

The NEHU Journal

A K Thakur
Lalit P Pathak
A C Sinha
E Jyrwa
R Khongsdier
Gurudas Das
B S Mipun &
R Ramthara

**Vol 1 No 1
January, 2003**

The NEHU Journal

Editor : T B Subba

Associate Editor : Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih

Copy Editor : Nabonita Ganguly

Production Assistants : Surajit Dutta & Binod Rynjab

Layout and Design : Shongdor Diengdob

The NEHU Journal is published bi-annually (January-July) by the North-Eastern Hill University Publications, Shillong. The focus of the Journal is on India's Northeast and countries bordering it. Articles on other areas are also welcome. Contributors are advised to consult notes at the back.

NEHU Publications reserves the copyright to all articles, communications and book reviews published and no article/communication/review or a part thereof may be reprinted without written permission from the Editor.

Subscriptions

Single issue	- Rs 55.00 / \$ 2
Single year	- Rs 100.00 / \$ 4
Two years	- Rs 175.00 / \$ 6
Three years	- Rs 250.00 / \$ 8

Payment may be made by cheque/draft payable to "NEHU Publications" and be sent to the Deputy Director, NEHU Publications, Bijni Complex, Laitumkhrah, Shillong-793003. Outstation cheques/drafts may kindly add Rs. 10/- or \$ 1 towards bank service charges.

All correspondence related to the Journal may be addressed to the Editor, NEHU Publications, Bijni Complex, Shillong-793003.

EDITORIAL

Several readers of *The North-Eastern Hill University Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* may remember the hard work put in by its editors and the quality of articles published in its issues. Unfortunately, the journal failed to maintain its regularity and seriality due to many reasons one of which was the appointment of the Director of the Publication Cell as the Editor of the journal. As a result, the work of giving the journal a chance to grow and mature was sometimes taken as a routine work, just as headship and deanship, which usually lasts for a period of three years. This arrangement has changed now, with the segregation of directorship of the Cell and the editorship of the journal. One other serious handicap was the vacancy of the post of the Publication Officer for a very long period,

The NEHU Journal

Vol.1, No. 1, January 2003

was holding other charges simultaneously. Now we not only have a full-time Publication Officer, Dr. T. B. Subba, the Associate Editor, but also an efficient Copy Editor in Ms Nabonita Ganguly. With their presence, the journal gets its backbone and its life. Now even if the Editor has to go the journal will not.

With some such happy developments under the guidance of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mrinal Misi, we also thought it prudent to open the journal to all branches of knowledge and to name it *The NEHU Journal*. Thus we start the journal with a new name and serial number and pledge to give it a much longer life than its earlier *sister*. We hope to receive your cooperation in subscribing, contributing (as authors and/or referees), and helping it grow as the most important journal of Northeast India. We wish to make the journal not just a mirror but also the most important forum for discussing the issues that living in this region brings us close to. We desire to make it the very idiom of the region.

NEHU Publications

T.B. Subba
Editor

EDITORIAL

Several readers of *The North-Eastern Hill University Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* may remember the hard work put in by its editors and the quality of articles published in its issues. Unfortunately, the journal failed to maintain its regularity and seriality due to many reasons one of which was the appointment of the Director of the Publication Cell as the Editor of the journal. As a result, the work of giving the journal a chance to grow and mature was sometimes taken as a routine work, just as headship and deanship, which usually lasts for a period of three years. This arrangement has changed now, with the segregation of directorship of the Cell and the editorship of the journal. One other serious handicap was the vacancy of the post of the Publication Officer for a very long period, which caused enormous difficulty in running the day-to-day activities of the Cell (where the journal is produced) by a teacher who often was holding other charges simultaneously. Now we not only have a full-time Publication Officer, who doubles up as the Associate Editor, but also an efficient Copy Editor in Ms Nabonita Ganguly. With their presence, the journal gets its backbone and its life. Now even if the Editor has to go the journal will not.

With some such happy developments under the guidance of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mrinal Miri, we also thought it prudent to open the journal to all branches of knowledge and to name it *The NEHU Journal*. Thus we start the journal with a new name and serial number and pledge to give it a much longer life than its earlier *avatar*. We hope to receive your cooperation in subscribing, contributing (as authors and/or referees), and helping it grow as the most important journal of Northeast India. We wish to make the journal not just a mirror but also the most important forum for discussing the issues that living in this region brings us close to. We desire to make it the very idiom of the region.

NEHU Publications

T.B. Subba
Editor

CONTENTS

Process and Agency of Precolonial States in Arunachal Pradesh <i>A. K. THAKUR</i>	1
The So-called Mongoloids in South Asia: Search for Early African Connection <i>LALIT P. PATHAK</i>	27
Forest Education and Research in British India: The Beginnings <i>A.C. SINHA</i>	- -	79
Evolution of Adult Education : A Historical Perspective <i>E. JYRWA</i>	- -	93
Demographic and Health Traits in Relation to Maternal Education in Northeast India <i>R. KHONGSDIER</i>	109
Cooperative Movement in Meghalaya : Its Growth, Performance and Weaknesses <i>GURUDAS DAS</i>	- -	137
Forced Migration, Social Conflict and Adjustment among the Mizos of Mizoram, India <i>B.S.MIPUN & R.RAMTHARA</i>	183
BOOK REVIEW	193

Forced Migration, Social Conflict and Adjustment among the Mizos of Mizoram, India

B.S.MIPUN & R.RAMTHARA

Introduction:

Migrations took place even during the ancient and medieval times. Some people migrated in search of fertile land for agriculture, whereas some were forced to migrate from their habitats. In Mizoram, migration took place under duress during village grouping in the wake of insurgency.

In the Third World countries, especially after the Second World War, insurgency and counter-insurgency have become a common phenomenon. India is no exception to such phenomenon. To tackle the increasing insurgency in the country, various measures have been taken by the states. In Mizoram, one of the important measures taken to check insurgency was grouping of many small villages into a larger unit.

In the North-East, village grouping was introduced in Nagaland and Mizoram. But it was soon discontinued in Nagaland due to various reasons. Re-grouping of villages into larger units as a counter-insurgency measure as done in Mizoram during 1967-70 was modelled after the 1958 regrouping launched by the British Chief against the Chinese squatters in Malaya after the Second World War. It was also linked with the tragic and ill-fated experiment of agro-villas in South Vietnam, which was aimed against the Vietcong, and was later modified by the USA

in 1962 into various workable units and ultimately proved successful. The authorities responsible for grouping exercises in the past were foreign powers, viz., the British in Malaya and the USA in South Vietnam, both aimed against Communist insurgents. Hence, its application in India is to some extent a deviation.

The tribal population of India living in inhospitable and hostile environment and without much exogenous impact have traditionally adjusted and adapted to their habitats very amicably with a symbiotic relationship with their environment. There has always been a precarious balance between the tribal population and their environment. Such a relationship expresses itself in their economy, settlement structure and population distribution. However, any change — be it climatic or technological — changes this symbiotic relationship, which has its impact on the tribal communities. It is in this context that a forced migration to group the villages of the tribal communities living in Mizo Hills can be properly understood. It goes without saying that the change through migration and grouping has had tremendous impact on the tribal economy, society and culture in Mizoram.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the present study are:

1. to examine the social and political compulsions of forced migration and relocating them in a new area, and
2. to analyse the environmental, social, economic and demographic consequences of the grouping.

Data Base:

To obtain various data, censuses and statistical handbooks of Mizoram and published books are consulted and extensive fieldwork was carried out in order to bring out the impact of forced migration on the people in the newly grouped locations. Information was collected through questionnaires and personal

interviews at household level from unaffected villages as well as grouped villages.

Methodology:

1. The present study is based on extensive fieldwork conducted in the selected villages.
2. One set of sample villages was from the villages unaffected by the grouping and another set of villages was from the grouped ones.
3. Changes/implications are studied by comparing the two sets of villages with their social, economic, demographic and environmental conditions.

Study Area:

The state of Mizoram is located on the Indo-Myanmar borderland on the eastern offshoots of the Himalayas. It lies between 21°56'N-24°31'N latitudes and 92°16'E-93°26'E longitudes standing like a lone sentinel in the eastern corner of India. It is bounded in the North by Cachar district of Assam and the state of Manipur, in the East and South by the Chin Hills of Myanmar and in the West by Chittagong Hills Tract of Bangladesh and the state of Tripura. The geographical area of the state is 21,087 sq.kms., which is 0.63 per cent of India's total geographical area. The state occupies a great strategic importance in the North-Eastern corner of India, as it has a total length of 585 kms of international boundary with Myanmar and Bangladesh. The North-South dimension is 285 kms and from East to West, it is about 115 kms in length.

Its physiography is characterised by parallel longitudinal valleys and ridges containing small, dispersed settlements.

Its population consists almost entirely of Mizos, belonging to the Mongoloid stock. The total population of Mizoram according to 1991 Census was 6,87,217 persons, consisting of 3,56,672 males and 3,29,545 females. Population growth rate in Mizoram was 38.98 per cent during 1981-91. The density of population in 1991

was only 33 persons per square kilometre and ranked one of the lowest density areas in India.

Anthropological evidences show that the Mizos migrated to the present habitat from somewhere in China. Legends, folk tales and folk songs also augment this perception. The Mizo language belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese family.

Great social, economic and cultural homogeneity exists among them. They entered Mizoram at different stages and settled in separate settlements, having their own village jurisdiction in respect to distribution of jhum lands. Later, disputes arose due to infringement of one village by the other. The desire for supremacy and territorial possession culminated in raids by a larger village on a smaller village. Thus the need to have a powerful person to regulate the domestic and political affairs of the villages became very important. Thus, chieftainship was born and the Mizo society became a Chief-centred society where the Chief or *Lal* was highly esteemed. Each village was considered as a separate state ruled by its own chief. There was a shift in the character of chiefs after the independence of India. And this age-old institution of chieftainship in Mizoram came to an end under Assam Lushai Hills District Acquisition of Chief Rights Act in 1954.

Grouping Exercise:

Political disturbance broke out in Mizoram on 1st March 1966, consequent upon the formation of Mizo National Front (MNF), which turned rebellious due to misunderstanding over the political domination of the erstwhile district by the Indian Government. The MNF was declared as unlawful, and the region was categorised as "Disturbed Area".

One of the important measures to check insurgency in Mizoram undertaken by the government was grouping of many small villages into a larger unit. This was done by evacuating the villages located in the far flung areas of the state and rehabilitating

them in some specified areas that were accessible to road communication for easy security checks.

Thus grouping of villages was carried out in Mizoram to safeguard the villagers from the MNF underground activists and to accelerate the progress of developmental works in the villages. As such, the scheme, which had four distinct stages or categories of grouping of villages, was introduced under the provisions of the Defence of India Rule, 1962, and the Assam Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1953.

Apparently grouping of villages in Mizoram brought many unintended changes. Since many villagers were forced to migrate to one place, there was a total dislocation of cultivation areas in the grouped villages. This led to widespread famine conditions among the migrated villagers. Due to high concentration of agricultural workers in the grouped villages, the available cultivable lands were exhausted and the already rather short cycle of jhumming (shifting cultivation) had to be further shortened. This reduced the agricultural yield incredibly and only a few families in such locations were able to harvest enough paddy to sustain them for the whole year. Such a situation created further social and political tension and misunderstanding among the Mizos living in such centres. But slowly they adjusted among themselves and started living peacefully. Due to such a situation many of them have shifted to other occupations for better living. Scarcity of cultivable land in grouping centres also forced many people to go back to their original villages and some shifted to new sites in search of fertile land for jhumming.

Before the introduction of grouping of villages, excluding the two towns Aizawl and Lunglei, there were as many as 764 villages in Mizoram. The distribution of villages and their population in different sub-divisions or districts before the introduction of village grouping in 1967 was as follows:

Table 1: Number of Villages and Population in Mizoram, 1966

District	No. of Villages	Population
Aizawl	456	199354
Lunglei	169	41563
Chhimituipui	139	38539
Total	764	279456

Source: Fieldwork.

Table-2: Number of Evacuated Villages and Grouping (New) Centres, 1967-70

District	No. of Villages Evacuated	No. of Ungrouped	Grouping Centres	Population in the New Centres
Aizaw	344	32	80	56721
Lunglei	127	20	22	11312
Chhimituipui	42	86	8	6136
Total	516	138	110	74,169

Insurgency in Mizoram, which is the sole cause of grouping of villages, was not accidental but the outcome of a long planning and preparations clandestinely made by the dissident groups. It was deeply rooted in the social, geographical, economic and political milieu of the society. The economic interest and psychological needs created major political and social forces that accelerated the movement with definite direction and goals. Consequently, the inter-group and ethnic tension intensified and led, at times, to direct violence in the form of insurgency.

Highlights of the Study:

Relocating the people in a new centre by uprooting them from their natural locations brought about significant changes in their solidarity, their values, their ways of life and their social practices.

In the traditional setting, the village harmony was largely based on agricultural works, which bound the villagers together. Agricultural practices were characterised by slash and burn cultivation, locally called 'jhum'. The practice of jhum cultivation did not permit permanent landholding, although any individual villager considered the village land as his or her own. The jhum cultivation cycle was usually eight to nine years. It appears that solidarity of the villagers was the effect of the system of agriculture they practised. Any dislocation in traditional agricultural system would thus result in disharmony in the village solidarity.

Village relocation or grouping into centres destroyed the traditional village economy based on work-partnership, which was a common customary practice throughout Mizoram. The sudden and forced relocation of villages without proper planning had far reaching consequences on the traditional social organisation as well. The emergence of new occupations with greater emphasis on monetary value created economic and social differentiation among the village communities in the grouping centres. Jhum cultivation lost its traditional significance as a source of village harmony. Thus, a new value system based on monetised economy has emerged. Greater emphasis on the monetised economy gave rise to the immediate monetary profits to some, which resulted in widespread misappropriation of developmental funds at all levels. The quick transformations forced many people in difficult situations and are unable to adjust themselves. This resulted in anxiety and tension among the people.

Capital crimes like murder and theft, which were almost unknown to the Mizo society before village grouping, have become

a common phenomenon in the grouping centres. The Village Council Courts have become less important and act only as nominal bodies. This has also resulted in ethnocentrism, group identity and sub-nationalism mainly due to many hardships faced by the people consequent upon the introduction of grouping scheme. The ethnocentric attitude was so strong at times that a strong feeling of ethnicity prevailed, which called for group cohesion. This kind of group sentiment could be observed elsewhere whenever there was a high degree of group homogeneity.

The atrocious activities of the security personnel on duty in the grouping centres aroused suspicions. These feelings have drawn them together with an increasing enmity against the non-tribal as most such personnel belonged to that category. This increased the in-group cohesiveness and made them hostile to the non-tribal people.

The sudden and forced nature of changes in the traditional system caused difficulties to many families. They could not adjust themselves properly in the grouping centres, which resulted in tension, anxiety, inter-village feuds and insecurity among themselves. All this led to emergence of different kinds of social mal-adjustments, which were earlier unknown to Mizo society.

Development through Test Relief (TR) programme in the grouping centres motivated the Mizo people to participate in many developmental activities like construction of road, building, playground etc. Availability of wage-linked employment opportunities discouraged the traditional Mizo tendency to offer free service.

Emergence of grouping centres has led to further diversification in religious denomination among the Mizos. The isolated religious leaders adhering to their own denominations activated themselves for re-establishing their status in the new society with a new group of followers. As a result of this re-configuration of the society there were many religious

denominations. This is evident in the following empirical findings. In both grouping centres, we found as many as four denominations. On the other hand, we found only one denomination in the ungrouped villages. Although there is only one religion prevalent among the Mizos in Mizoram, i.e., Christianity, there are several denominations.

Although economic opportunities dissuaded the individual Mizos from offering voluntary services, the society did not ignore the importance of the traditional community life sustained through collective endeavour. The urge to get back the benefits of their old community life, the youths are motivated to revive the old practice of voluntary service, but in an institutional manner following the modern organisational techniques. As a result, social and voluntary organisations like the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuih-khawm Pawl (MHIP), Village Defence Party (VDP), etc. are successfully operating in the contemporary Mizo society. Thus the contemporary Mizo society too has adjusted themselves in peace and harmony with the changing World.

NOTES & REFERENCES

- Chaltuakhuma (1987): *History of Mizoram (in Mizo)*; R.D. Press, Aizawl.
- Chaltuakhuma (1981): *Political History of Mizoram*; (in Mizo), L.B. Press, Aizawl.
- Chatterjee, Suhas (1985): *Mizoram Under the British Rule*; Delhi.
- Coser, L. (1956): *The Functions of Social Conflict*; The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois.
- Gore, M. S. (1968): *Urbanisation and Social Change*; New Jersey.
- Government of Mizoram (1989): *Mizoram- Era of Peace and Progress*, Directorate of Information and Public Relation, Aizawl.
- Hluna, J.V. (1983): *A Search for Mizo Identity*; Aizawl (in Mizo).

- Hluna, J.V. (1985): *Church and Political Upheaval in Mizoram*; Aizawl.
- Kennedy, P. (1982): *Know your Own Land (Mizoram: Series IV)*, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl.
- Kuznets, Simon & Dorothy, Thomas S. (1955): *Internal Migration and Economic Growth in Selected studies of Migration since World War II*, New York
- Lalchungnunga (1994): *Mizoram-Politics of regionalisation and National Integration*, Reliance, New Delhi.
- Laldenga (1968): *Zalena Thuchah*; (in Mizo), MNF Headquarters, Mizoram.
- Laldenga (1973) : *Mizoram Marches Towards Freedom*; MNF Head quarters, Mizoram.
- Lalhmingthanga (1972): *Problems of Peace Making in Mizoram*; Aizawl.
- Nirmal Nibedon (1980): *Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade*; New Delhi
- Nirmal Nibedon (1981): *North East India The Ethnic Explosion*; New Delhi.
- Nunthara, C. (1989): *Impact of Introduction of Grouping of Villages in Mizoram*; Omson, New Delhi.
- Pautu, S.H. (1982): *Separatist Politics in Mizoram*, M. Phil Dissertation; (Unpublished) NEHU, Shillong.
- Ray, Animesh (1982): *Mizoram : A Dynamics of Change*; Calcutta.
- Saiaithanga (1969): *Mizo Kohhram Chanchin*; Aizawl.
- Sangkima (1993): *The Society and Social Changes of the Mizos*; Aizawl.
- Saprawnga, C (1970): *Mizo Political Thought (in Mizo)*, Aizawl.
- Schapera, I. (1967): *Government and Politics in Tribal Society*; New York..
- Siama, V.L. (1967): *Mizo History (in Mizo)*; Aizawl, 1st Edition. R.D. Press, Aizawl.
- Singer, et al (1968) (eds.): *Structure and Change in Indian Society*; Chicago.
- Singer, Milton (1970): *When a Great Tradition Modernizes*; New York.
- Singh, S.N. (1994): *Mizoram*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi.
- Srinivas, M.N. (1977): *Social Change in Modern India*; Orient Longman Ltd., Bombay.
- Tlangchhuaka (1973): *Mizoram Politics Chanchin*; (in Mizo), MNF Headquarters, Mizoram.
- William, R. M. (1947): *The Reduction of Inter-Group Tension*; New York.

Book Review

Sustainable Regeneration of Degraded Lands edited by Jyoti K. Parikh and B. Sudhakara Reddy, Tata Mcgraw-hill Pub. Co. Ltd., New Delhi, 1997 (IGIDR, CAP21), pp.295 + x, price not quoted on cover.

Land is the most tangible of all natural resources. It is upon land that man has left the imprints of all his cultures and civilisational remains, sufferings and happiness, achievements and failures. It is for land that many a battle has been fought, civilisations rose and perished. And yet, land remains the most contentious of all human affairs. When land as private property emerged with the development of the agrarian civilisation, some ten thousand years ago, considerable amount of land remained as a common resource for the community on which the community has *use* and occasionally, *occupancy* rights. This is often common to all the developing societies where various social groups and communities at different evolutionary phases of their social history, may co-exist. In such societies, rights on *Common Properly Land Resources* (CPLR) are generally accepted concepts of the *community* vis-a-vis the *state* and also, the individual holder of *ownership* rights. Even the developed nations do recognise the *use rights* of citizens over certain forms of environmental or infrastructural resources. This phenomenon is quite common among forest dwellers, quasi-nomads and village communities of India. However in recent times, the traditional use rights of various communities, under various circumstances, over common land resources, have come under severe stress both through the restrictions imposed by an all pervading, sovereign state and the greed of the individual encroachers over common land resources. This has resulted in severe erosion of the livelihood-system of many communities, who traditionally survived on their use rights on the common land resources.

In this light, the contributions of various scholars in a national seminar held at IGIDR, Mumbai in November, 1996 and encapsulated in the current volume is a refreshing departure from the main-stream economics— into an area much neglected but of immense significance to a large number of Scheduled Tribes, castes and village communities through-out the country. The book contains a total of thirteen papers arranged into three parts: Part I dealing with the concepts and status of CPLR, Part II dealing with specific methodologies and Part III dealing with various management practices and alternative institutional arrangements on specific case studies. Majority of contributions, of course, emanate from the CAP21 group of IGIDR.

The first paper by Vijay Laxmi and Jyoti Parikh deals with the concept of CPLR and its current status in India. The second by N.C.Gautam (of NRSA) stresses on the modern methodologies like remote sensing applications to identification of various categories of waste land and to the extent they could be utilised for land regeneration. Iyengar's paper on CPLR in Gujarat points to the modernisation forces that beset the traditional relationships like land encroachment and the possibility of state intervention in parceling the degraded *commons* to co-operatives for land regeneration, as income and employment generating activities. Nadkarni emphasises the revival of the traditional use rights system as an important component of the strategy of rural poverty alleviation in the country. Dixit narrates the travails of the Banni villagers (of Kachchh) where frequent droughts in recent years have degraded the quality of the grasslands, a common property resource and thus affecting their livelihood system.

Part II contains three papers by NTGCF and the IGIDR faculty and largely deals with the economics and methodological innovations in environmental accounting (of case studies from Gujarat and Karnataka) of National Tree Growers' Co-operative Federation Ltd. and demonstrates that many such co-operatives are not only economically viable but remunerative and thus, are

eminently viable enterprises and could be replicated in many such villages with degraded village commons for bettering their livelihood system—a major task that NTGCF has ventured upon.

Drawing extensively upon the Palamau experiments (on village co-operatives), Gopal Kadekodi emphasises the successes of such alternative institutions and management practices (primarily, land co-operatives) and their economic viability in enhancing the quality of life of the villagers. Reema Nanavathy (SEWA) takes an extreme feminist stand by forcefully arguing to hand-over the entire forestry sector to women and under women's management. Riya Sinha's paper, while commenting on various CPLR institutions (NGOs), is of the opinion that 'reward in proportion to effort and contribution' works the best. The study based on six Rajasthan villages by Kanchan Chopra and S.C.Gulati addresses the problems of linkages of CPLR system and stress migration.* The last paper by Reddy, Parikh and Parikh is based on a stakeholders' survey of Mallanhally village that analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the TGCS system adopted.

No doubt, India now is saddled with nearly one third of her land area degraded, either degraded forest land, wastelands or marginal lands, a major part of which falls under CPLR. It needs regeneration and the regeneration process can create millions of man-days of work and employment and economic regeneration of many marginalised communities. Many traditional CPLR management systems are available, many new experiments in the form of JFMCS, TGCS and the Palamau-type land co-operatives are also available. The government has no funds to regenerate all these land on its own (the ventures like the social forestry or NWDB etc.) and the successes of such efforts are limited only, and the

* Some of our own studies on Meghalaya indirectly vindicate the hypothesis that 'ecological degradation in the rural areas has led to distress migration from rural to urban areas'. It may be noted that Meghalaya, like many other North-Eastern states, has a very strong tradition of CPLR.

programmes are not quite cost-effective.

CPLR provides an alternative to such approaches, where the community is the investor and harvester of benefits. The institutional arrangements and management systems could be adopted in such a manner that the ventures truly become 'bankable', i.e., without surviving on doles from public funds. The role of government or NGOs to that extent should be that of a promoter and facilitator, allowing co-operatives to take a plunge in land regeneration as an *economic venture*.

A. C. Mohapatra

Professor of Geography, NEHU, Shillong

***Urbanization in India: Challenges and Opportunities* by R.P. Misra**, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 1998 (NERC-ICSSR, Shillong, Lecture Series), pp.106 +vii, Price: Rs. 175.00 (HB).

The book under review was the outcome of a series of three lectures delivered by Professor R. P. Misra on the same theme on the auspices of the North Eastern Regional Centre of the ICSSR in the annual lectures series in November, 1996 Shillong. The book is divided into six chapters, the first two chapters highlighting the general problematic of urbanisation, the third on evolution of urban system in India, the fourth on urban growth and associated problems in India in recent times, the fifth and sixth constituting a thesis on the future scenario and agenda of India's urbanisation in coming decades and its sustainability. The book is lucidly written, not too cluttered with figures and equations and contains visions to address the ground realities (of the urban dilemma) — food for thought to planners, administrators and students as well.

The UN report on world (1993) clearly states that the future impetus for further urbanisation has to come from the developing countries, since the developed world is an urban civilisation already

and by 2025 AD, of the projected 8 billion world population 5.2 billion will be urban of which the developed will contain only 1.2 billion and the rest (4 billion) coming from the developing ones. This could be a frightening prospect given the resource constraints in developing countries and the magnitude of investment required to provide even a semblance of urban services and infrastructure in these countries.

Public policy interventions in containing urbanisation have generally failed, except under extreme regimentation as was in China where rural to urban migration for long was not permitted without official sanctions. Otherwise, though governments and administrators would wish to intervene — these are futile. Cities are not made — they evolve. They grow because of migration and migrants create accentuated wealth for the cities, build their cultures and make the urban civilisation successful.

One has the lurking fear that Prof. Misra's agenda for the future urban (desirable) situation of India suffers from a prescriptive methodology. He however, acknowledges that the *wired society* of the future on its own volition would perhaps dampen somewhat the impetus on agglomeration economies that industries and services have enjoyed for the past two centuries of industrialism. But this is just a possibility. To what extent can the developing countries transit to *information age* and to what degree and when, remains the moot question. No body would question the wisdom in having cities of more manageable sizes, better managed, disaggregated, decentralised and well integrated with the rural economy of the country —but how to achieve all that? Greater direct public intervention perhaps is no answer.

(a) Contrary to the Gandhian idealism of a prosperous village economy, what we confront is a decadent, moribund village —the city no better. What is needed is not *re-architecturing* the settlement system of the country —an utterly futile exercise, rather a well conceived public policy of larger investments in the rural economy, a sectoral shift of rural economy from primary to secondary and

service activities (— that China did so successfully in the last two decades) and maintaining a steady share of the primary sector in national GDP at about 40 per cent. (It has fallen below 30 per cent in recent times). This means in general, higher productivity in the rural sector and a balanced *terms of trade* between the rural and the urban economies of the country.

(b) A system of incentives and disincentives through fiscal means can be helpful in discouraging industries and new economic ventures coming to larger urban agglomerations and metro-cities. Infrastructural investments in small towns and their physical linkages with the larger urban centres could create counter-forces to further agglomerations in the latter.

(c) A concerted national policy for removal of regional disparities is required so that all further developmental impetuses do not polarise in developed regions alone and developmental forces are well distributed throughout the country, allowing each region to capitalise on its comparative advantages. However, *competitive federalism* may not be a useful way that has been going on after initiation of liberalisation of the economy since 1991. The least developed regions (or states) are likely to lose out in the race and there are little public resources available to develop them through setting-up of public enterprise. That this method has failed is no news. Decentralisation and *de-agglomeration* of the urban system need to be ushered in by market forces calibrated through public policies.

(d) On the front of the cities themselves, it requires more organisation and management from the precarious situation in which the Urban Local Bodies (ULB) are placed, even after five years of enactment of Nagar Palika Act (74th. Constitutional Amendment, 1993). The ULBs require to be more professionally managed, participatory and proactive to market forces, generating resources through well-designed policies of taxation, incentives and disincentives. The market growth would augment their revenues that can be re-invested into further development of the

city. The vast land resources at the disposal of the ULB must be put to productive and revenue yielding ventures. Employment will increase, income of the average city-dweller will increase, so also the wealth of the city. A vibrant and growing rural population will not run to the city for a living. There would perhaps be some answer to the urban problematic in developing countries and hope of a light at the end of the tunnel.

A. C. Mohapatra

Professor of Geography, NEHU, Shillong



DECLARATION

Form IV Rule 8

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Place of Publication | : | Bijni Complex, Shillong-793003 |
| 2. Periodicity | : | Biannual |
| 3. Printer's Name | : | Deputy Director, NEHU Publications |
| Address | : | Bijni Complex, Shillong-793003 |
| 4. Publisher's Name | : | Deputy Director, NEHU Publications |
| Nationality | : | Indian |
| Address | : | Bijni Complex, Shillong 793003 |
| 5. Editor's name | : | T. B. Subba |
| Nationality | : | Indian |
| Address | : | NEHU Publications, Bijni Complex,
Shillong 793003 |
| 6. Name and Address of individuals
who own the journal and partners
or share-holders holding more than
one percent of the total capital | : | North-Eastern Hill University,
Permanent Campus, Umshing,
Shillong-793022 |

I, T. B. Subba, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

T. B. Subba

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. A. K. Thakur is Selection Grade Lecturer, Department of History, Tirap Government College, Deomali, Tirap, Arunachal Pradesh.

Dr. Lalit P. Pathak retired as Librarian, NEHU Central Library, Mayurbhanj Complex, Upper Nongthymmai, Shillong 793014.

Professor A. C. Sinha teaches at the Department of Sociology, NEHU, Shillong 793022.

Dr. (Ms) E. Jyrwa is Reader at the Centre for Supportive Learning Systems, NEHU, Shillong 793014.

Dr. R. Khongsdier is Reader at the Department of Anthropology, NEHU, Shillong 793014.

Dr. Gurudas Das is Reader at the Department of Economics, NEHU, Shillong 793014.

Professor B.S. Mipun teaches at the Department of Geography, NEHU, Shillong 793014 and

Dr. R. Ramthara is Lecturer, Aizawl North College, Aizawl, Mizoram.