

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Integral Rural Development - A Rural Transformation Experiment of Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry** edited by G. Palanithurai and R. Ramesh, 2015, Published by Concept Publishing Company Pvt Ltd, A/ 15-16, Commercial Block, Mohan Garden, New Delhi -110 059, pp: 134.

The book is about the initiatives of SARVAM (Sri Aurobindo Rural & Village Action & Movement), the rural development unit of Sri Aurobindo Society of Puducherry in two villages of Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu. They have taken up the experiment 'Integrated Rural Development' by providing spiritual perspective to rural development practice. The approach is to bring rural development in human-spirit centric rather than narrowing down to the conventional economic senses.

This book is presented in seven chapters. Chapter one provides a framework to understand what is covered in the book, the purpose and methodology adopted for preparing the document.

Chapter two gives a brief account of SARVAM as a unit of Sri Aurobindo Society in Puducherry. It discusses its vision, mission, values, areas and sectors of intervention and approaches and strategies. It talks about the 'Integral' Development and not the 'Integrated' Development. By 'Integral Development' the author means overall development, to improve

the standard of living along with quality of life, which includes civic consciousness or a transformation in consciousness.

Chapter three focuses on development in practice i.e., the areas of intervention, by providing a detailed description of the programmes and activities of SARVAM in two villages of Poothurai and Perambai. The areas include education, health, employment and livelihood, women and youth development, networks and collaboration. Educational interventions ranged from preschool to secondary schools. They included making institutions (both schools and balwadis) functional and focused on personality building, physical education, supplementary coaching, summer camps, etc. Health interventions included general health camps, dental camps, eye-treatment camps, immunisation camps and interest-free loans for treatment in association with Pondicherry Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), JIPMER and Aravind Eye Hospital. Sanitation and safe drinking water supply along with housing was another intervention taken up in collaboration with government and community. Employment and livelihood interventions resulted in setting up of dairy group and community revolving fund. A number of programmes were taken up for women and youth development mostly focussing on awareness generation, skill development and personality development along with attitudinal changes.

Chapter four titled, 'The Tenets of Transformation,' provides key lessons from the SARVAM experiment by elaborating on how the villages for intervention were chosen and the different entry point activities done and the social infrastructure built and finally how the community was linked to the institutions. Thus, the authors conclude that the systematic interventions made by SARVAM contributed to the social, financial, human and physical capital that improved the quality of life of people.

In chapter five, the authors discussed about the sustainability, replicability and scalability of the interventions of the SARVAM.

In chapter six, the epilogue of the SARVAM's rural development experiment, one of the editors, Prof. G. Palanithurai shares his views of the experiment saying that it is a process-oriented and demand-driven one. According to him, SARVAM's Integral Rural Development experiment has demonstrated how, starting with children, a transformation process can touch the entire community. This could be considered a model for micro-level rural development experiments.

Chapter seven gives details about the birth of new research and training institution, 'Sharanam' (Centre for Sustainable Rural Transformation), based on the field experience of SARVAM. It gives an overview of Sharanam's vision, mission, guiding principles, values, strategic direction for five years and scale of operations.

By reading the book, one gains knowledge on the issues related to development, especially integral development. The book provides an understanding of the practical issues faced by the programme implementers and the community. The language used is simple and the style of presentation is attractive with many colourful field photographs. In the overall assessment, the book is a good resource book on various aspects pertaining to integral development. This book may be used as a reference material for students, NGO workers and researchers, as it has a great relevance of time to the rural development functionaries.

*Dr. C. Dheeraja*

**State of India's Livelihoods Report, 2015** by Girija Srinivasan and Narasimhan Srinivasan, Published by Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd and ACCESS Development Services; pp. 177; Price: ₹ 1,195.

India's economy has witnessed a significant economic growth in the recent past, growing at 7.3 per cent in FY 2015 as against 6.9 per cent in FY 2014. The size of the Indian economy was estimated to be at US \$ 2.01 trillion for the year 2014 as compared to US \$ 1.84 trillion for 2013. This growth is powered by greater access to banking, technology adoption, urbanisation and other structural reforms.

Livelihood literally is a means of making a living. It encompasses people's capacities,