colonial masters. There is no justification for continuing with these zones made more than hundred years ago. The cultural diversity of Kerala as it is known today, requires a better demarcation of cultural zones.

A statement such as 'some informants, however, reported the existence of a school where free mating is permitted and children are recognized as the group's', is a serious one and is not explored further. This again, is an irresponsible statement which should have been avoided in a scientific writing.

Finally, the reviewer feels that the outcome of the seven-year project is not satisfactory. Each investigator should have spent at least 2–3 months in each community to write an in-depth ethnographic account of about 100 pages. This could have been done within the time and budgetary provisions of the present project. Providing an ethnographic account on the communities of India should be an ongoing project of AnSI. The task may be assigned to the ethnographers by allotting each of them two or three districts. University departments of anthropology may also be invited to collaborate in this endeavour. The reports need not be published in the form of books, but can be made available in VCDs and DVDs.

These volumes could have been useful to the researchers, administrators, political leaders, etc. if utmost care was taken to provide authentic and reliable up-to-date information on each community. As it is, in spite of so many lacunae, people have begun to quote these volumes as evidence in support of their arguments in inter-community disputes.

However, in spite of the above criticisms, Singh needs to be complimented for initiating the work for which AnSI was established in the country.

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Kenya Coast Handbook: Culture, Resources and Development in the East African Littoral. J. Hoorweg, D. Foeken and R. A. Obudho. LIT Verlag, Hamburg, Germany, 2000, 527 pp. ISBN 3-8258-3937-0.

The book under review describes the history and current status of the Kenya coast, and analyses from different basic, social and human scientific disciplines its resources, political and socio-economic transitions, potential for development and development limitations. It contains 28 chapters, and, following an introductory part, is divided into 'General background', 'People and History', 'Economic resour-