

or class room. Instead of pursuing the chimera of Western organisational techniques because of the persisting "colonialism of the mind", India has much to learn from the Japanese experience, particularly about how to develop and progress by being true to its own social,

cultural and human reality.

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Public Enterprises

Prahlad Kumar Basu

Public Enterprises—Policy, Performance and Professionalisation

pp. xv+99, *Allied*, 1982, Rs. 40.00

Reviewed by V.A. Pai Panandiker

The theory of "commanding heights of the economy" over the last two decades or less has massive nationalisation as well as investments in the public sector. With an estimated Rs. 24,000 crores investment today, the public sector in India is a giant.

Reading P.K. Basu's two principal papers published in a book form, however, one only gets the confirmation that the public sector is an unhealthy giant. While Basu does not say so in so many words, it is quite clear what he has to say. While the Ministries do the real "running" of the public enterprises they take little responsibility for the performance. As Basu says "It is very rarely that the head of Secretary rolls if the performance of the public enterprise under his Ministry is considered below the line or even totally unsatisfactory. In such circumstances the danger of a public enterprise chief being removed is much greater".

Basu's major concern is "How to bring about harmony between "policy" and "performance" when there is apparent conflict owing to the domination syndrome" (p.40). In simple English, how to keep the politicians and bureaucrats running the Ministries off the backs of the public sector managers consistent with public accountability.

Every evidence over the years, however, shows that it is not the "accountability" issue which has really created problems for the public sector enterprises. It is the patronage, kickbacks and other issues

which are responsible for the "domination syndrome". In that the unholy alliance between the

politician and the bureaucrat is seen to be believed. And an occasional clean bureaucrat has learnt to his great regret that simple constitutional proprieties do not pay. Increasingly, over the years, the Gresham's Law has been brought to bear upon the public sector managements to a great extent.

As the public sector grows, these issues will inevitably grow into major political issues. They will be raised not by the politicians and the well meaning bureaucrats like P.K. Basu but by the people. Basu's papers give a clue to what the real issues are, even though not explicitly.

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A Tourists' Paradise

Manoj Das

Introducing a Wonderful Land and a Wonderful people : India—a tourists' paradise

pp. xv+490, *Sterling*, 1983, ~~Rs. 125~~ *Rs. 150*

Reviewed by Samuel Mathai

From the earliest known times men have travelled from their own lands to other lands for one reason or another. The journey might be undertaken at some ruler's bidding, or for trade, or in a spirit of adventure; travellers went also on religious missions (e.g. Buddhist and Christian missionaries) but it was rarely for pleasure. Travelling in the ancient world, and until comparatively recently, was always risky, and what a traveller might encounter on the way was unpredictable. "Travel" is a variant of 'travail', meaning 'toil and painful exertion'. In the middle ages in Europe travelling for various purposes increased and certain facilities for travellers began to come into existence: 'host' and 'guest'—both words originally meaning 'stranger'—brought into being hospices, hostels, hospitals and, later on, hotels (all words related to 'host') and the hardships of travel were eased to some extent.

Travelling, in the sense of going from one's own country to visit other countries, greatly increased

after political developments led to the emergence of distinct 'nations' and 'states'. Invading another country for conquest or seeking refuge is not 'travelling'. Among the earliest recorded travels are those of Marco Polo (1254-1324). *The Book of Marco Polo, Citizen of Venice, Called Million, Wherein is Recorded the Wonders of the World* (c. 1239) is one of the great travel books of the world. Marco had travelled with his father and uncle to Cathay and the court of Kublai Khan, and was away from Venice some 25 years. He travelled by land and sea, and kept notes of some of the things he observed. He passed through India on his way back and in his book referred to the St. Thomas Christians of South India.

Interest in the world outside Europe steadily increased, and encyclopaedias and books of travel describing the 'wonders' of far-off lands began to increase also. One of the most interesting of such books of travel was *The Voyage and Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, compo-

sed in the 14th century. It is not certain whether Mandeville was the author's real name, and it is almost certain that he himself did not travel; he seems to have collected his material from other people's writings and from encyclopaedias. But his book, describing routes to and wonders to be seen in, Constantinople, Palestine, Egypt, etc., and taking the reader through many diverse lands... "through Persia, Syria, Arabia... through Amazonia, India the less and the more a great part; and through many other Isles that be about India: where dwell many diverse folks, and of diverse manners and laws, and of diverse shapes of men."

Some of the great voyages of exploration and discovery during the 15th century were partially inspired by such travel books; and these voyages in their turn opened up the world and made available a more accurate knowledge of geography and of the customs, manners, languages and cultures of different people. In Europe in the 16th century travel within the continent greatly increased. In Shakespeare's time it was fashionable for Englishmen to travel to Italy, and the "Italianate Gentlemen" became an object of envy and ridicule. Shakespeare speaks of a traveller who "sells his own lands to see other men's".

The changes that come about in the economic and political situation of the world after the establishment of European colonies and empires provided fresh stimuli for travel and led to the improvement of the means of travel and conveniences for travellers. The discoveries and inventions of the 18th and 19th centuries greatly facilitated the development of travelling, and the Industrial Revolution gave fresh impetus to it. The steamship, the railway train and, later, the motor car made travelling safer, more comfortable and less time-consuming. Travelling for pleasure became possible, and "tourism" in the modern sense began to develop. Books providing information and advice to tourists began to appear.

EARLIEST GUIDEBOOKS

One of the earliest guidebooks

was produced by a German, Karl Baedeker (1801-59). His aim was to give accurate and practical information to the traveller and enable him to dispense with paid guides. 'Baedeker' has now become a generic name for guidebooks. His first book dealt with the city of Koblenz where his firm was set up; then they dealt with the Rhine from Mainz to Cologne. Later 'Baedekers' covered all of Europe and were published in several languages.

Among the earliest excursions and conducted tours were those organised by Thomas Cook, an—Englishman. 'Cook's Tours,' became well-known. Thereafter many 'travel agencies' came into existence in many parts of the world, providing information and making all the arrangements (purchasing tickets, booking hotel accommodation, sup-

plying foreign exchange, etc.,) needed for a safe and carefree tour.

'Tourism' has now become an 'industry' and most countries officially promote tourism and encourage visitors to come to them, by putting up or helping to put up good hotels, by producing books and pamphlets that describe the sights to see and the special arts and artifacts produced by them, and the travel facilities available. In India we have created elaborate arrangements for developing tourism. There is an Indian Tourism Development Corporation and most of the States have their own Tourism Development Corporations, Departments of Tourism, Directors and Managing Directors.

It is natural that books intended for tourists should advertise their countries in as attractive terms as possible. For certain kinds of visi-

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tors a little information about the history, customs and manners, and aspects of the cultural and artistic manifestations of the country is a desirable addition to the usual material provided by guidebooks. But in *INDIA—A Tourist's Paradise* Manoj Das and Sterling Publishers have gone beyond utilitarian considerations and have sacrificed modesty and historical veracity in the attempt to boost the "wonderful land" and its "wonderful people".

LIVING IN MYTHOLOGY

In a prefatory "note from the Publishers" we are told: "This book is not just meant to be a run-of-the-mill travel guide. It is an introduction to India. In this [his ?] lucid and inimitable style Manoj Das introduces you to the vast Indian subcontinent which stands like a colossus on the world map." What is a colossus? In Manoj Das's Introduction (which runs to 28 pages) he says, "True, few travellers come to India with the intention of sounding the profundity of her philosophy or spirituality. But there is hardly an aspect of the Indian life, apart from the bare surface of the 'modern' Indian's existence, which is without some influence of a pristine philosophy or the touch of spirituality. And so far as the said surface is concerned, surely, no traveller has any reason to be enamoured of it: it is as colourfully dull [sic. colourlessly ?] and lifelessly modern as elsewhere in the world. A traveller surely comes to have a *feel* of the culture and the civilisation that is India—through a travel across this vast country, gazing at her magnificent monuments and coming to know her people."

Manoj Das's main thesis is that "India's forte is her spirituality", and visitors to this country should look for this spirituality and not for anything 'modern'—for everything 'modern' is the same everywhere, and is dull and lifeless. Indians, he says, are "a people who live in mythology". He seems to make very little distinction between mythology and history. Manifestations of the 'spirituality' of the Indian people (who are all assumed

to have a single culture and to derive from one main ethnic stock) include such practices as 'sati' of which he speaks nostalgically. He might have added that though 'sati' was prohibited by the British government and can no longer be openly practised, we now burn young wives who do not bring adequate dowries!

As a guidebook this publication has some useful features, but is written in poor English complicated by the printer who seems not to have heard of 'proof-reading'. There are several photographs (black-white) of buildings and scenes but the reproduction and printing are so poor that they seem to be indicators of the poor quality of workmanship in India. The list of travel agents is useful, but it is not certain that any tourist can make much use of the addresses of all the Directors of Tourism in the country. Naturally the book says nothing of the poor quality of roads and other travel facilities in this country; of rapacious taxi drivers and indifferent official functionaries; of the difficulties of making reservations in trains or planes; of the poor quality of food available in trains and the 'hotels' in small towns; and of the ill-maintained and ill-equipped hospitals and the difficulty of getting reliable medical attention anywhere except in the metropolitan cities.

TOURISTS' PARADISE

The fact is that although we want tourists to come to India we do little beyond putting up expensive hotels in a few places to make travelling a pleasurable experience. True, we have some world-famous "monuments" like the Taj Mahal (not a product of Indian spirituality); but few people will come long distances just to see a few monuments; nor will many (except hippies and besotted females in search of a libidinous 'guru') come in search of the mythology or alleged spirituality of India. We must develop good quality middle class hotels and restaurants, provide reliable and comfortable bus and train services, improve our roads, and so on, so that middle income groups can spend several days travelling about in

reasonable comfort. Section of the book entitled "Features of the Country" and "Practical Briefings" are particularly useful. The reader is "assured that the average Indian is tolerant at heart." "If sometimes he surveys you with eyefuls of philosophy, don't mistake that to be a sign of misgiving or suspicion!"

The section or chapter called "Tours in a Planned Space of Time" is helpful. Most tourists appreciate organised itineraries. The value of the book would be greatly increased if in the suggested tours fuller details of the mode of travel available (plane, train, coach), the time required for the journey, facilities for stay (hotels, inns, guest-houses, the "class" to which they belong and approximate costs), and things to be seen at various points on each trip, were given.

'Paradise' has been defined as a place characterized by favourable conditions, special opportunities, or the abundance of something desired. India has an abundance of many things that tourists might wish to see and enjoy, though different tourists would be interested in different things. But conditions and opportunities are not as satisfactory or favourable as might be desired. If we wish to promote tourism we must do more than advertise our specialities. Everyone who comes to India is not a millionaire and cannot afford to stay in five-star hostels. Many ordinary visitors might wish to travel by train instead of by air. Some visitors might wish to explore the country by travelling by road in a car driven by themselves; this would mean the availability of cars for rental, good road maps and roads with reliable signposts, and convenient hotels or motels along the routes.

It must be hoped that the growing awareness of the importance of tourism in India, of which *India: A Tourist's Paradise* is one example, will soon result in an abundance of the kind of facilities referred to, and we shall be able to compete successfully with other tourists' paradises.

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