

in itself as a broader concept for creating a liveable habitat for physical and mental health and well-being of the people. The editor has also discussed in detail, weaving together various chapters of relevance, to present the efficacy of slum upgrading approaches, extension of tenure followed by donor-funded programmes, searching for the efficacy of housing programmes and mass housing solutions through Social Audit.

*Dr.G.Valentina*

**Community Natural Resource Management and Poverty in India - Evidence from Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh** by Shashidharan Enarth, Jharna Pathak, Amita Shah, Madhu Verma and John R. Wood, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd 2016, Pages 414, Price: ₹ 1,150.

In the year 2000, the United Nations, after surveying all the economic, social, health and environmental problems of our planet, announced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They agreed on eight goals, the first of which was declared to be the eradication of poverty. This was of immediate significance to all those concerned about poverty in India, which, going by the World Bank poverty standard of a per capita income of less than US\$ 1.25 per day, implied that India contained one-third of the world's poor (2010 figures). The poor thus formed 42 per cent of the Indian population and lived mostly in rural areas. Despite recent overall increases in India's growth rates and an official downward revision of poverty estimates, the absolute number of rural Indians living below

the poverty line is estimated at about 400 millions (2010 figures).

During the two decades leading up to the millennium, a new approach to rural development was introduced in many of the larger Indian States and this in turn gained governmental recognition. Titled as 'Community Natural Resource Management' (CNRM), it featured the decentralisation of the local management of natural resources to the rural communities (most involved in their use) by government departments. Thus, under the new approach, farmers were to take responsibility for the management of water; forest dwellers for the protection and management of their forests; and fishermen for the management of the fisheries on India's inland reservoirs.

The emergence of CNRM as a new strategy for managing natural resources by the local communities first appeared in the 1980s and spread widely in 1990s, and was touted as 'a new paradigm' for rural development in India.

Between the years, 1990 and 1995, the Government of India (GoI) took much of the initiative in each of the four CNRM programmes that were researched in this book, by promoting reform, setting up model legislations and providing financial support. At the outset, the CNRM idea was greeted with skepticism- as to how could farmers, without engineering or management training, take on the huge responsibility of water management? Similar doubts were expressed about the administrative abilities of forest dwellers or fishermen and their ability to overcome their dependence based on poverty, illiteracy and isolation.

This book consists of 8 chapters. The introductory chapter, besides introducing CNRM, provides a brief background on the beginnings of each of the four CNRM programmes in India.

The second chapter explores the conceptual and methodological issues that the authors have addressed in their research. The main concepts are some of the thorniest in the development lexicon: community, decentralisation, institution, equity, governance, impact and poverty. The main methodological challenges included the selection of study villages, FGDs, a household survey (HHS), pre- and post-intervention asset and production measurements, determining the impact of CNRM on poverty, including attributing change in poverty status to CNRM.

Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 present the research findings and analysis of the four CNRM programmes of Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM), Inland Fishing Cooperatives, Watershed Development and Joint Forest Management (JFM), respectively. Because of the special features of each programme, very aptly each author conducted the research and analysed the results in his / her own way.

However, at the same time as far as possible, a comparative perspective was also maintained, noting similarities and dissimilarities in de jure and de facto programme initiation, performance and outcomes.

Chapter 7 begins the conclusion by exploring the comparative findings presented in chapters 3-6; specifically, it reviews the authors' answers to the central research questions from the perspective of each of the four CNRM programmes.

Chapter 8 presents the way forward and underlines two tasks: (a) the main deficiencies of CNRM in the two States, both generally and in relation to each programme and (b) based on the evidence and the analysis, it suggests policy changes regarding CNRM and its role in reduction of poverty in India. The authors appear to offer these suggestions to Central and State governments (administrators, politicians, policy makers and implementers), tax payers, NGOs, the academic community studying CNRM, and most importantly, CNRM practitioners at the village level.

*Dr. G.V. Krishna Lohi Das*