

developments in the practice and the academic literature in the field. Exhibits that summarise the detailed information have been provided for quick reference as well as very concise 'menus' that can be used as check-lists during evaluation. In other words, although the book is designed as a classroom text, the presentation allows it to be used as a reference book by practitioners when they are actually conducting an evaluation study. Lastly, the book contains cartoons and short Sufi tales (the Sufi tales are induce-ment enough in themselves to read the book!) that emphasise the points of the author and also provide useful humorous breaks that make reading the thick book less laborious.

One of the biggest weaknesses, particularly from the perspective of an Indian reader, is the reliance on North American, mostly US examples and illustrations. Most of the issues discussed do not have a place in the Indian context and readers unfamiliar with the American context may not appreciate many of the critical issues discussed. Though the contents could be generalised it might require some effort to understand their relevance in a different environment. Again, the focus is extensively on the government sector. But, since evaluation of government funded programmes is a dominant concern in the US, the bias is natural in a book whose primary target is the American reader and whose writer is personally involved in several government sector evaluation studies. Finally, the work is primarily a text book which tries to

be academic as well as practitioner oriented. In its attempt to satisfy many segments, it runs the risk of dissatisfying many readers.

Despite its weaknesses, this book could be recommended to the Indian reader. The first segment that can profit from it is the government sector. India has a proliferation of programmes for elimination of poverty, illiteracy and so on, funded by state and central governments, which are rarely, if at all, evaluated to establish their effectiveness. Programmes to promote small size industries or to encourage industrialisation of certain 'under-developed' areas also exist. All such programmes need to be examined to assess whether they are achieving any desirable end or are a waste of public money. This book provides some useful insights into conducting evaluation of government programmes while managing the political pressures that may be associated with any such study. Well managed utilisation-focused evaluation studies could improve the benefits to the intended beneficiaries, and also save the public a lot of money.

Utilization-Focused Evaluation could well benefit the layman or the informed citizen. An understanding of such processes could help people critically examine the functioning of programmes/organisations that have been established to meet their needs and help use the democratic process to ensure their evaluation and improvement.

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Economic Restructuring, Technology Transfer and Human Resource Development

By B R Virmani and Kala Rao

Response Books (a division of Sage Publications), New Delhi,

pp : 288, Price:Rs 395 (Cloth)

The issue of technology transfer has received due attention from academics and the popular press. At one extreme there are visions of mass unemployment as a result of people being made redundant by new technology; a vision which all too often finds its most vigorous proponents among Indian trade unionists. On the other, there is the prospect of technology raising productivity and thereby economic activity which, perhaps with a few minor hiccups, ultimately results in higher living standards. Between these views lies the actual task

of acquiring technology - whether by developing it indigenously or getting it from abroad, handling the absorption of technology among users and dealing with the problem of economic restructuring. Virmani and Kala Rao have dealt with precisely this issue in their book.

The work has been divided into four parts. Part one provides a general discussion of the issue and concentrates on the concerns, objectives and implications of policies at the national level. This is followed by a detailed look at the policies adopted in three South-East Asian countries, viz., Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, and India. Part three contains four organisational case studies dealing with technology transfer for enterprises in India. The writers have ended by summarising the information available from the country-based studies and case studies and have provided some directions towards a healthy technology transfer policy.

The objectives of writing this book are undoubtedly laudable and a lot of useful information has certainly been provided. However, the feeling remains that they have bitten off more than they can chew. Given the breadth of their concerns, it is sometimes not possible to go beyond the most general statements. In terms of policy initiatives, their main stand seems to be that the policy of import substitution, which has only very reluctantly been abandoned of late, was the primary culprit responsible for the sorry state of development in India when compared with South-East

Asian countries and that adopting investment-friendly policies along with a good system of education and infrastructure would go a long way towards solving our economic problems; a conclusion hardly worth plodding through 300 pages to come to!

The country-based studies give information on the detailed policy initiatives and procedures adopted by various South-East Asian countries in this area. This could provide useful information for policy makers in India. However, no study is provided on the efficacy of these measures and the niggling doubt remains that it is not so much the detailed procedure as the overall outlook towards investment that matters. The two case studies on enterprises in Malaysia also do not contribute much since they provide little information on how they have been affected by government policies. The detailed organisation-based case studies, unfortunately, deal only with Indian firms. It comes as no surprise that a public sector enterprise performed the worst, mainly due to government intervention and that private sector firms did fairly well.

The strength of this book lies in the last section which summarises the preceding material. The last chapter has made a careful analysis of the issues that need to be looked into. This last section and the analysis in the second chapter are of value, as also other relevant information, which unfortunately, seems carefully hidden among a mass of irrelevant material through-

out the book. A detailed study of how the government could facilitate technology transfer by providing information on appropriate technology and by performing technology audits would have been interesting. The same would be true of an organisation-based study of assessment of needs and negotiation of a successful technology transfer. Such studies, one suspects, well within the reach of the authors, would have a lot more focus than the present effort, which even though valuable, can hardly be recommended for an over-worked executive.

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Financial Institutions and Markets

By Meir Kohn

Tata McGraw Hill, 1996; pp 868; Price: Not mentioned

This book, as the title suggests, is about financial in-