



AN ESSENTIAL SYNOPSIS OF A PROMINENT SCHOLARLY LIFE-WORK

Geography, Development, Public Policy: Select Essays of Gopal Krishan.

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This volume of essays and studies, an outcome of meticulous editorial work, provides a succinct summary of Gopal Krishan's scientific life-work up till now. Although the primary apropos of its publication was obviously a deep bow to one of the most honourable Indian geographers entering his seventy-fifth year, but it was also an exemplary aim to collect together a relatively considerable part of the author's writings, published dispersedly earlier. The professional accomplishment of the volume can be apprehended exactly by the latter circumstance, namely making a conceptual selection of Professor Krishan's extensive oeuvre. The editors have picked up the thirty-two essays or about one-fourth of total one hundred and thirty reserach pieces in such a way that they represent comprehensively the output of the author's last four decades long life-work and the evolvment of his learned experiences.

Prior to the essays included in the volume, the readers get, within the frame of the 'Prologue', a pithy but detailed compendium on the unswervingly rising academic journey of 'GK', as he is popular among his colleagues and students. Along with stages, institutions and figures referring to the advancement on his path of life, accentuation of unobtrusiveness and professionalism, the unique characteristics of Gopal Krishan's personality has not been failed, as well. A brief consisting of personal particulars and enumeration of positions, honours and works serves as a useful supplement to the appraisalment conceived in the spirit of fellowship.

The essays themselves selected from a fairly wide range of journals, annals and edited books have been arranged in five thematic groups in accordance with the author's fundamental scopes of activities. The first ones, in Part I, entitled '*Geography: Issues and Challenges*' deal with a broad scale of theoretical and methodological questions of science, as from the tasks and missions being

ahead of Indian human geography until systematizing and defining of indicators used for description of demographic variables. Then, in the Part II, *'Development: Salient Parameters'*, one gets an overall picture of the general and geographical aspects of development laying particular stress on its agricultural concerns. An essay on trends in regional inequalities in India and a remarkable case study on the 'Sukhomajri Project', the success of a social co-operation initiative to mitigate spatial disparities complete this part. The editors devoted the Part III, *'Development: Population Aspects'*, to the relationship between demographic issues and societal evolution in India enlightening this matter by means of regional studies focusing on minorities, diasporas, internal migration, urban-rural diversity etc. The role of the Sikhs in this connection has a great importance, reflected in the appearance of the work on their spread from the closing years of the 19th century till now in and out of India, as well as the essay on the demography of Punjab, covering one hundred years long period between its annexation and the Partition of India. The treatises in Part IV, *'Development: Urbanisation Dynamics'* analyse one of the most evident regard of social development process, that is the features of Indian urbanisation, through such subjects like political economy, pace of growth, urban-rural relations among other things which have also been amplified by the case studies on typicalness of urbanisation in regions bordering Pakistan. Finally, in the last section entitled *'Administration and Public Policy'* we can obtain a taste of Professor Krishan's papers come to life in the field of administrative geography from area reforms via Delhi NCR's metropolitan growth management until the futuristic perspectives of Chandigarh, perhaps the most peculiar element of the Indian settlement network.

It can be stated with confidence that this new volume has managed to fulfil its mission. The editors have succeeded in full realization of their original dream of creating an all-embracing collection of the author's life-work. For all this, it is definitely recommendable for each and every researcher and student, having any research interest in the above mentioned specialities or simply just for those who respect GK's person and scientific achievements.