

Urban Mobility in Developing Countries.
P. G. Patankan. Bombay, Popular Prakashan,
1978. Rs. 75.00. 152 p.

The problem of transportation in today's cities has occupied the attention of a whole host of planners and other specialists. Most would agree that in its transportation problems — as in many other things — a city is unique in itself. Only in very general terms can one talk about the similarities or dissimilarities between cities in this respect — or use the lessons of one city in another. This is why the book at hand seems to be rather indifferently compiled. At one level the author talks about general conditions obtaining in cities in the developing countries, but what he substantiates them with (throughout the book) are instances from one city — Bombay. This aspect only, if properly highlighted, might have lent valuable insights into how a planner gets trapped into making generalised remarks when what he is talking about are particulars. What happens in the treatment, of course is just the reverse.

The basic data given in the book also reflect this preoccupation. For instance, the capacity of a private car or taxi is taken as 4, but in some cities such as Calcutta, the official capacity is 5 with the *operating* capacity varying between 5 and 6. In cities such as Lucknow, the capacity is as high as 7. The reasons for this deviation is simple — the makes of the taxis are different. And yet the overlooking of this simple fact implies that the *potential* contribution of several forms of transport to the easing of the transportation problem in specific types of cities is being overlooked. Similar is the case with the capacity of buses. In a city like Calcutta, an omnibus normally carries around 100 to

120 passengers (including standees) while a single decker carries around 70 to 80 passengers, but the author assumes a standard of 70 for all buses. No doubt figures are again different in other cities. It is possible to argue here on behalf of the author that what he has given are only sample calculations, and that the figures need not reflect the reality in toto. But if that be the argument then the book becomes a kind of transport operator's manual and not a book on urban mobility — for the simple reason that a book on urban mobility has to start with an analysis of the reality of the transport problems and build from there. What the author has done is to jump from an elementary summarisation of certain of the general features of the urban transportation problem to a set of calculations which reflect a kind of ideal state of affairs.

The book does not deal with a major aspect of urban transportation — route planning. Nor does it consider passenger demand forecasting in any kind of detail. And yet, these are the two aspects which can make or break a public transportation organisation. For the transport planner, obviously, many other things are of importance; for instance, the fact that introduction of a public transportation route has very specific kinds of impact on the land use along that route. And again that there are 'values' attached to the number and types of public transportation that a locality is served by; creating, in turn, different kinds of demands upon the system. Social dimensions of the urban transportation problem and the fact that the transport planner can really shape the city have been totally ignored.

The author has made a case for having an overall metropolitan transport Authority. However, the arguments he points could equally

be used for having a transportation planning cell within the local government or development authority with independent transport operators. The point is not to have one authority instead of two, or six, or twentyfive, but to see how and at what level, and in terms of what information, the operations of the diverse operating agencies are being integrated. As long as this integration through their task-relatedness takes place, and the transport organisations provide each other with this kind of systems data, almost any kind of organisation would do as an overall transportation planner. In fact it might be useful to consider, given this condition, competing transport organisations to increase overall transportation efficiency. One is thus tempted to regard the concept of Unitary Authority as a bureaucratic solution only.

Finally, the tone throughout the book is normative, which does nothing to further exploration and understanding of the reality of the urban situation as far as transportation is concerned. And even the introduction of exotic modes of transport such as hovercraft for intra-city transport fails to take the subject, as treated by the author, beyond the level of the simplistic.

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Personnel Management and Industrial Relations : Its Theory and Practice in India, 2nd rev. ed. Biswanath Ghosh, Calcutta, World Press, 1979. 353 p. Price Rs. 27.00

The book under review is the second

revised edition of the book originally published in 1976. As its title indicates, it is on the theory and practice of personnel management and industrial relations in *India*, a venture which only a very handful of scholars have so far undertaken.

The book contains in all 20 chapters and covers largely all the areas normally understood to belong to the arena of personnel management and industrial relations. In addition, the author provides several notes, as appendices to the main text on what he calls the 'Behavioural aspects of Personnel Management'. The book also contains a bibliography of relevant literature on the subject.

Readers of any worthwhile book that devotes itself specifically to a study of the theory and practice of personnel management and industrial relations in *India*, I believe would legitimately expect, that it would examine the differences between the Indian industrial situation and the one that obtains in the western developed countries and its implications for man-management. This would not only provide the justification for the need for separate treatises on India (especially because there are good text books on this subject written by foreign authors keeping in mind the western context and which are also available in the Indian market), but would also indicate the direction in which the theory and practice of personnel management and industrial relations should move in the country.

The author of the present volume does not do that. Instead he largely describes the tools and techniques of personnel management and industrial relations which are already available in similar books and often at greater depth and details. In fact the book