BOOK REVIEW

LAND USE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES AND FOCUS ON INDO-GANGETIC PLAINS
EDITED BY YASH P. ABROL, SATPAL SANGWAN AND M.K. TIWARI
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The book on Land Use: Historical Perspectives & Focus on Indo-Gangetic Plains is a comprehensive book covering various aspects of land use/land cover in the Indo_Gangetic Plain Region (IGPR). The edited book has 22 articles written by subject specialists with 42 contributors. The entire book has 667 pages with 54 pages bibliography and 13 pages for indexing. 1 congratulate the authors who are involved in Land Use Planning and Management. This is also a good reference book to be kept in the University & Engineering College Libraries of the country.

My observation on the book are as follows:

* Need to study and understand land use/land cover change is well explained.

* Increasing levels of carbon flux into atmosphere in the Indo-Gangetic Plain Region is well brought out.

* Need to document, archives, study and analysis of LUCC data is explained.

Chapters 1 to 5 explain the agricultural transformation during last four decades through changes in cropping patterns impact of high input technologies and declining growth. Sustainability concern (region wise) is also addressed at great length. Religious and sociologic ideologies and their impact on man-nature relationship is highlighted. Pedological issues like natural soil degradation, impact of carbon stock on fertility of soil conversion from natural ecosystem to agro-ecosystems and the resultant implications of global warming, drought/famine in the region, changing river courses and earth quakes in IGPR are carefully discussed.

Chapters 6-14 discuss the historical tracking of climate severity in relation to EL Nino specially in South Asia and disease incidence and influence of El Nino. Regional and district scale observations on LUCC, agricultural practices; population pressure, methods for estimating carbon content in live vegetation and meta data on useful data bases in India are highlighted. In the river basin approach for understanding forestry, land use, topography, geology, soil, climate, economic and social influence as well as historical perspective and social influence are covered. In few papers, status of the Bangladesh economy and its dependence on agriculture and allied activities are discussed.

Chapters 15-22 discuss relationship between economy and land use traced into historical times. Detailed discussions on food crops productivity and spatio-temporal patterns are highlighted. A separate paper on land and water quality related issues and their spatial distribution, changing landscape of Punjab in terms of both forest and green revolution are explained. Issues related to sustainability of agriculture and maintenance of ecological balances are analysed in detail. Brief insight into land use change implications in terms of cover conversion, degradation, intensification and driving factors are discussed particularly in central Himalayas. In few papers dynamics of population pressure, land holding, size, land use pattern interaction and land holding structure in terms of fragmentation and reducing farm sizes are discussed. Influence of market forces through leasing are briefly outlined.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall, the quality of the papers is high. This book is of interest to academicians and researchers. This volume is quite bulky and can be abridged in places. Tables, text is clear and legible. Maps, sketches quality can be improved. Cover page is excellently designed.

A few suggestions for improvement to future editions of the book should be useful. The papers can broadly be segmented into sections based on Region. A more careful editing and proof reading would not only ensure better quality but also removal of redundant and repetitive material. Taken as a whole, the edited book is a very careful compendium for anyone seriously interested in useful historical perspective of IGPR. Researchers and scientists would welcome this book as a useful addition to their library.

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