

URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND NEW TOWNS IN THE THIRD WORLD: LESSONS FROM THE NEW BOMBAY EXPERIENCE by Alain R.A. Jacquemin, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999.

Scholars and students of urbanization in the Third World will appreciate the appearance of this book. It is a well-researched work that provides those interested in the subject an in-depth view of the processes of development of a new town in India and its subsequent impact. New towns have been established in many parts of the developing world, used as a strategic tool for reshaping urban hierarchy, and improving life for the urban and rural poor. Jacquemin's book is a thorough analysis of such an experience in planning and implementation of a major case in India. The book, which is a concise version of a Ph.D. thesis written in The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of the University of London, contains wealth of data, some of which gathered in the author's field work.

The major aims of the book are stated at the outset: (1) to evaluate the urban planning experience of New Bombay. Lessons learnt could be used as theoretical contribution to the general theory of urban development in the Third World; and (2) to provide a pioneering study, based on empirical research, on New Bombay, the twin city of Bombay.

These aims are discussed and analyzed along ten chapters grouped into three parts. The first part provides the background to urban development in the Third World in general and specifically in India. The discussion summarizes nicely some major published sources of theoretical knowledge regarding the process of urbanization in the developing countries, while covering major issues such as colonial development, natural increase, urban migration, housing problems, urban poverty etc. In addition, Jacquemin provides an overview of strategies and practical experience of planning and development. It is followed by a discussion of urban development in India and in Bombay, based on both historical perspective and current issues. The last chapter leads to the conclusion that the rapid growth rate of Bombay generated problems of inadequate infrastructure, shortage of housing and social and economic services, typical of the urbanization process in Third World cities. All these led to the initiation of the New Bombay plan. In each of the chapters a section is dedicated to the study of urban policies and urban planning.

The second part, which is the main focus of the book, deals with the evolution of New Bombay. It is made of four chapters focusing on: (1) the development concept and planning objectives; (2) the form and extent of urban development and growth after 25 years of project implementation; (3) the impact of the urbanization process on the original villages and their population; (4) the relationships between the new town and the different social classes within its boundaries; and (5) the role of the state in the transformation processes. After years of deliberation the government of Maharashtra has planned and implemented New Bombay as a twin city to the over-congested India's economic center, Bombay. The town was built on an area partly

rural and partly within the municipal boundaries of mainly two local municipalities. It was planned under a common strategy used in developing countries—New Towns—meant to create a more balanced and sustainable urbanization process by providing the necessary economic and social infrastructure.

The growth of the new town took a fast pace from the late 1980s and early 1990s, mainly due to establishing and widening the links with the job centers of Bombay. Those to suffer from the development process were, as usual, the villagers whose amenities were not improved, and especially the landless villagers who could not gain any benefit by selling land or receiving compensation, as did some of their land-owning neighbors. New Bombay has indeed become a city predominantly populated by an upper middle class, while low and low middle class people were marginalized even from those areas that were specifically planned to accommodate them, due to the relatively high cost of living needed by residents of the city.

As a critic to this part, to regard New Bombay as a growth pole is a debatable issue. The growth poles idea served as a focus of development in areas where urban economy was non-existent or which were at the lower level of the urban hierarchy. This is not the case of New Bombay. Moreover, to think that New Bombay could become overnight a self-contained city is somewhat over optimistic. The experience of new towns shows that it takes time to take-off. There is a need for a threshold population and economic activities to grow and develop in the town, and social and economic adjustment by the surrounding region, in order to generate a sustainable regional integration.

In the third part the implications of the planning concept and the implementation process are further discussed and evaluated. The author links here the findings of the second part to the theoretical background offered in the first part. He reaches the conclusion that new towns may be served as a tool in strategic planning, as well as a valuable tool in determining the regional urban growth pattern. This should be done with minimal embroil and negative effects on the rural population whose land is under pressure by urban expansion. Government proper intervention may provide the platform on which the rural population and the urban poor, living on the fringe of development, can receive a share of the growth process. Nevertheless, rehabilitation schemes that were introduced to improve the conditions of the original population were a far cry from success—little has actually been done. This raises the eternal question of why does the development of one section of the population leads to the underdevelopment of another section.

Some issues have not gained any attention, particularly those related to the conflicts regarding the urban-rural fringe, and the issue of urban agriculture, a growing phenomenon in Third World cities. At the end of each chapter there are long notes, some of which were probably part of the original thesis and are relevant for a thesis but less so for a book. Also, it is pity that there is no index to this book. Any academic book is very much rewarded when an index is available.

Altogether, the chapters and parts of the book are well-structured and knitted. The book unravels all the conflicts, difficulties, intricacies and issues of plan imple-

mentation. It is well written, clearly presented and thought-provoking. To those interested in urban development it may offer a further insight into the mechanisms and processes underlying current conditions of planning and urbanization. It has taught me a great deal.

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INDIA: GLOBALIZATION AND CHANGE by Pamela Shurmer-Smith, London: Arnold and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Pamela Shurmer-Smith is Principal Lecturer in Social Anthropology and Cultural Geography at the University of Portsmouth. Her book appears to have two aims. The first, in her own words, is to “address the state of India at the turn of the millennium.” The second, partly conveyed by the title, is to put the blame for the worsening condition of India’s poor since 1991 to the shift to a market-oriented economy and globalization. She succeeds, beyond reasonable expectations, in meeting the first aim; in the second, she doesn’t quite succeed.

The structure of the book is as follows. There is a 17-page Introduction, aimed largely at “a readership of interested outsiders, people who do not have much firsthand knowledge of India...” It provides thumbnail sketches of caste, religion, political structure, languages and the economy which would be useful for ‘insiders’ as well (even if they do not always agree with the author). The body of the book is divided into twelve chapters: 1) The New Economic Policy; 2) Affluent urbanites; 3) The middle mass; 4) The urban poor and marginalized people; 5) Rural life; 6) Women and men, old and young; 7) Violence, crime and corruption; 8) Divisions in society; 9) The Center and regional movements; 10) What price the environment?; 11) A steel frame?; and 12) India and her diaspora. These chapters occupy a little over 160 pages.

Taken together, Chapters 2–9, 11 and 12 provide a fair picture of the fissures and fault-lines of contemporary Indian society. Doing it in less than 150 pages is an achievement; on the other hand, in a longer book, the reader could well have lost sight of the wood for the trees. The author seems to have found just the right balance.

In style, the book is more journalistic than scholarly—that, in fact, is the compromise that has made the book possible. For the present reviewer, it is not journalistic enough. The use of jargon subtracts more than it adds. The text is full of quotations and names—the bibliography contains more than 500 entries. However, would ‘a readership of interested outsiders’ recognize more than half-a-dozen of these names, or be able to assign due weight to their statements? The book would have been more readable if these references had been banished to footnotes. A more scholarly work on the subject would have filled several large volumes, and been years in preparation. One of the merits of Shurmer-Smith’s book is that it has appeared in real time. One of the significant observations in it is that it is the precari-