

doors for setting-up small and large scale agro-industries in rural areas. In this context, this book finds relevance and is useful to all those who are in search of setting up of new agro-based industry in rural areas.

The book would facilitate the students, bankers, management consultants and aspiring entrepreneurs in agro-processing industries in India for better understanding of present scenario of the agro-industries, barriers in the present system, selecting a suitable project and implementing the project. Overall, it is an excellent textbook-cum-practical guide on procedures and practices in the field of agro-industries in India.

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***Social Problems in India, Edited by Bhola Nath Ghosh & Himansu S. Ghosh***, 2017, published by Concept Publishing Company Private Limited, New Delhi, India. Price : ₹ 1050

Each chapter of this book highlights a unique social problem, potential reasons behind it and plausible solutions to eradicate the same. If not addressed, these problems may plunge the nation into darkness and lead the country into socio-economic backwardness. The editors of the book made a good attempt to compile 15 articles on various burning issues the Indian society has been facing. One of the authors elaborated the evil of corruption which is the most pertinent issue today. He remarks that corruption in a civilised society is like a deadly disease, which will lead to disastrous consequences for the country in general and the society in particular, if not prevented through proper measures.

Corruption has a deep and pervasive impact on the functioning of the entire economy, the author rues.

Some authors in the book have touched upon the cruel practices in the society such as domestic violence against women, gender parity, bullying, inequalities among citizens, etc. No society and nation at large can ignore the need for holistic and people's-centered approach to poverty reduction and human development. To address this issue, the authors suggested that a radical change in discourse and development is called for which is away from sole reliance on micro-economic growth model to the one based on improvement in quality of life of the poor. The authors pointed out that emancipation of the marginalised and vulnerable sections from the inequalities, gender parity, illiteracy, poverty, hunger, life threatening diseases are the major concerns of any civilised society and democratically elected government. They opined that quality in human life can be achieved through affordable healthcare, right education and enforcement of human rights. This book systematically covered the problems in the society through critical evaluation and detailed research at the ground level. The authors made a detailed analysis of the situation in the country from a sociological view point.

In this book, the chapters especially on healthcare, maternal mortality, and cancer depict a gloomy picture in the Indian society. In the absence of proper medical infrastructure and adequate medical professionals and low economic status of vast number of tribal people, they are denied universal access to timely and affordable healthcare. The authors felt that basic amenities like safe drinking water, sanitation facilities are equally important for better health.

Though India has achieved rapid economic growth in the recent times, the authors commented that its maternal mortality is one of the highest in the world. They found that lack of management capacity in the healthcare system has led to poor quality and slow progress in these essential services. The study further mentioned that the cases of maternal deaths are basically reflection of the existing economic, social, and cultural factors. The article on cancer educates the readers on the dynamics in dealing with the disease, emotional inter-play within the family, extent of isolation among cancer patients as well as the significance of professional intervention in holistic care of the patient.

The chapter on right to equality for the Indian women traces its origin and evolution right from the ages of Plato and Aristotle to the time when the laws were incorporated in the Indian Constitution. One of the researchers has concluded that the Indian cinema failed in upholding the rights of the oppressed on one hand and portraying the women as objects of obscenity and commercial work on the other hand. In the chapter on students' radicalism, the writer finds that the left wing radicalism is on the rise among the university students in West Bengal mainly due to dissatisfaction with pathetic state of affairs in the society, polity and the educational institutions.

Overall, this book highlights the burning socio-economic issues of the Indian society along with required strategies to tackle them. As such, the book is quite useful for the policy makers, academicians, researchers, NGOs, human rights activists, rural development professionals and the civil society at large.

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***Decentralised Democracy in India: Gandhi's Vision and Reality*** by **M. V. Nadkarni, N. Sivanna and Lavanya Suresh**, 2018, published by Routledge, London, pp: 420, Price : ₹ 1295

The ideal democratic system for Mahatma Gandhi was *Gram Swaraj* (self-rule by villages). Only in *Gram Swaraj*, people would have full opportunity to make their voice heard by their representatives. Based on this theme, the book explores the philosophical and ideological background of Mahatma Gandhi's vision of decentralised democracy. The book provides an in-depth analysis of different issues relating to decentralisation, historical evolution of Panchayati Raj Institutions and a critical assessment of the institutions both in rural and urban areas from a Gandhian perspective. The book comprises 11 chapters focusing on the decentralised democracy in terms of Gandhi's philosophy and the present situation of politics and governance at the local level both in the rural and urban areas.

The book starts with an elaboration of Gandhi's political philosophy and his alternative vision towards democratising the society and the economy. The introductory chapter provides a vantage point of comparison of the actual reality and what can be taken as an ideal. The first three chapters subsequently delineate Gandhi's holistic vision of rural development which included agriculture, horticulture, village industries, bee-keeping, animal husbandry, transport, education, sanitation, culture and sports. The chapters provide the overall framework of decentralised political democracy. The chapters four and five deal with the historical evolution of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India covering the pre-Independence and post-Independence periods. It also depicts the existence of local self-government in India at the grassroots level since ancient times.