

BOOK REVIEW

Casual Labour of Kanpur : Their Living and Working Conditions, K. G. Agrawal, National Labour Institute, New Delhi

This slim volume is based on the author's survey of 135 casual workers in Kanpur, a city with more than 15,000 casual workers. These workers are employed either on a regular basis by the Railways, PWD, MES, and the textile mills, or are unattached and have to find employment on a day to day basis. The author has posed a series of questions to them regarding their working and living conditions, wages and economic situation, migration, family and social life, aspirations, and health and medical care.

His general observations are far from surprising for anyone familiar with the dismal, almost Dickensian, state of affairs of casual labourers in India's urban labour markets. Casual workers are ignorant of the Minimum Wages Act and other protective labour legislation. Ironically, it is the State, as well as the organised sector, that are the biggest employers of this strata of Indian labour reserve. All existing laws are in fact circumvented by public bodies when the need arises to hire temporary workers.

The author does note the existence of differences within his sample of casual workers. For example, badli workers in the textile mills are clearly better off than casual workers employed by the Railways, the latter typically having worked 5-10 years without being regularised. He also notes the existence of sex discrimination with respect to work allocation and wages in the Kanpur casual labour market.

The vast number of tables occupy the major portion of the monograph. No statistical tests are carried out (they could have been) and the monotonous description of the tables could undoubtedly have been made more interesting. But for the latter, the author would necessarily have had to relate his findings to the vast body of theoretical literature on this topic.

The monograph could also have been edited more carefully, for example, on page 12 the

author's imposed metaphor fails : "They are very sore with the management and have a feeling that their blood is being sucked. They are so resentful that they are almost revengeful." And again, on page 74 : "Casual labour of Kanpur does not have much of education unlike casual labour of Delhi who have good education."

Finally, the author's finding that union presence alters the work-life experience of casual labour confirms my hypothesis that unions can qualitatively change the nature of unorganised urban labour markets. The question that remains (for Kanpur's casual workers and for workers all over) is why unions do not organize the unorganized?

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Organizational Behaviour Process by Uday Pareek, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, India 1988, Page 367, Rs. 90.00.

This book will be a useful resource for those who are interested in Behavioural Science and Organizational Behaviour. In addition, it will be a valuable guide to those who are interested in public policy, business environment, and social issues in management.

The structure of the book is consistent with its stated objectives. Twenty three chapters divided into five parts or sections serialized from A to E, deal with behavioural processes relating to persons, roles, teams, and finally the organization.

Chapters 1 and 2 describe the importance of the behavioural processes in organization and the relationship between societal culture and organizations. These two chapters lay the basic approach and foundations of this book.

Chapter 1 argues that the concept of process essentially concerns with the question of "how" or the overall dynamics which underlie the behavioural interactional dimen-

sions of a situation in organizations. In this chapter, different processes and how these processes operate at nine different levels in any organizations have been discussed. These levels have been identified between the microlevel (the individual) and the macrolevel (the society). These processes are interrelated, and therefore, the managers (specially HRD managers) being aware of these processes could develop intervention strategies to build links between these processes.

Chapter 2 describes the relationship between social culture and management. The questions raised in this connection are : how the concept of societal culture could be understood? Is societal culture always functional or dysfunctional for modernization? How to deal with the conflict between traditional cultures and modern management?

Chapters 3 to 8 deal the processes related to "The person"—the self-level processes such as perceptual process, internal-external process and focus of control, etc. Eric Berne's Transactional Analysis is lucidly dealt both in connection with interpersonal styles in chapter 6. Chapters 7 and 8 are related to leadership styles and the learning process.

Ten chapters, 9 to 18 that follow, highlight two salient areas such as "The Role" and "The Team", and concepts included in these chapters are : work motivation, managing frustration, stress and burnout, role efficacy, communication, interpersonal feedback, consensus building, conflicts and collaboration.

The final section of the book deals with "The organization". The section has five chapters and is devoted to organizational processes such as organizational climate, communication, learning, change and development. The focus of these chapters taken together is on management action and implementations in organizational settings.

Organizational behavioural process ultimately does succeed in assisting readers to understand how the functional aspects of the processes can solve organizational problems. Its strengths are clarity of prose, concisely worded descriptions of issues and suggestions for professionals in applied settings, and examples to aid readers in the use of concepts.

For these reasons the book deserves attention and makes a valuable contribution in this field.

The book is well written and comprehensive, despite the fact that most of the chapters were included in an earlier volume on organizational behaviour published in 1982 and some other chapters were published in other books or journals. These are modified and expanded in the present volume. Suggestions for further select readings are given at the end of each chapter. Nevertheless, a very complex and technical literature is dealt with in relatively nontechnical language and with due regard for careful definitions of concepts.

The Volume is largely addressed to managers, and can be used as a text-book for OB courses in the universities and management institutes. However, the book provides sufficient new ideas and hypotheses to provide work for serious research students as well. That is exactly what a good book should do.

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Motivating Organisational Roles : Role efficacy approach by Udai Pareek. Rawat Publications, Jaipur, India, 1987, Page 99

A challenge often thrown to an area of scientific enquiry is to prove itself useful in the world. *Motivating Organisational Roles* accepts this challenge. In the preface this challenge is well stated. It begins, "If one problem needs to be identified as the most critical one in Indian organisations today, it can safely be that of work commitment or work motivation. There is a general complaint that people in organizations do not put in their best, that they have low commitment to work, that the level of "discipline" is low and so on". Traditional approaches familiar to management by and large have failed to satisfy the practising managers.

The approach described in *Motivating Organisational Roles* essentially is to help the managers examine the potential of their roles to be effective (i.e., role efficacy), and then to work out a plan to increase role