

Study of Environment can lead to Human Development

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'Population, Health and Environment' Edited by Sayeed Unisa, T.V. Sekher, Chander Shekhar, Abhishek Singh, L.K.Dwivedi and M.R. Pradhan

This book is a collection of papers presented at the national seminar which address a wide range of issues in area of population, health and environment in the context of different states in India and the neighbouring country of Nepal. The papers offer the readers multi-disciplinary views on the interlinkages between population, health and environment. The papers are based on relevant data from official sources such as NSSO, NFHS, DLHS and DIHS and are in the broad area of fertility and family planning, health and health care services, maternal health care and population dynamics and environment. A review at the wide variety of topics discussed in this volume, it will prove to be an important resource for students, NGOs, academicians and working in this field of social development, population, health and environment.

In the comprehensive context of development, apart from the economic dimensions of development, it is important to understand the influence of geography, the intersection of climate, ecology and economic activity. Such interactions play important role in influencing human welfare which should be the ultimate goal of economic development. In this context, this book on population, health, environment precisely analyse these issues in depth. Apart from institutional factors, cultural values and social system play crucial role in many outcome indicators of development and the question of households' fertility decisions has been handled in section on I on "*Fertility and Family Planning*" which supports this point very well. From examining the macroeconomic trend in fertility trends, the section focuses on contraceptive use, awareness level, and aptitude and also changing feedback of women to economic and non-economic determinants of fertility.

Section II deals with "*Health and Health Care Services*". The public support for health has been very low India as it spends less than 1 percent of GDP as a public expenditure on health.

This has serious implications for quantity and quality of public health infrastructure. With the

changing pattern of burden of diseases and rising morbidity levels it is important to analyse the benefit incidence of public health expenditure. There is evidence of significant demographic, social class and regional differences in mortality and health situations across states. The paper on Mortality highlights the constraints in analysing the issue of adult mortality rate in India. This section also highlights the importance of affordable and quality health care for poor.

The section III focuses on “*Maternal health Care*”. Developing countries including India are struggling with the problems of higher mortality among infants. Incidentally, India has huge inter-state disparities in mortality rates. Hence a section on maternal health care which plays critical role in determining child health and IMR is more than justified. There are two papers on Fertility rate and Education and fertility regulation and utilization of maternal health care are important contributions as the earlier studies have already underlined the importance of female literacy rate in controlling fertility rates and also in reducing the maternal mortality rates.

The last section which is section IV is on “*Population Dynamics and Environment*” deals with the interrelationship between population growth, economic growth and environmental sustainability. The papers in this section have made an attempt to trace this interrelationship by focussing on the implications of population growth on poverty, undernourishment, overuse of resources and finally environmental degradation on the sustainable development. The paper on fuel consumption by female headed vs male head households highlights some important findings such as the social norms influencing the issues of headship in the Indian households. Apart from that the paper has made an important contribution by discussing Kitchen Environment Index which plays important role in affecting the environmental quality in rural households.

The interconnectedness between people, economy and environment is crucial to understand for those working in the field of sustainable development. Environment closely affects the health of the people, hence any study of human welfare will be partial and incomplete without discussing the interlinkages between the two. This book has made a good effort to trace the interconnectedness between the demography, health, environment and this volume revolves around this theme in a major way.