

Book Notes

N.S. McBain and S.J. Uhlig. *Choice of Technique in Bolt and Nut Manufacture*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. 1982. pp xiv+154. Price: Paperback £ 12.50; Hardback, £ 14.50. [Volume 5 in the David Livingstone Institute Series on Choice of Technique in Developing Countries, edited by Eric Rahim]

The book provides alternative technological information on manufacture of bolts and nuts, and suggests the most efficient mode of production from an economic point of view under varying conditions of production. The study determines the least-cost technique for manufacturing the product, analyses the cost structure, economies of scale and market demand in developing countries, and compares the availability of various machines that are used to manufacture the product in both the developing and developed countries. In the first half of the study, the discussion is confined to broader principles of production with special reference to nut and bolt production, alternative technologies and associated mechanization, developments in world trade and production, markets of the product and sources of capital equipment. The second half of the book deals with method of analysis. This section specifically deals with variation in inputs and capital due to variations in technologies. Finally, the sensitivity of the results is examined by varying the quality and price of inputs and with the employment implications of various technologies.

World Health Organization. *Control of Health Care Costs in Social Security Systems. Report on a Workshop*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe. 1982. 31 pp. Price: Sw. Fr. 4. (EURO Reports and Studies, No. 55)

The book suggests specific measures to control health-care costs with reference to different social security systems in various countries. The discussion of cost-containment policies is mainly concerned with restricting the use of resources and the availability of health-care services, variations in quality standards, budgetary and financial incentives, and feedback of information to providers and consumers. Research findings of the book suggest that the effectiveness of various cost-containment policies depends largely upon the economic structure of each country. As regards the efficacy of different policies, it concludes that budgetary and financial policies have diverse effects while other factors external to health-care have perceptible influence on the health-care system. The book also found the health-care systems of many countries to be characterized by a lack of feedback of information to consumers. Finally, policy recommendations have been made under three headings: viz. general policies, education, and research.

D. Banerji. *Poverty Class and Health Culture in India*. New Delhi: Prachi Prakashan. 1982. pp. x+309. Rs. 100.00.

The book is the first of the two volumes planned to be produced on the subject. A non-conventional approach has been adopted to study the problems of rural life in India. The volume pertains to the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data concerning various facets of rural life such as cultural and biological meaning of poverty; relationship between caste, religion, class and politics; interaction between different groups of rural community; and different programmes for development. The study covers nineteen villages and a period of about nine years from 1972 to 1981. The first three chapters briefly outline the study and present quantitative data. Other chapters elucidate theoretically and quantitatively different aspects of rural life such as the villages and their institutions; poverty, power and social structure; portraits of poor and rich villages; and leadership, political parties and social and economic control. Finally, the author draws some obvious policy implications of the study.

Dietmar Rothermund. *Asian Trade and European Expansion in the Age of Mercantilism*. New Delhi: Manohar Publications. 1981. pp. xii+170. Rs. 75.00.

The book investigates the origins of historical differences between rich and poor countries with particular reference to Europe and Asia. The author's point is that the conflict between the developed countries of Europe and the less developed countries of Asia has its roots in the age of mercantilism. Trade between Europe and Asia led to commercial revolution in Europe while Asia did not benefit from this trade because of its land-based feudal societal system. The weak political system of agrarian states in Asia could not stop foreigners from getting complete control of their region. The book traces European expansion in this context of biased trade. The first three chapters of the book elucidate the concept of mercantilism, the relationship of trade with political power with particular reference to Asia and the Venetian system of guarded trade. The expansion of the Dutch and British trading activities, intertemporal shifts in the pattern of Asian trade and the importance of Asian trade for European economic development are discussed in Chapters 5-9. Other chapters deal with the historical trends of major Asian powers, structural changes in trade with the establishment of East India Company, new dimensions during the 18th century, and British-French rivalry in Asia. The final chapter is devoted to assessing the gains of Asian trade with Europe by making use of modern theories of trade and concludes that these theories are not of much use in explaining the pattern of trade from the age of mercantilism to the present time.

World Health Organization. *Economic Research into Health Service Growth. Report on a WHO Workshop*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe. 1981. 39 pp. Price: Sw. Fr. 4. (EURO Reports and Studies, No. 52).

The book critically reviews a number of studies which examine the phenomenal growth of health service costs, draws policy implications and provides guidelines for further research on the subject. The discussion on autonomous increases in health-care expenditure covers three factors, namely, the availability of health-care resources, budget and finance systems, and new technologies for health services. On all the three points the book suggests various areas of study that need to be explored. The major finding of the study is that the supply or supply-related factors affect health-care consumption in such a way that policies to contain expenditure should be aimed at limiting the supply of health-care facilities and at providing incentives to patients. Other findings indicate that budget and finance systems have insignificant effect in the long run to contain health-service expenditure, and rapid developments of modern technologies have significant bearings on costs. Finally, the book stresses the need to critically evaluate the performance of cost-containment policies since their targets are often not realized in practice.