

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

RANVINDER SINGH SANDHU (Ed.), *Urbanization in India: Sociological Contributions*. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 2003, 258 p.

Part of a seven-volume series compiled to celebrate the Indian Sociological Society's Golden Jubilee in 2001, the current volume offers a well-edited collection of thirteen papers previously published in the *Indian Sociological Bulletin*. The papers are organized into four themes: urbanization, social stratification, neighbourhood and family, and slum dwellers/migrants. Spanning five decades of scholarship, the contributions come from across the Indian subcontinent.

The volume provides a sampling of diverse theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of urbanization in India. In his introduction, Sandhu emphasizes the disparity between the long history of urbanization in India and the fairly modest amount of sociological scholarship on the subject. He notes that there is only one textbook on Indian urban sociology currently available and expresses the hope that this newly edited volume will prove useful as a sourcebook for those interested in the unique perspective India has to offer on urbanization.

The four articles in Section I provide the background for the book, introducing main themes in urban sociology within the Indian context. D'Souza's article suggests that India offers a challenge to accepted theoretical perspectives in the study of urbanization. He argues that urbanization in the developing world may be accompanied by different types of social changes than those observed in Europe and North America. A. R. Desai's article, "Urbanization and Social Stratification" and Rao's article, "'Fringe' Society and the Folk-Urban Continuum" continue to explore this theme. While rural society and urban society are considered separate in much of the developed world, this dichotomy does not exist in India, where "urban life and the rural life are two segments of one social life in its totality" (60). In the final article of the book's first section, Narain argues that the various social problems which arose along with urbanization in the West will be less acute in the Indian context because of cultural resiliency.

Section II deals with the effects of urbanization on the Indian social stratification systems of caste and class. Phillips looks at status consistency in the city of Indhore, Madhya Pradesh, arguing that caste and class

converge and crystallize in urban environments. Saberwal, on the other hand, finds that both macro and micro level changes are working slowly to increase social mobility. Examining inter-caste relations in urban Punjab, he finds a reduction in the notions of 'pollution' and 'untouchability' as applied to the Harijans. Driver and Driver examine the relationship between "Social Class and Voluntary Associations in Urban India," concluding that while individual organizations tend to have members of only one class (and thus do not necessarily provide a forum for people from different classes to interact), urbanization does lead to the rise of many organizations working against social inequality.

The articles in Section III address the effects of urbanization on neighbourhoods and families. Doshi examines two neighbourhoods in Ahmedabad, one that retained its traditional (caste-oriented) form and one that changed dramatically with increased industrialization and population growth. He argues that the provision of basic facilities such as sanitation is key to the maintenance of neighbourhood cohesion. Bopegamage looks at neighbourhood relations in Delhi, comparing a planned and an unplanned housing area. He finds that the planned neighbourhood is more sociable, arguing that as well as the physical layout, the length of residence and common social and religious backgrounds of the residents contribute to social cohesion. Kaldate's article reviews the research on the disintegration of the rural joint family system and the rise of the nuclear family. She argues that while urbanization has definitely contributed to family change, these changes have been gradual and that many transitional family forms are found in the Indian context.

The last section contains the strongest empirical articles, focusing on migration and slum dwellers in urban areas. Chatterjee discusses various types of migration, reanalyzing data from an earlier study to Bombay by Zachariah. She argues that migration can take many forms, and that the age and occupational structure of an urban migrant community can offer clues to the type of migration that produced it. V. Desai compares residents in three slum settlement areas in Bombay across social, economic, and migration characteristics. She finds the three areas to be quite different, emphasizing the impact of market dynamics and community-based politics on slum development. Finally, Inbanathan looks at lower-caste Tamils in a Delhi resettlement colony, Trivenipuri. He shows that caste, kinship, and religious rituals remain important in this community, posing a challenge to traditional sociological theories of cultural adaptation and assimilation following urbanization.

The current volume provides an excellent overview of fifty years of urban sociology in India. The thematic organization of the articles enables the reader to focus on general trends in scholarship during the time period. However, the volume suffers from two omissions: a conclusion and a recent article on urbanization in India. Since each section uses Indian scholarship to challenge Western theories of urbanization, a conclusion summarizing these challenges would increase the relevance of the book for the wider sociological audience. Additionally, the book needs at least one

article that provides a current description of urbanization in India. Between 1994 (the most recent article included) and 2003 (the book's publication date), urbanization progressed rapidly across the country. According to the 2001 Census, India is now home to more than one-sixth of the world's population and 28% of its people live in urban areas. To be complete, a retrospective account of urban sociology in India should include a current academic analysis of the past ten years of rapid social change. One cannot help but wonder what will happen to this vast, diverse country in the 21st century. In this edited volume, Indian sociologists provide an empirical and theoretical basis for our speculations.

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