

Book Reviews

K.U. Mada, *Dynamic Settings in Fluid World*, Southern Economist, Bengaluru, 2019, pp. 432, Price ₹ 400/- only.

This book is in six parts. Part I deals with assimilations and harmonisation for development. It covers subjects like India as a bonding and assimilating nation, beyond management education, importance of consultants, value of public service, etc. The subject of Part II is globalisation and its impact. It has essays on integration in world economy, emerging global powers, Brexit, global economic uncertainties, etc. Part III covers development projects. It has essays on land acquisition, utilization of surplus land, project management, smart city and so on. Two essays are on Karnataka. Part IV covers governance of enterprises and institutions. Five essays are on the Reserve Bank of India and three on corporate governance. Development banking, family managed business and public enterprises have also been dealt with. Part V deals with different aspects of inclusive growth including mini-finance for self-help ventures and investors in bear market. Part VI includes 'Reviewing thoughts.' They are inclusive of foreign investment by emerging economies, coalition government, fractures in the world economy, etc.

The contents of this book are aimed at a general reader and were earlier published in the form of articles. It does not add much to a reader's understanding of the issues discussed in it.

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Rohit Azad, Shouvik Chakraborty, Srinivasan Ramani and Dipa Sinha (Eds.), *A Quantum Leap in the Wrong Direction?*, Orient Blackswan, Hyderabad, 2019, pp. 315, Price ₹ 495/- only.

With a question as its title, the book contains a number of essays which seek to answer it. These essays were written when the general elections were round the corner in the country and they contain an assessment of the NDA-II government in terms of what it had promised and what it has delivered. The contributors are academicians, journalists and others which means that their views need to be taken seriously even if the reader may decide not to agree with them.

Part I deals with four aspects of the economy. The first essay deals with the foremost plank of the NDA government: *Sabka saath, sabka vikas* by Rohit Azad. He thinks it to be contradiction in terms. He concentrates on demonetisation and GST. The former has inflicted hardship on the dispossessed and the latter put

brakes on the aspirations of small businesses. He asks, “After all, what good would come out of the rising income of a poor dalit woman if there are no schools, hospitals, water, sanitation, and other basic facilities over and above what she suffers at the bottom of the caste and patriarchal hierarchy?” (p. 38). Prasenjit Bose and Zico Dasgupta talk about the banking distress. Economic offenders have been practically let loose under the new dispensation. They argue, “The NDA-II regime has been unable to revive the PSBs and has squandered fiscal resources in corporate bailouts.... The expansion seen in the private-sector banks and NBFCs have not been to the extent that could compensate for the shrinkage of the PSBs. Despite the official claims of enhanced financial inclusion, the failure of the NDA-II government on that score is also manifested starkly in the grim reality of bank branch closures, particularly in the rural areas” (p. 61). Arindam Banerjee and Ishan Anand deal with agrarian crisis which they feel has worsened. They believe, “The Central and state governments have responded by delegitimising the protests and preventing demonstrations. And whenever these governments have come up with a policy response, it has largely been palliative and short-sighted” (p. 66). Subhanil Chowdhury holds that on the employment front, in 2018 India witnessed an employment decline of 11 million people in sharp contrast with Modi’s promise of increasing employment by one crore each year.

Part II covers socio-economic indicators. Kiran Bhatti thinks that the structural changes have been for the worse. Changes in syllabi at the school level have been undesirable like removal of references to national leaders. International writers as well as Urdu words have been omitted in a bid to go local. While the finance minister proclaimed grandiose schemes, he failed to indicate the sources of funds to finance them. Ayesh Kidwai extends her criticism to higher education. Colleges and universities are starved of funds, and infrastructure and academic development have suffered a setback. Indranil Mukhopadhyay and Dipa Sinha draw a picture of ill-health in the country. Overall Central Government health budgets declined in real terms and equally importantly, “...it has also halted whatever little progress was made by taking investments away from existing programmes, including those that were doing well” (p. 157). Sona Mitra argues that women’s welfare too has suffered. She says, “The priorities accorded to women’s empowerment by this government clearly show the lack of political will in actually implementing the same and hence, the ground realities, despite having a few good programmes in place, does (sic) not reflect any improvement in women’s situation in the country” (p. 198). Amit Thorat writes about *samajik nyay* and *samaik samrasata*. Atrocities on dalits have been taking place since time immemorial which are particularly cruel, macabre and sadistic. But, a new dimension has been added to them under NDA-II. Self-styled community-based outfits like gau rakshaks are perpetuating them in public. He writes, “While society is seen as backward and slow to shed its religious and superstitious beliefs, the State was always seen as the upholder and dispenser of human rights and law enshrined in the Constitution. This fundamental idea has changed and those in power are now being seen as tacit supporters and believers in Vedic Law, rather

than constitutional law” (p. 204). The last paper in this part is on environmental issues by Shouvik Chakraborty. He seeks to show that underlying policies are skewed in favour of the private corporate sector not only in terms of relaxing environmental regulations to ease its growth, but also to facilitate additional accumulation by it under the guise of environmental governance. He stresses, “The environmental and ecological policies formulated by any government across the globe should be intended to protect the masses, or the common person, who are the worst suffers” (p. 235).

The subject of the last part of the book is governance. Roshan Kishore discusses the ‘*suit-boot ki sarkar*’. The NSSO found that the unemployment rate reached a 45-year high in 1917-18. In absolute terms India saw a destruction of 1 million jobs between 2011-12 and 2017-18. He observes, “The fact that the government has announced direct income transfers for farmers and income-tax rebates to the small income-tax payer is a clear acknowledgement of the hit to the incomes of the poor and non-rich in the Indian economy” (p. 254). Anmol Somanchi makes a critical assessment of *Aadhaar*. He writes, “As the government’s tenure comes to an end, the benefits from Aadhaar largely remain unclear, while there is plenty of evidence that it is resulting in the exclusion of deserving beneficiaries from their entitlements” (p. 256). To press his point further, he gives a glaring example and says, “A recent survey of 325 households from a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Jharkhand revealed that more than 40 per cent of the households had faced some form of exclusion due to Aadhaar – ration cards cancelled, discontinued pensions, refusal of school admissions, etc.” (p. 273). Happyman Jacob has taken the government to task with respect to foreign and security policy. The author says, “In the past four-and-a half years, New Delhi has failed to find a détente with China, its relationship with Pakistan has nosedived, its neighbourhood policy has been an unprecedented failure, and the NDA-II government’s national security management has been subpar” (p. 277). Violence in Kashmir and in the LOC has witnessed a sharp increase. India’s popularity has declined in the regional capitals owing to its tendency to interfere in their domestic affairs. This was particularly true with respect to Nepal. Besides, there is a growing saffronising of the foreign policy. Srinivasan Ramani discusses the damage in the public sphere. He says, “Issues that dominate public discourse today are cow vigilantism, communalism and religious mobilisation, thus diverting attention away from issues such as unemployment, climate change, renewable energy, etc., thereby vitiating the public sphere” (p. 312). He adds, “Further, people belonging to the minority community have come under the threat in various parts of the country; dissidents among India’s civil society who have questioned the Indian State’s failings have been branded as seditious; fragile equations in border states have been strained as Kashmir has been on the boil, and the issue of citizenship in Assam has taken a communal turn” (p. 312). He thinks that all this has perhaps led Amartya Sen to argue that India under the NDA-II has taken a ‘quantum leap in the wrong direction.’

The book critically deals with many important aspects of today’s India.

Brought out on the eve of the general elections, the editors seem to have aimed to educate the general public about the performance of the NDA-II to enable them to decide what it should do. The criticisms which the book contains are undoubtedly well founded. It can be read with interest by all concerned.

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T.V. Paul (Ed.), *The China – India Rivalry in the Globalization Era*, Orients Blackswan, Noida, 2019, pp. 351, Price not mentioned.

The first part of this book has Information about China and India rivalry which begun in 1950 s and deepened with the 1962 border war. This part introduction has introduced by T.V. Paul. At that time several rounds of negotiations were attempted but the result was not positive and so it continued. Recently Doklam issue arose between them. In today's world of competition in growth and development that rivalry has entered a new phase. Recently it has been reported that China aspires to be the most powerful nation globally and so it is opposing to the growth of trade of India. The first part of this book shows how the relationship between China and India is moving under globalization.

The second part of this book is contributed by Mahesh Shankar, Xiaoyu pu, Manjari C. Miller, Zen Han and Jean- Francois Belanger, Calvin Chen and Selina Ho. There is an account of the situation of north-west of China and north-east of India in term of their contested territories. It discusses the asymmetrical situation of China to India about strategies, water disputes, territory and concept of power. It also explains the competition for resources, especially for hydrocarbons. Both the nations are now focusing on the development of renewable energy due which the conflicts between them will reduce. Territorial and political differences are impacting the water resources. Water shortage is a serious problem in India. This part of the book deals with the problem of water scarcity and the role of China on the issue of Brahmaputra River water. It discusses the strategic dimensions of China-India rivalry. Both of them are looking at each other's strategies. It is observed that the divergent strategies are not the source of their conflict.

Part IV introduced by Mathew A. Castle and Feng Liu. It provides information on the mitigation of trade and investment between China and India. Participation in to the global governance is a major issue between them. It has concluded that trade and investment have been asymmetrical between both sides and while interdependence has mitigating effect, it is increasing tension. The main reason behind all this is that the trade links are asymmetrical between both countries. China is opposing India at the global level for its membership by UN Security Council and Nuclear Suppliers Group. Though there are many disputes between them, they are showing interest in cooperation for the sectorial reforms in globalization.