

Other articles deal with irrigation management in North Pakistan (Tor Aase) and the Punjab (David Gilmartin), the latter focussing on the relation between the British colonial administration and local attempts at self-organisation; the voluntary organisation of waste management in Madras city (Hakan Tropp), pesticide production in Gujarat (Petter Lindstad) and deforestation and private property rights in North-West Pakistan (Are Knudsen).

In sum, this is a good resource book both for activists in search of detailed information about these issues in South Asia and for scholars interested in research methodologies for analysing and documenting the multiple dimensions of the relationship between society, state and the natural environment.

*Imme Scholz*

HANS-GEORG BOHLE, ELVIRA GRANER, MARTINA HEITKÖTTER, MARCUS MAYER (eds.), *Ernährungssicherung in Südasiens. 7. Heidelberger Südasiengespräche*. (Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung 178). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1997. ix, 162 pages. DM 58,-. ISBN 3-515-072071-1

This volume contains the collection of papers presented in 1996, the year of the World Food Summit, at the Seventh Interdisciplinary Roundtable on South Asian Issues at the South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg. In his opening lecture H.-G. Bohle (Heidelberg) gives a general overview of the complex problems of food security in South Asia. Five smaller countries on the subcontinent belong to the group of "food-deficit"-countries, and also Pakistan and India still suffer from the disparities of wealth and biased access to food. 40 to 50 percent of the world's malnourished population live in South Asia. Food security is not only a problem of sufficient food production. The occurrence of hunger and malnutrition among vulnerable groups is determined by economic, social, and also geographical factors, i.e. poverty, gender, health, access to markets and by state policies.

The participants at the conference represent a broad range of disciplines and professional background, history, agronomics, nutritional science, public health care, geography, social anthropology and development co-operation. The selection of papers in this volume is a mixture of general state of the art reports, supplemented by topical and regional case studies, and experiences reported by representatives of development organizations.

L. Weingärtner (Rottenburg) introduces the basics of nutritional science with regard to vulnerable groups in developing countries. Her paper focusses in particular on the impact of mal- and undernutrition on women and children, and presents basic indicators for the subcontinent. D. Rothermund (Heidelberg) gives a historical overview of the dimensions of food security and government policies in India, especially for the colonial period and the time since independence. One central point is the impact and efficiency of governmental policies regarding food production and security. H.-G. Bohle (Heidelberg) presents the concept of vulnerability and geographical risk research as one approach to assess the complex socio-economic dimensions of food security, including its adaptation for a case study in Nepal.

From the social-anthropological perspective, M.J. Casimir (Cologne) analyses the traditional strategies and diets of different pastoral groups of the northwestern mountain rim of the subcontinent. His case studies illustrate the huge variation of food preferences among socio-cultural groups and in different geographical regions of South Asia. An overview of the interdependence between national agronomic policies and food security in developing countries is presented by R. Herrmann (Giessen). This primarily theoretical paper includes the recent discussions on international trade liberalization and the potentials for national policies.

This first section on basic problems of food security is followed by one on the economical dimensions. Based on an econometric demand-side model for Indonesia, O. Gans (Heidelberg) analyses the cost-efficiencies of different strategies to improve the food balance of target groups, e.g. rural poor. The results of this cross-sectional study are often contrary to the official policies of price subsidies. C. Bell (Heidelberg) and W. Moos (Essen) study food production and distributional effects on the rural economy in India after independence. Their analysis proves the still important influence of weather on the agrarian output in India, and their statistical model shows evidence for economic "trickle down"-effects, leading to a lower variation of wealth distribution due to the general growth of wealth. E. Weber (Kirchzarten) presents a case study of a fishing community in South India, focussing on the rapid transformation of traditional strategies of food security after the introduction of modern production packages, e.g. trawlers or prawn cultivation. This case study shows that official policies and market interventions led to the marginalization of different social groups, and simultaneously also to the overexploitation of the regional fish resources.

The last section on problems of food supplies and international co-operation begins with H.J. Diesfeld's (Heidelberg) overview of the complex interrelations between food supply and health in developing countries. This paper focusses first on the negative impacts of diseases on labour productivity, and second on the occurrence of diseases and epidemics, that are facilitated by agrarian technologies and methods of production. W. Monigatti (Eschborn) briefly presents the food security programmes and projects of the German Agency for Technical Co-operation, ranging from food relief to policy consultancies on the national level. This presentation is supplemented by the experiences of one of the major German non-governmental organizations. J. Donner (Bonn) focusses not only on the organization's traditional approaches to poverty reduction and the improvement of food security on the local level, but also treats lobbying by the NGO to improve the international terms of trade that determine national policies.

The twelve papers in this volume vary significantly with regard to their structure, depth of analysis and their particular contribution to the key topic of the conference and the regional focus on South Asia. There are, however, several common topics that are repeatedly taken up in different papers and especially in the summaries of the discussion sessions. The key topic is the interrelation between wealth or poverty and food security. This includes the controversial discussion about the policies and

impacts of trade liberalization. Socio-economic case studies and the experiences of development practitioners indicate the on-going process of marginalization, whereas econometric studies on the national level provide evidence for economic "trickle down"-effects. This discussion is extended to the problem of appropriate approaches (inductive vs. deductive) and methodologies, and the level of aggregation of data. This is also the case with the discussion about the potentials of up-scaling successful projects on the local level ("best practices") to programmes on regional or national levels. Gender issues were not dealt with in a separate paper, but the important role of women within the processes of rural production and domestic reproduction as well as their vulnerability during the economic transformation were taken up in several papers and also in the discussion sessions.

This conference raised an important issue and drew attention to a region which is characterized by a complex interrelation between cash crop- and staple food-production, agro-exports and food-aid, inefficient government policies and huge internal socio-economic disparities. No blue print solution was readily available at this conference and no direct recommendations were made. However, only on the basis of interdisciplinary contributions can this complex set of problems be assessed and hopefully targeted for the improvement of food security on local and national or even global levels.

The conference proceedings provide a useful overview of scientific, cultural and political issues of food security, with a special focus on South Asia. However, a shortcoming of this interesting and important book is the lack of English summaries which might limit the number of readers.

*Jürgen Clemens*

APARNA RAO, *Autonomy. Life Cycle, Gender and Status among Himalayan Pastoralists*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1998. XVII, 350 pages, £ 50.00. ISBN 1-57181-903-7 (Hb.)

Rao's book is an ethnography about agency and autonomy among the Bakkarwal, nomadic pastoralists in Jammu and Kashmir. The volume concentrates less on concepts/ideologies about autonomy than on day-to-day practices with a focus on gender.

The book is the result of twenty-eight months of fieldwork in several phases plus several longer visits between 1980 and 1992. As regards norms, values and worldview, the Bakkarwal are a composite group and thus very suitable for a study of individual autonomy. They combine elements from the East Pashtun with traditions coming from the Punjab further south. They are of Islamic faith but of a South Asian variety, living in a mixed religious setting with egalitarian values of Islam and hierarchical ideologies of the Hindu order.

The book falls into six chapters framed by an introduction and an afterword. The introduction provides the theoretical and methodological basis. Regarding theory Rao draws on general literature on agency and especially on works on self, person and autonomy within the recent discussion on individuality in South Asia. Contrary to some authors she assumes human beings as striving towards the attainment or