

Book Reviews

PUBLIC HEALTH ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN INDIA: Edited by B. Suresh Lal. pp.352 + xviii, tables, photographs, 2016. Serials Publications Pvt. Ltd.: New Delhi. Hard bound. Price Rs. 1250/-.

This edited book by Dr. B. Suresh Lal of the Department of Economics of Kakatiya University, Warangal, Telangana, focuses on public health, biodiversity and environment, and social and legal issues through twenty-five articles presented in three parts. Part-I contains eight articles on 'public health issues'; only four articles in Part-II on 'biodiversity and environment'; and thirteen articles on 'social and legal issues' in Part-III. Twenty-five articles have been contributed by twenty-four scholars, of them 20 are from Telangana State and 4 are from Andhra Pradesh.

The volume carries a foreword by Prof. V. Gopal Reddy, former Vice-Chancellor of Kakatiya University, who writes, "Several traditional practices that are sustainable and environment friendly continue to be a regular part of the lives of people in developing countries. These need to be encouraged rather than replaced by more 'modern' but unsustainable practices and technologies. Education being a proactive force.....is capable of tackling the problems that humanity is facing in three areas — health, environment and social. The editor has carefully selected the articles that addresses these issues.....".

On 'Public Health Issues' some of the articles are titled as: "Communicable Diseases – Causes and Remedies", "Communicable Diseases", "Introduction to Diabetes", "Diabetes – Causes, Symptoms and Treatments", which are of very general nature, may be interesting for the lay readers. These three articles do not carry even a single reference in the text and at the end part. No information have been provided by the authors about the prevailing situation of communicable diseases and diabetes in the villages or blocks of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, which would have been helpful to researchers and to the

government administrators for taking future steps for their eradication.

In Part-II, of the four articles, two articles titled 'Biodiversity – An Overview' and the other 'E-Waste Management in India', are very generalized articles on biodiversity and waste management which are introductory level discussions at the undergraduate level. Like the previous articles mentioned earlier these two also do not contain any reference for further reading. There is no information provided by the authors on the situation prevailing in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh or of any parts of India, thus making it an introductory presentation for the beginners which the reviewer feels was not expected from the editor. Though the book is titled as ".....*Issues in India*", nothing has been presented on the situation prevailing in India on these aspects.

In Part-III, there are thirteen articles which cover topics of discussion like child marriage in India, child labour in India, importance of family planning, sex selection, illiteracy in India, media impact on youth, youth of today, financial literacy, and a few others of very generalized nature. The shortest articles are "Financial Literacy" and "Importance of Family and Family Relations", each covering just four pages, these two articles are also without any reference cited. Six articles in this section have no references cited at the end, suggesting no review discussion of earlier works on these topics. The authors have followed their own style of presentation of references wherever shown, and carries numerous spelling errors, suggesting highly deficient editorial work.

Asesh K. Haldar
*Sarat Chandra Roy Institute of
Anthropological Studies, Ranchi*

EMPOWERMENT OF DALIT WOMEN: ROLE OF COMMUNITY BASED MICRO-FINANCE IN ANDHRA PARDESH. By N. Padmaja. pp. 287+ xvi, abbreviations, maps, tables, graphs, figures, photographs, index, bibliography, 2015. Serials Publications (P) Ltd. New Delhi. Hard cover. Price Rs. 995/-.

This hard covered volume by Dr. N. Padmaja is based on a study of three districts of Andhra Pradesh, which has three distinct regions, as Coastal, Rayalaseema and Telangana. The districts chosen for the study by the author are Chittoor (in Rayalaseema), Vizianagaram (in Coastal) and Mahabubnagar (in Telangana). Further the author selected 6 Mandals from Chittoor, 4 Mandals from Vizianagaram, and 6 Mandals from Mahabubnagar. At many places the author has differently spelt the place names particularly Vizianagaram and Mahabubnagar. The author states, "Thus, the study covers 3 districts, 16 mandals, 80 villages, 160 SHGs and 480 SHG members including 160 SHG leaders in Andhra in Pradesh" (p.32). The author has not mentioned in the 'Introduction' under the sub-heading "Collection of Data", as to when and for how long, she collected the entire data from the beginning to the end. This should have been expressed by the author. The author has listed five objectives of her study, which are generally in the line as presented in a Ph. D. dissertation. The style of presentation of the volume followed is what we generally find in Ph. D. dissertation. Nothing innovative that reflects her own line of thinking while presenting the volume.

This volume contains nine chapters as follows: Introduction; Scheduled Castes Under Study: A Brief Profile; SHGs and their Members – A Profile; Functioning of SHGs; Savings, Loans and Expenditure; Economic Empowerment; Social-political Empowerment; Changing Status and Role; Summary and Conclusions; at the end the author presents, bibliography, annexure, photograph, and index.

In chapter 3, 'SHGs and their Members – A Profile', the author has presented statistics of SHG members through 13 tables on the age distribution, literacy, marital status, size of family, type of family, kin relations in the family, type of houses, distribution

of caste groups, land holdings, occupation, livestock and income. These statistics presented by the author of the members of the SHGs do not reveal anything specific, though the author writes, "It is a fact that the success of the groups depends to a great extent on their socio-economic milieu"(p.65). The author has clubbed all the SHGs (160 SHGs) while giving this statistics. It does not indicate the distinctiveness, if any, that may have existed in three regionally distinct districts (Coastal, Rayalaseema and Telangana) and in 16 mandals, that the author considered for her study. The author has not made any comparative statistics of the three regionally distinct districts in her study.

There is no mention how the SHGs started in the three regions, who were the agencies/ NGOs/groups who motivated and initiated the formation of SHGs in the districts, how the movement started and spread in the villages. All these are very important in the understanding of empowerment of Dalits in the villages. Was there any Dalit leader who initiated the movement in the villages? These are important aspects of the study in the understanding of the empowerment of Dalit women. Is it entirely the Dalit leadership who are taking the initiative for forming SHGs in the village. A discussion of all these aspects are missing in this volume. The author should have discussed on some ten to fifteen SHGs specifically, out of 160 SHGs, representing varied periods of their formation and about their establishment, functioning, and their progress and popularity in the village among Dalit women. The author has given a list of castes — as Mala, Adi Dravida, Madiga, Paidi, Holiya Dasari, five caste names, in Table 3.8 on page 73, while on page 72 the author writes, "It is evident from the above table (*table is below*) that the SHG members belong to six caste group". The author has missed the name of one more caste. On page 218 (first paragraph), the same mistake has been repeated by the author. Such discrepancy in expression while describing are many more, and should have been checked.

At the end the author has presented ten photographs which are blurry, and so could have been avoided, as these are not important for the present discussion on empowerment. There are many printing errors.

Research students who are interested in the study on empowerment of Dalit women in Andhra Pradesh

will find this book of some help at the introductory level.

P. Dash Sharma
Sarat Chandra Roy Institute of
Anthropological Studies, Ranchi

RELIGION AND HEALTH: NARRATIVES ON FAITH HEALING. By Gurinder Kaur. pp. 541+ ix, tables, map, photographs, index, 2016. Serials Publications Pvt. Ltd.: New Delhi. Hard cover. Price Rs. 1950/-

Dr Gurinder Kaur writes in 'Preface' about her book, "...an attempt in comprehending, analyzing and conceptualizing all these connections and tensions through and inter-subjective experiences of the people about health, illness, treatments, prayers and religious beliefs. It is based upon empirical research conducted among Sikhs in north India. The idea behind the whole research was to locate continuities and discontinuities in identifying self as a Sikh (*in print* at two places on page is: *Sikh %*) its influence on health seeking behavior, its combination and contestation with popular beliefs and perceptions (p. viii). In 'Introduction' the author writes (p.8), "Understanding of the role and concept of supportive social relationships has been of objective importance in medical anthropology. Effect of religion on health can be understood only within a context defined by shared group norms, expectations and meanings." "Keeping in line of this thinking, the Sikhs were chosen as the focus of the present research work. The word Sikh means disciple. Guru Nanak Dev was the founder of Sikhism and first Guru of the Sikhs. Followed by him were nine other Sikh Gurus. The lineage of Gurus ended with tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh. Sikhs acknowledge these ten human Gurus.. According to the Sikh code of conduct a Sikh is any human being who faithfully believes in one Immortal Being, the ten Sikh Gurus; beginning from Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Gobind Singh; the Guru Granth Sahib; the utterances and teachings of Sikh Gurus. The baptism bequeathed by the tenth Sikh Guru and who does not owe allegiance to any other religion, is a Sikh. Guru Granth Sahib is the Holy Book of the Sikhs, accorded the status of a living Guru. The Holy

Book is considered as a remedial manual for all the ills suffered by humankind (Singh, 2005)."

"The ideology of Sikhism does not believe in occult beliefs and practices like *jantar*, *mantar*, *tantar*, magic, amulets, astrology, fasts, omens, ancestor worship or rendering services of oracles or faith healers for any matter or healing obtained through supernatural powers, other than God,Sikhs attach no importance to worship of graves or other relics.... Does that mean there is no place of faith healing in Sikh religion?"

This is precisely what the author has sought to answer in her book.

Theologically, all sorts of worldly ills that human beings suffer from, whether physical or psychological, the root of all these ills lays within the individual himself or herself. Sikhism places great emphasis on taking up personal responsibilities for one's own sufferings. Illness, disease, pain, suffering, etc are all the result of indulgence of human mind, body and spirit in worldly affairs. Breaking from this world bondage and uniting with God is the true healing. This healing is plausible only through remembering the divine name of the God (*nâm*). Unconditional belief in powers of God, of working according to His will under the canopy *nâm*, would render humans free of sufferings of all kinds, including illness and diseases.

The author has quoted extensively (citing *Pannâ* number) from Guru Granth Sahib the verses devoted towards the medicine and healing of various diseases and illness attached to the body, mind and soul, ultimately explaining the path of liberation from them. These have been discussed in chapter on 'Religious Identity and Faith Healing'.

"The notion of healing in Sikhism is thus to be in God's grace. The divine name, *nâm*, is the only way of achieving this blessed grace. Reading the holy scriptures from the Holy Book, visiting gurudwaras (Sikh temples), taking dips in *sarovar* (sacred bathing tank) are predicted by the Sikhs with the hope of attaining healing for their illness" (p. 9-10).

The author attempts to project in this book not just the religious dictums that define the identity of being a Sikh, but also the varied factors in different degrees of combination that influence the decision making process when facing illness. The author,

however, realizes that “At times these combining factors may be in consonance with one another and at times they may be in contestation” (p. viii).

The author discusses the ‘narratives of faith healing’ through the following chapters: Religion and Health: An Introduction; Faith Healing: Theories and Concepts; Religious Identity and Faith Healing; The Sikhs: A Profile; Research Journey; Narratives of Faith Healing; and lastly, The Summing Up. Let us see what the author has written in her ‘Research Journey’. On page 106, the author writes about the field areas. “.....three field areas were chosen for the study. Two of them were from the state of Punjab and the third was from the state of Uttarakhand.Uttarakhand was chosen because of miniscule population of the Sikhs residing in a completely differing socio-cultural milieu surrounded by substantial population of followers of other faith, especially the Hindu population.” The fieldwork was conducted in Amritsar and Mohali of Punjab and in Rishikesh of Uttarakhand. The author has substituted the word ‘design’ by the word ‘journey’ while discussing about research methodology. The reviewer was dismayed to find the ‘narrative’ of her ‘research journey’ unimpressive. It is a generalized presentation as is done in dissertations.

The chapter VI, the largest chapter covering some 346 pages, ‘Narratives of Faith Healing’, the author present the analysis of the data based on the interviews of 600 respondents chosen from field areas of Amritsar (Punjab), Mohali (Punjab) and Rishikesh (Uttarakhand), selecting 200 respondents (100 males and 100 females) from each area. All the respondents belonged to the upper high socio-economic group, and maximum respondents were *keshdhari* (non-baptised Sikhs maintaining uncut hair), followed by *ichhadhari* (Sikhs with shorn hair, proportion was highest among the female respondents), and the *amritdhari* (baptized) respondents who were least in number.

The author concludes, Amritsar being cradle of Sikhism depicted high religiosity among the respondents, followed by the city Rishikesh of Uttarakhand, though being away from Punjab and having a minority status and residing among the followers of other faith, majority being the Hindu. The Sikhs of Rishikesh in order to differentiate

themselves have asserted their religious beliefs and practices, as it was a means of defining their unique identity, though they have adopted some of the beliefs and practices of the Hindus. The city of Mohali, being close to Chandigarh, show high influence of modern life style and impact of rapid urbanization among the Sikhs residing there. Religion to them was an important aspect of life but was not the sole criteria of their life. The author states, “The difference, however, is not high in degree. Area, gender, age, educational qualification, occupation, socio-economic status were not the sole defining factors in development of religious beliefs and faith of the people.”

The author has discussed about faith healing and healing practices citing 38 cases. It would have been excellent, if the author had presented the illness types, and the age/sex of the persons suffering, the places they visited for curing their illness or sufferings, and the field area, about category of healers, etc in a tabular form. The table would have given a better analytical presentation. Running description of 38 cases without analysis is not a very desired style of presentation.

However, the reviewer feels this is an interesting field of study in medical anthropology conducted by Dr. Gurinder Kaur for understanding the human behavior at times of stress and tension, particularly in areas of high urbanization and modernization.

P. Dash Sharma
Sarat Chandra Roy Institute of
Anthropological Studies, Ranchi

SOCIAL MOBILITY AMONG URBAN WOMEN.
By Jyoti Sunil Shetty and Anjali Kurane. pp. 361+ x, tables, maps, appendix, 2015. Serials Publications Pvt. Ltd.: New Delhi. Hard bound. Price Rs. 1295/-

This volume on *Social Mobility among Urban Women* is based on a study conducted among the Mali women of Pune city situated at the foot hills of Sahyadri in Maharashtra. Pune is well-known as a major industrial centre of India. The authors write, “Pune city is characterized by cultural, educational, military, religious, and industrial features therefore

Pune was selected as a research area for the study” (p.58). Further the authors write (p.58), “Also the selection of Pune area was purposive as Mahatma Phule and Savitribai Phule were from Pune belonging to Mali community, their house is in Ganj Peth, Pune, andThey started their activities for upliftment of women from Pune.” The authors randomly selected 382 urban Mali women for their study from five suburb areas of Pune city.

The authors presented their study through eight chapters as follows: Introduction; The Methodology; Status of Women in the Family; Educational and Occupational Mobility; Social Mobility – I; Social Mobility –II; Case-studies; Summary and Conclusion, and at the end under appendix included the format of semi-structured interview schedule.

The authors have discussed social mobility in two sections, I and II. In section I, they have discussed social mobility on the basis of the attitudes of Mali women towards marriage, family, rites and rituals in religion; and have also tried to focus their extent of social participation and extent of their social distance (p.184). In section II, the authors have tried to assess the Mali women’s attitude towards politics and their extent of participation in politics, and secondly, the authors have attempted to study utilization of mass media among the Mali women taking four indicators as — reading newspapers, watching television, watching movies, and use of computers (p.263).

On page 64, the authors write, “qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection was used. This combination was purposive as this gives a holistic insight to the research problem and adds to the anthropological understanding of the problem.” The reviewer was dismayed to find that in a book covering 361 pages not a single table has been presented by the authors suggesting their attitudinal change towards marriage, rites and rituals, participation in politics quantitatively, nor even the status of the educational level of 382 urban Mali women they sampled and studied. The only table (Table 2.1, p. 62) that exist in the book is titled as — ‘Research areas with sub-areas’. Quantitative analysis of data on social mobility is a better way of presentation of social mobility, this is missing. Descriptive presentation without tables makes poor expression of social mobility.

It would have been excellent if the authors had attempted sociometric analysis of social mobility.

This volume is just one more addition to the already existing volumes of work on social mobility. Researchers interested in social mobility study among women will find this volume informative at the introductory level.

Shampa Gangopadhyay
*Anthropological Survey of India,
Central Regional Centre, Nagpur*