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BOOK REVIEW

Human Biology : Global Developments
Edited by L.S. Sidhu and S.P. Singh
XIII + 274 pp., References, USG Publishers and Distributors, Ludhiana (1996)

This book has been edited in honour of Prof. Dr. Otto G. Eiben, a distinguished Human Biologist and presented on his 65th Birthday. Prof. Otto G. Eiben, an internationally acclaimed scholar, has the distinction of being the President of the European Anthropological Association (1986-88) and winner of the prestigious Szent-Gyorgyi Albert prize. He has authored over 250 research articles and 12 books. Some of his remarkable contributions include Kormeand Growth Study, National (Hungarian) Growth study, Budapest Longitudinal growth study, and research papers in the field of Kinanthropology, Sport Science, Somatotyping, and Physical Fitness. He has been the editor of the journal 'Anthropological Közlemenyek'. He has great love for India, a part of that is reflected in his collaborative programs with Indian scientists. He enjoys esteem position both as a scholar and a person in the minds of Indian Anthropologists. In this spirit, it was a great moment when I saw this book, edited by two Indian Scholars, no less than Prof. L.S. Sidhu and Dr. S.P. Singh, who are a fine blend of being experts and experienced in the field of Human Biology.

Prof. Eiben has worked on a variety of topics under the umbrella of Human Biology with a galaxy of scientists from all over the world. Naturally he has academic friends from Canada, USA, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Venenzuela, South Africa and India, who were invited to contribute to this Festschrift volume. I was also honoured to contribute to this volume. Long standing friendship, affection and reverence I have for Otto that it was really a bad luck that I could not contribute to this volume. Nonetheless, I was much pleased when I got the opportunity of reviewing the volume.

This fascinating collection of papers under the title, 'Human Biology : Global Developments' reflects a wide variety of interests, that Otto shares. They range from Human growth, Kinanthropometry, Sports, Body Physique, Physical Fitness to Human Evolution. Sidhu and Singh, the editors, need to be congratulated for editing this volume in such a short span.

As the focus of the present review is the whole book, each of the article may not receive the attention in the review to the extent it deserves. To begin with, the paper by Stini addresses to the Senescence and its place in Human Evolution. He has highlighted the role of dynamic demographic characteristics, specially life expectancy, morbidity and mortality in altering the course of Human Evolution. Malina and his colleagues have worked out the relationship between Androgyny, based on the ratio of biacromial and bicristal breadth, and somatotype, particularly mesomorphy. Ross and his colleagues have deciphered the limitations of BMI (Body Mass Index) in the evalution of health. Kaul and his coauthors have collated information on some of the somatotype studies from India. Malik and Singh have presented the parent-child and sib-sib relationship based on selected body measurements of Punjabi Khatris. Carter, one of the famous propounder of Heath - Carter somatotype method, has wonderfully reviewed and commented on the somatotype analysis. Gaur and his colleagues have described in detail the Nutritional and growth status of the children between 6 to 10 years in Rajgarh Tehsil of Himachal Pradesh. They were also able to establish sex differences in this group in the growth status. The findings of an year long longitudinal study in muscle mass have been presented by Bhalla and Walia. Sethi and his coauthors have reported on the basis of their study on Punjabi Khatris the effect of various factors, particularly lifestyle on the menopausal age. Duquet and his colleagues did not find any appreciable ef-

fect of one or two years of additional physical education classes, at the age of 10 years, on the performance of children from 11 to 18 years.

Singh and his colleagues observed that a competition among the equals in maturity may be more healthy and fruitful than between unequals. On the basis of anthropometric investigation, Sodhi and Sandhu have presented their viewpoint on talent development in volleyball. Socio-biological profile highlighting socio-demography, nutrition and anthropometric characteristics of Venezuelan community has been provided by Pervez and his group. Prokopec and his coworkers have presented the impact of birth weight on the somatic development in their paper. While working on the impact of undernutrition, Jaiswal and her colleagues observed that motor development is affected more than the mental development. Bhatnagar and his colleagues were able to demonstrate that the foot arch and flexibility of ankle joints can help in long jump and broad jump and can thus help in improving performance of Basket ball players. Tobias, at the end, provides an elucidating account of demographic characteristics and environment of the fossil hominds. He concluded that though the life expectancy has increased from early hominids to present *Homo sapiens*, but this rise may not have been smooth.

During the review, I felt that it was not easy to unify the diverse topics under a single theme, except that they all fell within the domain of Human Biology. Even to group them under some academically meaningful subdivisions was not feasible.

I am sure that this difficulty must have also been realised by the editors and they might have preferred to keep these scientific treatises not tied up in the bundles of academic boundaries. This might give a jump or a jerk to the readers when they cross from one chapter to the other, but certainly, individually, each one of the papers provides a unique piece of information and thought provoking ideas. On the other hand, the editors have done a fabulous job of collating such stimulating and wonderful papers under a single title.

Succinctly, this Festschrift volume in honour of Prof Otto G. Eiben is a rewarding blend of reviews, theory and case studies and is a welcome addition to the literature in the field of Human Biology.

S.L. Malik
Department of Anthropology,
University of Delhi, Delhi 110 007, India

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