

Foreword

The increasing density of population and its impact on the environment is one of the important themes pursued by many researchers. This issue is extremely important in the case of India, as we are experiencing increasing density of population coupled with severe environmental degradation. This combination has direct influence on the intensity of poverty in the country. Theoretically, increase in population will not always cause environmental degradation. However, if proper policies are not in place to accommodate the increased density of population through adequate and quality infrastructure, there will be degradation of environment and over-exploitation of resources. In India, we have been facing forest degradation, increased urbanisation, depleting ground water resources, significant increase in environmental pollution and larger urban environmental degradation due to emissions. The density of polluting agents, over-exploitation as well as the carrying capacity of the resources is increasing. That sounds a strong alarming bell.

We have varied experience across regions of the country. The problems of environmental degradation are acute in some regions while the problems have been surfacing only recently in other regions. Each of these regions responds to environmental degradation differently and with varying intensities. The processes of adaptation and mitigation are also different. This is mainly because of the historical emergence of intrinsic adjustment processes of the regions as well as responses of the population to the factors affecting environment. Besides, there are regions and states that have already faced significant degradation of natural resource and environmental issues and have taken steps to meet these challenges. It is true that these steps are not sufficient or do not measure to the intensity of these challenges. It is important, therefore, to analyse our preparedness to meet the challenge of environmental degradation in the face of the differential intensity and heterogeneity of public responses. They perceive it differently as important stakeholders in meeting the challenges. It is quite a difficult proposition to hold a unique solution for all. However, in order to avoid disasters tomorrow we have to be fully prepared today.

The study undertaken by Dr C M Lakshmana, addresses some of the problems of environmental degradation within the perspective of differential responses and reactions across regions. The author tries to explain it through the population pressure. Many researchers have visited

the hypothesis earlier. However, some fresh light is required in order to understand the issue in the new perspective. Dr Lakshmana has tried to meet this challenge in the present monograph. I am sure that this monograph will throw up many questions to the researchers as well as raise new issues for the purpose of further research. I feel quite happy and recommend this monograph to the wider audience for their reaction.

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