

variables; and the impact of political liberalization in this process has been difficult to isolate empirically. In theoretical terms, Leaf's efforts to justify the superiority of pluralist ideology adopt a dubious teleology: "the Marshall Plan worked and dirigisme does not because the pragmatic theory that underlies the former holds itself strictly accountable to what is observable and the theory that underlies the latter does not" (p. 17).

The Development Dilemma is a stimulating piece of action research that examines the impact of selected development projects in India and the implications these have had for persons displaced by these projects. The volume is the product of ten years of research, begun initially when the author was asked to undertake a monitoring and evaluation study on population and relocation caused by the Sardar Sarovar dam on the Narmada River in western India. The book opens with a long introductory study by Michael M. Cernea. Parasuraman's first three chapters explore the historical background of displacement in India and outline the methodology used in the study. Part 2 details the empirical findings, with one chapter dedicated to each of the six case studies—notably a study of displacement caused by the Durgapur steel plant in West Bengal, the Jawaharlal Nehru port in Maharashtra, the Maharashtra II Irrigation Project, the Bolani iron ore mines in Bihar and Orissa, the Upper Krishna Irrigation project in Andhra Pradesh, and the Sarvar Sarovar project in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Three concluding chapters explore the implications of displacement for women, lessons from the Narmada movement, and general policy implications from this comparative study.

Parasuraman's conclusions are critical of project planners in both government and private sectors. He argues that public sector industries often acquired land well in excess of requirements for project construction. Compensation money given to displaced families in each of the studies was used almost entirely to meet immediate consumption needs and to pay for the costs of rehousing: households had virtually no money left over after these costs were met that could be invested in new sources of livelihood. Although industries were commonly instructed by government to provide at least one job per household to displaced families, this instruction was often ignored in practice. Although industries often had adequate financial resources to provide effective resettlement and rehabilitation (R and R), they regularly lacked the vision or interest to do so and also lacked staff with training or experience in rehabilitation work. However, the state in India was also far from blameless: "it is obvious," Parasuraman argues, "that state and national governments lack the willingness and capacity to properly resettle and rehabilitate people displaced by development projects. . . . Even in situations where some form of legal framework to rehabilitate the displaced exists, most people among the vulnerable groups end up poorer than they were before displacement" (p. 258). Overall, the book is written with a clear and accessible style that will make it appropriate for specialist researchers and for graduate and advanced undergraduate students. Although the take-home messages are bleak, this book provides a fine introduction to the politics of resettlement and rehabilitation in India.

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Untouchable: Dalits in Modern India. Edited by S. M. MICHAEL. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999. xii, 183 pp. \$47.00 (cloth).

This collection of essays aims to show how Dalit perspectives could unsettle established understandings of Indian society. The book is divided into four parts. The first section introduces the concepts of untouchability and caste. The second section summarizes the ideological significance for the Dalits of Ambedkar's Buddhism, the writings of Jotirao Phule, and E. V. Ramaswamy Periyar. The third section considers the implications of a society divided along caste lines for those at its margins. The chapters in the final section discuss economic issues from a Dalit perspective. For reasons of space, specific comment can only be passed on a selection of chapters from each section of the book.

John Webster introduces the term "dalit" and considers whether the term is clarified by analyses based on religious or economic terms. He finds both of these approaches wanting. In his view an economic approach understates the importance of caste status as a factor determining material outcomes. Likewise, an approach that sees untouchability as only possible in the context of Hindu society is dismissed. Webster supports this view with a review of the evidence demonstrating that caste has persisted among non-Hindu religions, such as Christianity, in India. He argues that a sacral view of caste "does not include the more secular associational and organic views of caste, which can be equally oppressive to Dalits" (p. 17). Webster also draws attention to the reinterpretation of Indian church history that has accompanied the growth of Dalit Christian identity.

Timothy Fitzgerald examines Ambedkar's concept of religion. He argues that Ambedkar used the term "religion" to refer to belief system and social practice based variously on caste rituals, asceticism, and personal choice. The chapter includes a concise account of Ambedkar's attempt to interpret Buddhism in a fashion that eschews worldly renunciation and would instead promote the struggle for equality. Fitzgerald argues that the concept of religion is of little use when studying Ambedkar's Buddhism. He prefers the typology of ritual, politics, and soteriology as a framework for assessing Ambedkar's Buddhism. This emphasizes the connection between salvation and democratic political structures that emancipate the oppressed. As with the whole book the chapter is too short to do justice to the topic. I would also have liked more references to the author's ethnographic research that is only referred to in passing. One section that requires further clarification is the claim that conversion is a modern idea (p. 62). Does the author mean modern in the Indian context or in wider comparative sense? S. Selvam argues that M. N. Srinivas's theory of sankritization is an adequate tool for explaining the exclusion of Dalits from the caste system. In contrast Selvam emphasizes the ideological nature of Brahminic Hinduism and argues that it was a form of hegemony that used cultural practices and traditions to maintain the subordinate status of the untouchables. The argument is illustrated with a brief interpretation of the history of Hinduism in Tamil Nadu. There is a tension within Selvam's argument. He notes that sanskritic traditions have been resisted and that local traditions coexist with the dominant tradition. This otherwise interesting chapter requires an explanation of how the Brahminic hegemonic project could operate when its cultural forms were resisted successfully. The editor has worked with a broad of definition of who is a Dalit and permits Arjun Patel to present a vivid account of the promotion of Hindu consciousness among the *adivasis* of Gujarat. The links between cultural mobilization and formal politics are significant. In recent years the BJP have enjoyed the electoral benefits of this low level promotion of Hindu identity in the state.

The chapter by B. L. Mungekar raises the pertinent question of how the post-1991 reforms to the economy will impact the Dalits. He notes that the phenomenon

of “jobless growth” whereby most new jobs are created in the insecure informal sector reduces the possibility that rapid economic growth will reduce poverty. Mungekar’s conclusion is that preexisting social inequality based on caste will ensure that the Dalits will be excluded from any benefits associated with the reforms. A good deal of the chapter is devoted to the issue of reservations policy and thus some important issues are overlooked. For instance, the author opens up a space for an interesting analysis of the dominant coalition in India’s political economy in terms of caste rather than class but this is not followed up.

As suggested above, the weakness of this book lies in its brevity. Ten chapters are squeezed into this slim volume. Thus some interesting arguments are introduced but not developed. However, what is irksome for a specialist reader may be a boon for a general reader who could pursue other more detailed literature with the aid of the bibliographies at the end of each chapter. As is often the case with writing on Dalit issues several of the writers make clear their normative positions in the course of the chapters and as a result the book has a committed feel to it. The book concentrates on material from western India though there are references to other regions, such as the Punjab and Tamil Nadu. The book serves as a useful introduction to debates about untouchability. It also provides an interesting and welcome sample of an alternative and distinctively Dalit approach to writing about religion, society, culture, and politics in India.

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Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs. By CHRISTOPHER PINNEY. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. 240 pp. \$55.00 (cloth); \$29.00 (paper).

Frame 1: A group of naked Andamanese girls is made to pose for a photograph in 1872, taken by a British zoologist deputed to study these island tribes. That the central figure in the photograph had in the meantime been “civilised,” dressed and made an inmate of the British Orphan school on Ross Island did not detract from the pressing colonial anthropological concern, here, with staging “a vision of an authentic primitiveness salvaged from imminent extinction” (pp. 46–47).

Frame 2: A middle class Indian lady in traditional attire poses with a photograph album against the Victorian paraphernalia of drapery, ornate furniture and floral backdrop in the studio of Ramchandra Rao and Pratap Rao, the Indore State Photographers, around 1900 (pp. 88–89). The demeanor and expression of the lady, like the carefully wrought artistry of the image, stand typical of the new subjectivities and visual potentials that the art of photographic portraiture opened up for modern urban Indians at the turn of the twentieth century.

Frame 3: In a contemporary chromolithograph, Shiva and Parvati with their two sons Ganesh and Kartick pose, as if for a cosmic photographer who urges them to smile and move closer (pp. 116–17). In a parallel crop of colorful photographic montages produced by several small-town studios of Madhya Pradesh, faces of wedding couples gaze out of flower petals or the wings of a butterfly (p. 133), while celestial backdrops immortalize the images of villagers who stand before these. While the gods in all their godliness impersonate modern-day mortals, the human subjects of popular photography are rendered iconic by the craft and magic of the medium.