

BOOK REVIEW

Human Growth The Mirror of the Society by Mithun Sikdar, published by B. R. Publishing Corporation Delhi, 2015, pp vii, ix, xix+ 295, price, Rs. 2150

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Human Growth The Mirror of the Society is a superb compendium of various scholarly articles based on in depth researches on human growth theories, models and their applications in different spheres of human life. The present volume under review consisting of fifteen papers is most timely and addresses modern approaches in diverse fields of modern auxology. The forward written by Prof. Dr. med. Michael Hermannussen, Founder and head of Auxological Society and Editor Anthropologischer Anzeiger adds glamour and credence to this volume.

Human growth and development is very fascinating and is a mirror of public health. The title of the book is based on the vision of Professor Mourilyan James Tanner who developed the basic concepts in human growth and development and used these data as a tool to monitor health status of individuals/population. The nutritional transition and modernization has affected the human growth characteristics during the recent years therefore, it calls for regular monitoring of nutritional status of populations in view of secular trends and updating our knowledge in diverse fields of human auxology. A brilliant attempt in this direction has been made by the editor in this volume.

Sikdar has divided the book in two parts. Part I includes eight papers based on human growth theories and models. Part II includes seven papers on Human growth as a tool. The first chapter of part I has been written by Prof. Barry Bogin, a renowned expert in the field of human growth along with Dr. Ines Varela Silva who discuss how human physical growth reflects the biocultural environment in the context of Maya children and adults. Their findings on Maya research revealed significant implications of interactions between physical, social, economic, political and cultural environments and human phenotype. They advocate on focusing future research on unraveling the biocultural features that are most amenable to improvement. This is an excellent piece of work related to theme of this volume. In second chapter Napoleon Wolanski discussed processes of human growth in terms of saltations, stasis and continuous growth. The paper contains a vivid description of diurnal changes, neurohormonal system and social and cultural problems associated with growth process. Prof. K.N. Agarwal and Prof. D. K. Agarwal in third chapter discuss somatic, sexual and brain growth and development during adolescence and suggest that for growth assessment in adolescence height and weight should be examined in relation to sexual maturity rating. Their article is very informative as it also gives details about the effect of smoking and alcohol on developing brain. The effects of toxic elements on human health with special reference to mercury have been discussed in detail in the fourth chapter by Dr. Jaydeep Sen

and Miss Pushpa lata Tigga. An elaborate account of secular trends in Europe along with associated intrinsic and extrinsic factors has been given in the fifth chapter by Prof. Sylvia Kirchengast. Prof. Anuradha Kadilkar and Prof. Vaman Khadilkar in chapter six use human growth as a tool and emphasize on applications of growth studies for ascertaining the health status of populations. N. Nowak joins Prof. S. Koziel to write a review paper on determinants of human body length proportions in the biological context in the seventh chapter. Part I ends with an excellent review on mathematical models of human growth has written by Prof. Mathew H. McIntyre in the eighth chapter.

Part II starts with the classical secular trend research from Central Europe : The Kormond Growth study by Prof. Gabor A. Toth, Dr. Botond L. Buda and Dr. Csilla Suskovic. It gives an elaborate account of decadal changes on various anthropometric measurements of Kormond boys and girls from 1958-2008. Next chapter By Prof. Carlos Varea, Prof. Carlos Bernais and Prof. A. Gonzalez- Gonzalez identifies the maternal factors that are generating variability in fetal growth and evaluates their influence on different segments and at different stages of fetal development. In Chapter eleven, the short term physical changes that occur during Marathon running have been evaluated by Prof. Klaus peter Herm . The author proposes a measurement agreement on the sports persons following the short term and long term development from the beginning of sports activity. Heritability and inheritance pattern of human physique has been studied by Dr. Sudipta Ghosh based on a cross-sectional sample of 400 Santhal families in the twelfth chapter. In Chapter thirteen Dr. Subal Das, Dr. Sudip Datta Banik and Prof. Kaushik Bose collectively evaluated the prevalence of Anthropometric failure among Santal Preschool children of Purulia, in West Bengal using Composite index of Anthropometric failure. Prof. Tiluttoma Baruah along with Dr. Dipak Kr. Adak and Prof. Premananda Bharati have made a brilliant effort in chapter fourteen by comparing the growth pattern of two preadolescent groups of children from Northeast India. The last chapter of part II has been written by Dr. Mithun Sikdar, the editor himself. It is a feast to go through this chapter. He discusses environmental quality, developmental plasticity, epigenetics and physical growth in a riverine population of Northeast India. He generates interest among readers by putting forward Environmental shock hypothesis to explain the recent trend of increasing metabolic diseases worldwide. Overall this book has the best collection of research articles which have the potential to attract students to undertake studies in the field of human Growth and development.

The book has an attractive getup and commendable quality of printing. This book is a valuable contribution in the field of human growth by a young editor and is of utmost significance not only for anthropologists but also for sport scientists, pediatricians, public health workers and human biologists.

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