

BOOK REVIEW

Contemporary Studies in Human Ecology: Human Factor Resource Management and Development By M.K. Bhasin and S.L. Malik
Kamla - Raj Enterprises, Indian Society for Human Ecology, Delhi (1998). Rs 550/- US\$ 60/- (Hard bound)

The living beings interact with the environment for their survival, but our species differ from all others in this interaction. Biologically man is an animal, a vertebrate, a biped primate, and is subjected to many of the ecological and evolutionary rules. Man has acquired a distinct position in the network of biological diversity because of his ability to successfully exploit environment beyond his biological limits. Through the technological developments to satisfy needs and greeds, our species has developed the ability to manipulate the environment beyond the biological abilities. It is through these technological abilities to extensively modify the ecosystem that man has achieved the high productivity level of modern agriculture, without which human population could not have reached and sustained at the present levels, and without which man's great cultural and artistic achievements would not have been possible. In the situation where man is trying to fulfil his desires by overexploiting the environment, there is a ray of hope that man has also the wisdom and ability to understand the situation and act accordingly for his future development.

In the modern pace of life it is seen that human factor is very important in the management and development of environment. Need of the hour is the judicious management of resources. The real and effective development is not only to utilise the resources optimally for the present generation, but for the posterity. The non-renewable resources have to be used cautiously because of their limited availability. A balance between the expenditure and the replenishment of the renewable resources is needed. The last few decades have witnessed the environmental awareness on rise and deliberate attempts have been made to monitor both micro-and macro-environmental effects. It is felt that the problems arising out of the man-environment interactions are multifactorial and require a multi-disciplinary and

inter-disciplinary approach for their solution.

This volume is a result of the National seminar held from October 3 to 5, 1996 at New Delhi with the joint effort of the Indian Society for Human ecology, New Delhi and Institute for Bio-social Research and Development, Calcutta. The contributors to this volume came from a variety of disciplines like Anthropology, Botany, Zoology, Human Science, Human Geography, Life Sciences, Environmental Sciences, NGOs and Forest management. It is not simple to synthesise information from such a large variety of disciplines into a single volume. The editors have taken an at most impossible task and very successfully integrated information into a volume.

Professors Bhasin and Malik, the editors of the volume, convincingly argue, one should not lose hope. On the one hand, human beings are exploiters of nature and they have often been castigated for unleashing a state of reckless exploitation of resources denuding the earth. On the other, they know that it is from nature that they derive their sustenance. They know if they did not mend their ways or alter their ethos of living, the fury of nature will wipe them out.

Everything cannot be said in one book. The reviewer appreciates the concern of the contributors for ecological problems. The authors have raised several ecological issues, have discussed them to understand and have raised some methodological questions. They have also tried to suggest remedies to mitigate ecological problems. The richness of information and the contextual discussions thereby are the strength of the volume.

The present volume would certainly prove a boon to all those associated with education the educators, the educationaists, the decision-makers, the administrators and the researchers, for whom particularly it would be useful as they would find relevant material embeded at a single place, without spending time on searching the material. To sum up, it is worth reading and possessing this book by those who are sincerely interested in such a socially revelant issue of human ecology.

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