

of the area. His visits to field area and Bidisa campus have remained useful and helpful for both the ends, we are really thankful to the author for his painstaking efforts in producing such an useful volume on tribal life and change. I congratulate Dr. Rao for producing such a volume which will be useful for academicians and social scientists on one hand and policymakers, administrators and people in general on the other.

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e-panchayats in India - Some Facts

by Ravindra Kumar Verma, Archana Kumari, 2012, Serials Publications, New Delhi, pp 283, price ₹ 995.

The authors have lucidly brought out the proceedings of the University Grants Commissions' National Seminar on e-panchayats in Bihar - Impediments and Solutions, at a juncture when the State of Bihar is trying its best to harness the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) potential in an holistic manner by opting to go for e-panchayats implementation, when e-governance has become a key to success of governance as well as good governance in an era dominated by knowledge society. The National e-governance policy, Government of India, too envisages proliferation of electronic form of transfer of information at all levels of administration by connecting through State Wide Area Network using a mix of affordable technologies to make e-panchayats function as an efficient institution in providing easy access to information on a host of government activities such as RD programmes, schemes for its stakeholders/citizens in a transparent, reliable, accountable manner enabling quick decision making process alongside delivery of common services at their doorsteps as and when required on timely basis.

The book is a compilation of seventeen papers presented in the National Seminar, 2009 in Bihar. Out of these, nine papers are in English and the rest in Hindi version which are again sub-divided into five parts.

The first part consists of introduction as well as proceedings of the Seminar spread in two chapters. The proceedings highlighted issues and strategies in five broad themes: a) *theoretical issues* such as e-governance, e-panchayats and good-governance, ethics, people's participation approaches to study e-panchayat, ICT and knowledge management. b) *financial issues*-human resource development was main focus in attempting to use ICT in local governance, lack of infrastructure, awareness and e-readiness among the people towards use of ICT for better service delivery. c) *Issues related to policy and measures* include the use of postal network infrastructure for information dissemination, creation of common and personal e-mail IDs with PIN code and to have Hindi portal and involvement of NGOs and social activists in the policy framework. d) *issues related to society and e-panchayats* touched on social features vis-a-vis e-panchayats, linkages between consumerism/globalisation, knowledge based society and development. e) *Issues emerged on practice* encompassed corruption, interface of local bureaucracy and upper hand of district administration, dissemination of knowledge among panchayat representatives and transparency in transactions.

The second part of the book focuses on challenges, opportunities and issues spread in five papers touching on very crucial topics like challenges and opportunities, challenges and impediments, the conceptual aspects and functional aspects in the context of e-panchayat establishment, where knowledge based panchayats would narrow down the digital divide and delivery of services will improve. A great emphasis has been given as

to how information and communication technologies are instrumental in changing the way in which the government operates through horizontal and vertical interactions and information flows, apart from lowering transaction costs for citizens and government operations and public services which can be made more affordable to people at large.

The third part of the book discusses at length on rural development and e-panchayats by seven presenters which include e-panchayats and human development, a litmus test for rural development in Bihar, problems and prospects of e-panchayat in development and ICT for rural Bihar.

The book also attempts to clarify many fundamental questions/issues like why ICT in PRIs?, conceptual aspects of e-panchayat, can e-panchayat be a vehicle of good governance at grassroots level, RD and ICT role of panchayat in changed environment when mobile technologies play a dominant role in delivery of services. It further reiterates that investments in ICT alone by itself, cannot alleviate poverty or improve economic standards unless, the rural poor are made to participate in the opportunities that ICT offers.

Part four concentrates on Indian Society and e-panchayats highlighted by five presenters covering need of ICT for e-functioning basically for learning and education of the society. Another important factor of human resource development is stressed on training and deploying of a large number of front line service providers to ensure better service delivery to its citizens. In other words to say, that if the public services are well delivered to the rural populace then it can lead the state to developed state (Bihar). Part five gives the gist of bibliography and relevant appendix and list of participants who attended the Seminar.

In sum the book is rich in details and useful for policymakers, academicians,

researchers, students and NGOs. It provides relevant information on IT scenario in States like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, etc. and its accrued benefits, illustrated with e-readiness, IT policy of Bihar, IT infrastructure and strategies with possible impediments and solutions that exist today in the 21st century for speedy implementation of e-panchayats in the State of Bihar, which is the need of the hour. On the whole, the book has covered all pertinent aspects of e-panchayat in a simple and non-computer jargon language for general audience in particular.

– Dr. P Satish Chandra

Area, Production and Productivity of Horticulture Crops., by C.Gangaiah, 2012, Published by SERIALS Publications, New Delhi – 110 002, (India), pp. 112, ₹ 395 (Hardback).

The book under review is an outcome of a research study conducted by the author on Area, Production and Productivity of Horticulture Crops in Kadapa District – a micro level study. Crop diversification has greater concern in the rainfed agriculture in view of climate aberration. Diversification largely depends upon farmer's attitude, consumer demand, government policy, trade arrangements and development of irrigation, rural connectivity and other infrastructure facilities. In this context, the author has aptly documented the pivotal role of horticulture in India, WTO issues on horticulture and area, production and productivity details of fruits (Pomology), vegetables (Olericulture), flowers (Floriculture), species, plantation crops, medicinal and aromatic plants. In the first chapter, the author has emphasised on Institutions and Policy Environment for Horticulture Development with reference to their objectives and achievements viz., National Horticulture Mission (NHM), The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), ICAR, The Directorate of Marketing and Inspection (DMI), Ministry of