

BOOK REVIEW

Modern Trends in Anthropology: Some Socio-Demographic and Nutritional Aspects of Health

Edited by A.N. Sharma
200 pp. *Figures, Tables*
Northern Book Centre, New Delhi
(1989) Rs. 160.00 (Cloth).

This book is a special volume of the proceedings of a National Seminar on 'Modern Trends of Anthropology in Health, Nutrition and Demographic Strains of the Nation' held at Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, India.

There are in all 30 chapters in the book classed under four broad categories or sections based on the type of the data. The section-wise allocation of the number of chapters is as follows: Social aspect - five, Demographic aspect - eight, Biological aspect - 11 and Nutritional aspect - six. However from a reading of the title of the book one can not easily understand whether the work included the biological aspect at all though the editor's main plank of canvas is apparently this aspect.

Two of the papers in the first section are on the eruption pattern of permanent teeth among 360 Patiala children from lower and higher income groups in the age range of 6-16 years, and on the relative prevalence of dental caries in 300 caries-affected and 250 normal persons in the age range of 7-30+ years from Jalaun district of Uttar Pradesh. Of the remaining three papers, one is on unexplained fertility in 250 couples in the married life-span of 2-35 years while the other two papers provide a general account of health and nutrition and the prevalent belief system among the Bastar

tribes in Madhya Pradesh, and the Lodhas of West Bengal.

The papers included in the second section are generally diverse in nature and are neither in conformity with the theme of the seminar nor the title of the section. There are atleast two papers that dealt with some what similar data - one of the multivariate analysis of mortality among the scheduled tribe of Bagathas (202 couples) and secheduled caste (200 couples) comprising Malas and Madigas of Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh, and the other on the fertility and mortality in a sample of 148 Muria tribal couples of Bastar, M.P. The rest of the papers are on family planning practices in Sagar town of Madhya Pradesh and family planning barriers in rural Bihar, on the functioning of Primary Health Centres in Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh and the performance level of immunization programme in Madhya Pradesh, on the sociocultural and demographic variations among four West Bengal tribes and the impact of population explosion on agricultural food resources in rural Madhya Pradesh.

In the papers of the third section too as in those of the preceding section there is considerable amount of diversity in the nature of the data. The three papers on dermatoglyphics respectively deal, with the planter interdigital ridge count variation in Tuberculosis (TB) patients and normals, with the association between dermatoglyphic traits and Down's syndrome, and with the variation in the crease length formula among mentally retarded children and normals. Another set of three papers essentially are on growth studies: the Jharsuguda (Orissa) cross-sectional study on the measurements of height, weight, and head

and chest circumferences of 818 slum children; the Chhattisgarh (Madhya Pradesh) study on the body build and nutritional index among 360 Saryupari Brahmin male children aged 5-21 years; and the Madras study on the abnormal features like hypertelorism, large ears, low set ears or wide nasolabial distance in the diagnosis of certain syndromes from a sample of 840 children aged newborn to 11 years. The fourth paper in this series is on anthropometric variation as based on linear, transverse, circumferential and physiological measurements among the adults of the West Bengal tribes of Lodha and Mahali based on 205 families aged 20-48 years and 100 families aged 21-57 years, respectively.

Other papers deal with the genetic defect of *Talipes equinovarus* (club foot) in Sagar in relation to sociocultural and biomedical factors, association of ABO blood groups with tuberculosis from a sample of 117 patients and 100 control series in Chhattisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh, the G-6-PD deficiency and HbS among the Jains of Sagar from a sample of 120 males, and with the basic methods of research in dental anthropology from the standpoint of international uniformity to carry out systematic researches on dental variation and dental health by the collection of data and its analysis, interpretation and comparison

among different ethnic groups of the world at national, regional and local levels.

The papers included in the last section are on the impact of malnutrition on brain growth and mental development, on the nutritional status of a rural population of Sagar measured from dietary intake and anthropometric variation from a sample of 325 children as also households, on the dietary intake of Birhor tribe of Bihar and among the people of Rewa in Madhya Pradesh, on the nutritional status of Visakhapatnam children, Andhra Pradesh as estimated by anthropometric traits and dietary intake from a sample of 344 children, and on the dietary survey of Chhattisgarh region, Madhya Pradesh from 306 families.

The preceding account makes it clear that more than 10 papers are of a general kind and sketchy due to lack of field data. There is also no uniformity either in the style of presentation of the papers or in the citation of referred works. Despite these limitations the papers generally provide several cues for further research in various directions. The book is undoubtedly useful both at the teaching and research levels not only for anthropologists but also for those in allied disciplines.

V. Rami Reddy

Department of Physical Anthropology and
Prehistoric Archaeology
S.V. University, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India No. R.No. 50747/89

Printed and Published by M.K. Bhasin on behalf of Indian Society of Human Ecology (ISHE) at Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, Delhi 110 007 and printed at Kamla-Raj Prakashan, Printers and Publishers, Delhi and published by ISHE at Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, Delhi 110 007.

Managing Editor: M.K. Bhasin