

communities indulging in profit centred mentality had progressively reduced ethics in business, leading to casualisation of labour and inter-community clashes. The analyses of rural artisans and their relevance found in the study clearly indicates that 'globalization is grabbing resources' in the rural areas. The analyses of the rural artisans revealed that moneyed few who have access to technology and bank credit exploit the natural resources for their personal gain and thrived. So the social dimension of globalization was neither evident, nor desired to a large extent in Tamil Nadu to sustain the well being of the assetless.

The study proved that responses to globalization move at the grassroots level are partly in the hands of the local bodies and partly in that of the community. The global market demands efficiency, and to meet it what is needed is, action oriented learning, centred on protection of the community from being exploited by profiteering interests. The observations in the study pertain to the undeniable fact of globalization being eventually a mix of strengths, opportunities and threats.

Although the book is a very interesting and is like a mirror reflecting the effects of globalisation at grassroots, it would have been appropriate had the title mentioned it as a case study of Tamil Nadu.

A. Kamala Devi

Research Officer

Institute of Applied Manpower Research

<ajjarapu@indiya.com>

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Honey Trails in the Blue Mountains: Ecology, People and Livelihood in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, by Keystone Foundation, Kotagiri, 2007, pp. xv + 271

When Winnie the Pooh exclaimed, "The only reason for being a bee that I know of is making honey...", he did not stop hurriedly, but went on to rationalize his avowal: "...and the only reason for making honey is so I can eat it", hinting at the centrality of honey to his life. Understanding and recognising this bottom-line for the adivasis of the Nilgiris Hills is

what the book, *Honey Trails in the Blue Mountains*, aims to achieve. Brought out by Keystone Foundation, an NGO which has been involved in ecological and developmental issues in the Nilgiris for over ten years, this publication addresses a profound, yet taken-for-granted, aspect of tribal economy – the link between ecology and livelihoods. Derivatively, the book muses over aspects like biodiversity, honey collection and traditions attached to it, NTFP policies and aspects of the Nilgiri landscape.

As India's first biosphere reserve, the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve (NBR) is a biodiversity hotspot – the home to over 3700 plants, and 684 vertebrates, and many of them endemic. The wide variety of fauna and flora in the Nilgiri forests give it a special identity that shapes the lives of forest dwellers. It is this identity that has evoked within tribal communities a sense of conscientiousness while extracting NTFPs, an undertaking that has been going on for many centuries. However, this need not be the case always. Given the large spatial extent of NBR (5520-sq. km.), more that ten indigenous tribes inhabit the hills. Any anthropologist would have a field day trying to understand the highly complex interrelations among the tribes of Nilgiris, who dwell in the NBR sections of all the three states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. After all, Nurit Bird-David's statement that "The tribal population of the Nilgiri Hills of southern India have attracted massive ethnographic attention for over 150 years", still stands the test of time, but of late, for reasons more than ethnography.

This book brings to light the variety of practices in honey gathering by various tribes in the Nilgiris. As an important aspect of their livelihood (income and employment), honey hunting is a task that has ancient roots, and could be traced back to many centuries. Despite the presence of various tribes within a particular region, there was (and is) a clear-cut demarcation, region-wise and substratum-wise, in who should gather / hunt honey where. This was an important economic attribute that ensured that one tribe's livelihood chances are not usurped by others. Such specific territorialization enabled access to honey combs and prevented internecine clashes. As an economic activity, honey gathering by the tribes also brought with it a receptacle of norms that were held sacred and hence strictly adhered to – gathering honey in groups, advanced

Vol. XLIII
No. 4
Oct-Dec
2008

preparation for gathering honey, and the respect that the honey gatherers had for the bees. There were specialised sustenance techniques that have come to be associated with gathering honey from different substrata like rock crevices and atop huge trees.

In addition to making economic sense (and livelihood logic), the gathering and selling of honey by itself is an “event – living in the forest for a night”. There is also the ceremonial dimension to honey for the tribals, and is a *sine qua non* during births, marriages and deaths. Besides exploring these traditions, the book also documents the *modus operandi* of collection of honey at different regions by various tribal communities. The book, now and again, reiterates the sense of togetherness of the people involved in honey collection operations and emphasises the tribal communities’ “ecosystem centric respect” for forests. Another important facet of honey collection operations in the Nilgiris is the participation of youngsters and their eagerness to learn the art, ensuring knowledge transfer, which is an important requisite for the continued existence of an indigenous knowledge system.

Though the readers are not privy to the methodology applied for the surveys, what is evident is the usage of both positive (non-judgemental) recording of observations and the normative aspect of evaluating policies and procedures. In such a case, where does the book position itself in the contemporary dialogue on tribal welfare? At one level, the book does lend itself to be placed on the threshold of multitude of exercises in documenting ‘tribal knowledge/ traditional knowledge’ in India. At a more gradient level, however, that part of the book, which relates to the team’s perspectives – especially the ones recounting NTFP policies and livelihood concerns – does not adequately take in hand the issues decisively. This book, then, contributes to the prevailing adivasis rights discourse, albeit is a one-dimensional manner.

Additionally, a few chapters are peppered with Reverend Mulley’s (an expert in studies on the Nilgiris) anecdotes. This, along with Tarun Chahabra’s contributions on the Toda tribe, adds value to the book. Mention must be made of the photos that depict the mottled aspects of life in Nilgiris, the maps that serve to point out the topography, and the illustrations that are evocative of tribal cave paintings. There are,

however, a few problems for the readers: the resolution of the maps should have been increased to boost precision and the placement of the photos should have been embroidered along with relevant chapters. There is no doubt about this book becoming a benchmark guide for researchers working on issues apropos Nilgiris. Furthermore, the simple and terminology free exposition will endear it to the general reader too.

G. Narasimha Raghavan

Department of Economics

PSG College of Arts and Science

Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

<gnrvan@yahoo.com>