

correct in stressing, however, that a developing country must do more than concentrate on its comparative advantages (low average incomes, etc.) when attempting to integrate itself into the electronics world market. It must establish a comprehensive infrastructure and build up technological capacities.

Developing countries may have the chance to obtain the newest technology from industrial countries and therefore "leap-frog" several stages of development, thus gaining a time advantage. Experience has shown, however, that industrial countries are not keen on delivering the newest technologies to developing countries. This has been especially true in the case of India because of its intimate relationship with the Soviet Union.

After having restricted the multinationals' activities in the country, the Indian government now realizes how important the domestic presence of these companies is in the process of technology transfer, so vital for reducing the technology gap and maintaining an international speed of innovation. The important question is no longer deregulation, but how far it should go. This leads inevitably to the problem of transforming regulation policy into practice in the light of the day-to-day behaviour of the bureaucracy. Foreigners familiar with the country know how wide the gulf can be between official policy and practice, and that many things can happen in practice which the politicians never intended. The fact that the author does not say much about the transfer of politicians' good will into reality is perhaps a deficit in an otherwise superb book.

Gitta Walchner

JACK D. IVES/BRUNO MESSERLI, *The Himalayan Dilemma. Reconciling Development and Conservation*. London/New York: Routledge, 1990 (2nd ed.). 295 pages, £ 35.00

In this book Jack Ives and Bruno Messerli give a thorough account of the environmental situation of the Himalayan region and of Nepal in particular. It is an assessment of current theories about the causes and consequences of environmental degradation in a geographical key area of the Asian continent.

Introducing and summing up the different views and aspects of the "Himalayan crisis" the authors give a very broad geographical survey of the Himalayan region. They focus mainly on the history of deforestation and the role of scarce natural resources. It is discussed from an overall perspective, including the extent to which environmental problems are a natural process or can be regarded as man-made. After reviewing most of the arguments as

to whether there is "a crisis, a pseudo-crisis or a super-crisis" and contrasting them with results from recent research, the authors suggest a more modest and much more data-based interpretation of the environmental and social problems of the Himalayas and a more appropriate strategy to cope with them.

According to Ives and Messerli, after two decades of massive research some of the earlier views of environmental catastrophes in the Himalayan mountains often turned out to have been over-exaggerations and premature assessments of the situation and did not take into account how complex, dynamic and mutually dependent social factors and natural surroundings in the Himalayan region are. In their research strategy they emphasize the necessity for further information about the relevance of mountain/plains-linkages and reject the common thesis that overpopulation in the mountains is the major reason for deforestation and soil erosion in the mountains, thus leading to environmental problems in the plains. The long-term geophysical processes, the authors claim, have to be studied over a much longer time in order to assess the respective impact of man and natural erosion more correctly. Furthermore, international scientific cooperation is needed to face the predominantly socio-economic crisis in this region, which may be expected during the next decades.

Yet, Ives and Messerli do not dwell on problems only, they also consider how to cope with the dilemma of developing an area and likewise caring for the conservation of its fragile resource base under increasing population pressure. At the end of their book they sum up the most important results of the Mohonk Mountain Conference (1986), in which many experts took part, showing the interventions necessary for the improvement of the living conditions of the Himalayan peoples. Starting with a redefinition of what they think that "resources" mean in a Himalayan context, the authors plead for a combined approach of the natural sciences and the humanities, a proper identification of the clients for the development-cum-conservation activities and consideration of the kind of information needed to help in the future.

As a conclusion the authors list 21 essential topics (pp. 268f.) for a future research strategy. To them the environmental, socio-economic and political problems of the Himalayan region are all interlinked and can only be approached and partly solved by a supra-national and regional cooperation and coordination of research and development-cum-conservation efforts.

This book is an account of the most recent knowledge on the Himalaya, combining the perspectives of the social and the natural sciences and written with much personal insight and commitment. Although the reader is provided with immense detail about the social, economic and environmental aspects of

the Himalayan crisis, it is a particular merit of the work not to leave him/her in despair. The suggestions and future strategies which represent a large number of experts' findings show an affectionate concern for the many peoples dependent on the Himalayas. As a scientifically comprehensive and colourfully written work, it deserves the attention of all those interested in an up-to-date overview of what has recently been done and what remains to be done for the Himalayan environment.

Klaus Seeland

KLAUS KRÜGER, *Regionale Entwicklung in Malaysia - Theoretische Grundlagen, empirischer Befund und regionalpolitische Schlußfolgerungen*. (Beiträge zur kommunalen und regionalen Planung 11). Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 1989. X, 370 pp., 19 maps and figs., 87 tabs., DM 73.-

This book (mainly a doctoral dissertation, Hanover University, 1986) has 5 chapters dealing with, briefly, the following topics: 1. Introduction (pp. 1-13); 2. Some theoretical approaches to a general interpretation and overcoming of regional disparities in development (pp. 14-118); 3. Fundamentals of the social and economic development of modern Malaysia (pp. 119-175); 4. Regional disparities and regional policy in Malaysia (pp. 176-263); 5. Summary and conclusions (pp. 264-275). In addition, there are two appendices consisting of a fairly voluminous array of statistical tables on the one hand (pp. 276-353), and a short textual supplement on the other (pp. 354-355). Finally, the reader will find himself confronted with a list of references which casts some light on the literature selected (and neglected) for the purpose of this study, thus showing, upon closer examination of the titles cited, that there are only a few which were not referred to in the previous chapters. This is of course an absolutely legitimate method, and it is perfectly suited to stress a certain tenor of argumentation. So far, so good.

If one goes more into detail, however, one will be more and more convinced that this book has its weaknesses. This is not so obvious at the beginning where, in his "Introduction", the author lists the points he wants to clarify in the following chapters. Such a step is formally correct, it demarcates the range of problems, paves the way for subsequent research, and sets the goals envisaged. But everything is said in such a complicated manner that it tends to obscure rather than to explain.

The second chapter leads into the somewhat obsolete "boutique fantastique" of global theories and highly artificial scenarios which, bright or