

BOOKS REVIEWS

V. Lalita. 1995. *The Making of Criminal Tribes : Patterns and Transition*, Madras : New Era Publishers. pp. 198+xiii, Rs. 200/-

The Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 arbitrarily and unjustly declared several communities in India as criminal tribes, thus imposing a number of restrictions on these communities. The act assumed crime as hereditary occupation of these communities. Known as "de-notified communities", "ex-criminal communities", and "vimukta jatis", these communities continue to be the victims of their past; suffering stigma attached to their labels which prevented them getting integrated into larger society. Attempts were made by the British government and missionaries to reform these communities by rehabilitating them in settlements established for this purpose. The book under review is a study of two such settlements in Nellore and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh, dealing with Yerukula and Katthera communities. Combining an inter-disciplinary approach with the outlook of a social worker, the author undertook an analysis of the conditions of these communities, the rehabilitation programmes implemented and the response for these programmes. Though only two settlements have been taken up for a detailed study, the author covered a number of other settlements for comparison.

The book has been divided into seven chapters including introduction and conclusion. The introduction chapter deals with the nature of crime and criminality in general, and specific studies on the so called criminal communities. Chapter 2 discusses the historical setting in which the Criminal Tribes Act came in to existence. The restrictions imposed by the act and its consequences were analyzed in detail. Chapter 3 provides an ethnographic profile of Yerukula. An analysis of various factors which have driven Yerukula to criminal activity have been taken up. Chapter 4 deals with the Yerukulas in the early British period. History of various criminal settlements and the related issues and problems formed the focus. Chapter 5 delineates the social and economic changes that

have been taking place among Yerukulas and the implications of these changes. A few valuable suggestions for the successful rehabilitation of Yerukula emerge from the discussion which is well documented with the support of statistical information. Chapter 6 brings out a contrast between the two settlements studied where a significant reduction in the incidence of crime is seen in one settlement. The underlying factors for this were brought out. The concluding chapter is a debate on the role of heredity and environment in influencing criminal tendencies. The minimal progress achieved in the rehabilitation of criminal tribes has been highlighted here. The importance of removing the psychological barriers created by the stigma of criminal label and the need for concerted action on all fronts with a humane approach have been emphasized in the end.

Though, the author's observations on the criminal tribes and their problems are an important contribution in unveiling the struggle of these people, the remedies suggested need more cautious consideration. For example, one of her suggestions to disperse these people to avoid their concentration at a single place, is likely to pose more problems for them. The suggestion for allotment of land to these people for cultivation, needs to keep in mind the lack of an agricultural tradition. The presentation of issues from the perspective of Yerukula is welcome, but the view point of non-Yerukula is also important to deal with the dynamics of the setting in which the Yerukula are to be integrated into the main stream society.

Field workers are well aware of the practical problems of collecting sensitive information. The vivid description given by the author about the types of crimes, beliefs associated with criminal activities, instruments and weapons used in crime reveal the in-depth information obtained by the researcher from these ex-criminal groups. The narration made by the author is supported by extensive use of documents, reports, data collected through field work and a variety of sources. The author has rightly brought out that there is no significant associa-

tion between fathers' and sons' criminal activity. The most significant observation made by the author is that, though the beginnings of the crime are rooted in economic compulsions, a stage comes later, where crime is not correlated with poverty alone. Respectable people such as police and political leaders who enjoy the fruits of the crime develop a vested interest in the continuation of crime making it impossible for the ex-criminal communities to come out of the vicious circle. This book is extremely useful to social scientists and all those who are involved in the reform and rehabilitation of ex-criminal communities.

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Jaspal Singh (ed.), *Society, Culture and Socio-cultural Change*. New Delhi: National Book Organisation, 1996. Pp.i-XX + 331
Rs.350/=

The book under review has exciting collection of articles and papers published/presented by the author in several journals - Indian and Foreign - and in seminars/symposia. Most of the collections are author's own and a few are joint writings with Prof.C.Rajagopalan who served as a role-model for Prof.Jaspal Singh throughout his career as a student first and later as a dedicated teacher.

The topics covered by the book are varied - from methodology to theory and from theory to application. I am pleasantly surprised to read a chapter on logic of research with a nostalgia. In my early years of college life I studied logic as a compulsory subject. Though the subject by itself was interesting there was little realization of its usefulness by the peer groups. Only when I took up research and teaching as my career the usefulness of the knowledge of logic and logical procedures became abundantly clear. Still later when I taught research methodology to senior students and research scholars I realized the tragedy of abandoning the study of logic as a subject in colleges in Tamil Nadu from where we got most of our students for Masters and other research programmes. Though the study of sociology has been emphasizing on objec-

tivity, relativism, and skepticism as canons of science in practice it was hard to inculcate these canons into the minds of students who were deeply entrenched in ethnocentrism and accepted stereotypes as valid sources of knowledge. We attempted to correct this situation by offering courses in logic and Prof.Rajagopalan was a pioneer in this effort. Therefore it is quite natural that I am elated to see this chapter. You find an introduction of all the basic concepts in logic in the chapter and they are explained with suitable examples from everyday life particularly from Indian events and situations.

This chapter is followed by some excursions into Max Weber's contribution to sociological theory. By virtue of his knowledge in German language and having read the originals in German Prof. Jaspal Singh has the unique distinction of explaining Weberian concepts and theory in his own simple style which will even make the layman to understand them with such facility that no one can miss the essentials of Weber.

In the same fashion he elucidates the contributions of the Frankfurt School to social thought. He starts with its historical antecedents and by gradual progression goes on to the complexity of the thought processes of this school. Better part of this elucidation is his critique which runs through the whole exposition.

Some of the selections are the extended versions of his own reviews of books written both in English and in German language. Notable among them are the ones on Culture, National Integration and India and China.

On the applied side of social change in India he focuses on the Sikhs of Punjab and draws his data through field work and draws a very interesting and valid inferences. The analysis deals with social structure of Sikhs, Sikh leadership, their marriage practices, power elites among Sikhs and agricultural practices based on innovations. All these analyses show how Sikhs as a dominant socio-religious group transformed Punjab into a progressive well developed state in India.

There are also a few articles which do not have a direct relevance to the theme of the book. But he has handled them skillfully and linked to the theme of social change in terms

of futuristic needs. This refers to the articles on German Trade Unions and Japanese Management. However he is of the clear view that Japanese Management does not suit India as Indian social milieu is totally different from the social milieu of Japan and I would agree with him as one who has had an opportunity to observe their social life pattern overtime.

It would be unfair if one fails to say anything about the epilogue of the book. It is jointly written with Prof. Rajagopalan. It is a thorough going essay analysing various dimensions of Indian society - historical, economic, social and political - with a value loaded perspective. While the analysis is impartial the suggestions are subjective and personal. One may not agree with all their views but no one could doubt their academic sincerity.

On the whole this book is a readable one for the layman as well as for the expert. The free flowing language and precise expressions are the additional strengths of this book. I am sure the book will be widely read by the academic community with great appreciation and I have no hesitation in recommending this book to fellow social scientists.

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Katy Gardner and David Lewis, 1996.
Anthropology, Development and the Post-Modern Challenge. London: Pluto Press. pp. xvi + 192

The recent popularity of buzz-words in development discourse like "empowerment" or "civil society" and ascendancy of the "participatory"/"bottoms-up" approaches and the downfall of 'modernization'/'neo-Marxist' theories and of the 'top-down'/'trickle-down' approaches, have created a demand for anthropological knowledge. The demand for anthropologically-oriented-actors (AoAs) is equally strong from bigger (World Bank), intermediate (NGOs) and smaller (grassroots organizations) studios making newer versions of the film called "development". At this crucial juncture, the supply side is struggling to match the ever increasing demand for AoAs. The net

result is that some are hiring "others" in anthropological clothings, or "half-baked" anthropologists, whereas some have asked their existing staff to simply use anthropological jargon as a "make-up" to claim that they are "people-centred". Main problems for the supply-side (most of the colleges or universities teaching anthropology) are : their lack of awareness about the current debates or "fashions" going on in "development", mainly because of non-availability of a concise text book on the subject and their colleagues in academic settings, to enrich the discipline of anthropology and the science of human development.

The book under review, by Gardner and Lewis, has filled up the above referred existing vacuum within anthropology. The book is a well balanced synthesis of authors' experiences in different settings, as academics and practitioners. Claim of the authors' that the book is first "to bring together the various histories, opinions and debates which have emerged during the relationships between development and anthropologists in the contemporary period" seems justified. The book has been published as a part of an *Anthropology, Culture and Society* series of the Pluto Press under the series editorship of Richard Wilson. Some of the other titles under the series are : *Women of a Lesser Cost*, *Ethnicity and Nationalism and Power and its Disguises*.

To make the readers comfortable, the authors have placed at the beginning of the book a Glossary of terms used as "development jargon" and "anthropology jargon", before starting the seven-chaptered journey in the *Anthropology, Development and the Post Modern Challenge*. The opening Chapter-1 "Anthropology, Development and the Crisis of Modernity" (pp. 1-25) is an overview of the history, meaning and theories of development from colonial, post-colonial era of the present age of post-modernity. Problems posed by the Post-Modernists, like challenging the basic tenet of anthropology's claim to represent and understand diverse societies objectively and various other concepts and theories of development are all parts of this chapter. The authors have provided a sketch a historical background of applied anthropology,

its origin in UK and USA in Chapter 2 "Applying Anthropology - an historical background" (pp. 26-49). It also deals with the gradual change in applied anthropology's focus from social change to applied, action and advocacy anthropology.

The social, cultural and gendered effects of economic change; issues like urbanization, de-tribalization, capitalism and world systems and various factors responsible for the failure of development projects have been dealt in Chapter 3 "The Anthropology of Development" (pp. 50-76). Seven case studies on different development projects from different parts of the "third world" constitute the Chapter 4 (pp. 77-102). These case highlight the importance of factors like "access" and "control" over resources by different competing communities in a social setting, considered by most of the development experts generally as a homogeneous group. "Like the people to be developed, the development policies and practices are also heterogeneous", is the basic theme of Chapter 5 (pp. 103-127). The meaning and scope of popular terms like community development, participation, NGOs, target groups, participatory research methodologies, empowerment, farming systems research, "women in development" (WID) and "gender and development" (GAD) have been explained in this chapter.

Dilemmas faced by anthropologists, while playing different role within the development industry, based on three empirical situations, and the related issue of ethics have been dealt in Chapter 6 (pp. 128-152). Authors' have tried to answer queries like "how should anthropologists become involved?" and "how to avoid co-option by the development discourse?" in the concluding Chapter 7 "Beyond Development" (pp. 153-168). While admitting that anthropology neither holds all the situations nor suffers any simple formula for bringing positive change, the authors have highlighted the power of analytical insights of anthropology to reveal complex, even hidden, relationships. Anthropologists have been urged to question the processes or games going on in the name of development and to keep challenging the social and political relations of poverty and inequalities and to apply an-

thropology for a better world.

Undoubtedly, the pains taken by the authors to bring out the much needed text on the interface between anthropology and development, backed by a number of case studies and a strong bibliography, in a sleek volume is a yeomen service to the discipline of anthropology. However, there are some angularities in the text which may be taken care of in the next edition of the book. Like the meaning of social development given in Glossary as "a new term used in the UK to describe the" reads like a Brit-centric expression, particularly when a World Summit on Social Development has been organized recently. While dealing with origin and changes in the applied anthropology field, one feels that reference to the Local Practicing Organizations which have come up in the last decade, or so, should have been mentioned, along with a reference to the publications of journals like the *Practicing Anthropology* from USA and the *Anthropology in Action* from UK. Situation of applied anthropology in India refers to its engagement mainly with tribals alone. Actually much water has flown under the river Ganges by now. A list of the members of the Network of Practicing Anthropologists and Related Scientists (NETPARS) - a society registered recently (1995) in New Delhi, shows that work of applied anthropologists now spans from space research to the study of workers in mines. With these minor exceptions, the book has come out beautifully and is a must for anybody interested in human development. Incidentally, in a participatory mood or in a Participatory Book Appraisal mode, some of the undergraduate students of anthropology and sociology in the University of Wales Swansea, who have been prescribed this book, were interviewed by the reviewer and most of the students found the book very useful.

The book is recommended to students, researchers and teachers of anthropology and related disciplines and to all practitioners, policy scientists and planners engaged in the field of human development.

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