

BOOK REVIEWS

LAW OF BAD LIVELIHOOD (3rd ed. 1985). By R. Deb. S.C. Sarkar & Sons Private Ltd., Calcutta. Pp. 164. Price Rs. 35.

AT THE first blush one might mistake the expression "bad livelihood" with the hardships suffered by women and minors left without maintenance and their right to maintenance. Such an impression would be totally wrong. What is meant by the expression is bad means adopted for livelihood by persons of suspicious character who cannot give a satisfactory account of themselves or who have become professional criminals.

The subject of preventive action against the commission of crimes is an important part of the duties of the police. Chapter VIII of the Criminal Procedure Code 1973 deals with it. This is the subject matter of the book under review. Since preventive action is resorted to more by the police, and many cases of such action are not litigated in courts, the relevant law is known better to policemen than to courts. In these circumstances the author was best qualified to write on the subject. For, as a police officer, he has himself done the work of preventive action and knows it from inside. The insight which he has got as to the precise powers of the police, how they should be exercised rightly and why they should not be abused, has been grasped by him fully. He combines scholarship with experience. It is indeed a pleasure to find how much can be studied and written on a subject which has been otherwise brutalised by the abuse of powers by ordinary policemen. People who cannot give a good account of themselves are subjected to locking up by the police without much investigation, thus giving a scope for abuse. The author has, however, illuminated the subject by his learning and analysis to such an extent as to lift the level of discussion to a respectable and important comment as may not be found in a mere commentary on the code.

The book is packed with close reasoning, analysis of cases and emphasis on crucial observations in case law by italicising the same. The reader is, therefore, enabled to get a real grasp of the meaning of statutory provisions and of the case law. The work should prove to be instructive and readable by everyone who is concerned with the preventive action of the police and all aspects of it.

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