

Shorter Notices

Debal K. SinghaRoy (ed). *Social Development and the Empowerment of Marginalised Groups: Perspectives and Strategies.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 248 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 450.00.

This book is a collection of articles dealing with the issue of social development and the empowerment of marginalised groups. Globalisation, which considers the free market as the primary vehicle for economic development, has caused a significant change in the development strategy of the state. New meanings and concepts have emerged and these require further analysis. The articles in this volume represent a viewpoint that is essentially anti-globalisation. To support their arguments the contributors to this book highlight a number of success stories, such as the operation of village-level institutions, workers' cooperatives, and women's role in decision-making, that do not reflect the blind faith in the market which globalisation does. The successful outcomes of such indigenous initiatives provide a basis for alternative models of economic development which are not Western imports. This book would be of special interest to those researching in the fields of political science, gender studies, and public administration. (Mir Annice Mahmood)

Kanakalatha Makund and B. Syama Sundari. *Traditional Industry in the New Market Economy. The Cotton Handlooms of Andhra Pradesh.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 169 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 395.00.

This book deals with the handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh in India. The industry is considered to be part of the traditional industrial set-up and not part of modern, mainstream industry. Yet it is the second most vital sector of the economy after agriculture. The authors base their research on the handloom weaving industry using both primary and secondary data. One of the results of the authors' extensive research is that this industry is quite profitable as well as being competitive within the Indian economy. The study examines the interlinkages between the weaver, the trader, and the government. The research reveals various issues that need to be tackled at all levels so that this industry can fully exploit its economic potential.

Marketing of the product is particularly important, and this is the sector which is the weakest as government policy has been found wanting. The authors emphasise that all three actors in the handloom weaving industry, weavers, traders, and the government, have to act in concert if this sector is to flourish. The book would be of use to those researching in the area of rural development, rural industry, and sociology.

(Mir Annice Mahmood)

Radhika Viruru. *Early Childhood Education: Post-colonial Perspectives from India.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 189 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 225.00.

Much of early childhood education is based on Western systems that have been developed during centuries of colonialism. These systems have assumed such importance that alternative systems of childhood education have not been developed. This book fills that gap. The main theme of the author is based on the rejection of the Western-based childhood education system, which is largely play-based and child-centred. The alternative, which the author suggests is that human beings acquire knowledge from any number of sources and in a wider context. The argument of the author is that children should be treated as individuals with their own distinct personalities. This, she says, encourages children to be more independent and self-sufficient and more amenable to co-exist in society.

The themes raised by the author are then applied in the form of a case study in a nursery school in urban India. The growing consumerism in India as well as an increasingly competitive society affect children in different ways. This nursery school has developed its own method to deal with the problems of a modernising society, and the results are encouraging. However, the author does warn that although her alternative method is useful in reforming early childhood education, it is important to appreciate that there exist other ways that can tackle the problem. This is largely due to the diversity and complexity of childhood behaviour. Overall, this is an interesting book as it examines an area of current concern, childhood education and development. Educationists and sociologists in particular would find this book useful in further research.

(Mir Annice Mahmood)

Nira Wickramasinghe. *Civil Society in Sri Lanka: New Circles of Power.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 178 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 395.00.

The last decade has seen a large number of developing countries becoming part of an integrated world economy. This integration has led to the increased

mobility of different factors of production, e.g., capital (financial and physical) and labour across international borders. In particular, it is the revolution in communications that has shrunk the physical distances between countries and regions, making them in a way more interdependent. As a consequence, a whole new set of international institutions and organisations has emerged with their own priorities and agendas. This assumes greater significance as a number of these new organisations transcend national sovereignty, with all the ramifications about the future status of the nation-state.

This volume explores the newly emerging relationship between international institutions (financial agencies and humanitarian relief agencies as well as non-governmental organisations) and civil society in Sri Lanka. The book consists of four chapters, each dealing with a subject of significance at the present time. The issues of politics, security, good governance, and sovereignty are the major subjects of debate. The role of non-governmental organisations from the developed world is also discussed. What emerges from the discussion is that Sri Lankan society is becoming increasingly dependent on these external organisations for advice. Development is what these organisations deem it to be. Independent thinking is discouraged. The book presents an alternative view of the impact of globalisation/integration on developing economies, in the new international economic order. The critique is well-substantiated and should be taken seriously by other developing countries, which are passing through a similar phase in the process of development.

(Mir Annice Mahmood)

Ghanshyam Shah (ed). *Dalit Identity and Politics: Cultural Subordination and the Dalit Challenge, Volume 2*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 363 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 295. 00.

This book is about the “untouchables” in India who, in the past, have been severely discriminated against on the basis of caste. This discrimination has been economic, social, and cultural. A movement has been started by the ‘untouchables’ to improve their economic and social position. This movement has met with some success as Dalits have now entered positions of power in the political sphere. But much remains to be done to improve the economic and social conditions of the vast majority of Dalits living in poverty and under social oppression.

This volume is a collection of articles by various authors that review current events in India and how these events influence the social and economic position of the Dalits. A number of conclusions emerge from a perusal of the articles. These include social and economic developments weakening the caste system; increases in

social mobility as a consequence of policies that favour Dalits; and, probably most important, the political consciousness among them which has made them more aware of their rights. However, a word of caution is necessary. Although some Dalits have succeeded in breaking through the social and economic barriers of the caste system, they have tended to distance themselves from those who have not been that successful, and have aligned themselves with the ruling classes/upper castes. This has resulted in creating divisions within the Dalit society, with possible long-term repercussions for their struggle to achieve equality with the other castes in India.

As the articles in the book review the attempts of the Dalits to attain equality in a society that has discriminated against them throughout history, this volume would be of particular interest to students of social anthropology, sociology, history, and politics.

(Mir Annice Mahmood)

Narendar Pani. *Inclusive Economics: Gandhian Method and Contemporary Policy.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 205 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 380.00.

Political developments over the past two decades have influenced economic thinking. In particular, the narrow ideological basis on which economic policy-making used to be based has given way to a broader and more pragmatic approach. However, this book argues that this is not sufficient by itself; one requires a step-by-step method to explain economic phenomena. To develop this system, which is independent of the standard economic methodologies in use today, the author relies on Gandhi's economic ideas and teachings. Through a close examination, the author develops an alternate methodology that explains much of the new developments in current policy-making in India. To do this, the author outlines basic premises of the Gandhian method in a general framework, before applying it specifically to the discipline of economics. This is described by the author as the inclusive method. It includes the main role Gandhi reserved for action and its consequences. It further involves discussing what is meant by truth coupled with the issue of subjectivity. The author then goes on to examine the tools Gandhi used in developing his inclusive method to deal with incidents in actual life. This includes his concepts of Swadeshi and Trusteeship. Ultimately, the book challenges the conventional wisdom in mainstream economics that deals with economic growth, the specialisation of economic activity, the importance of ideology, etc. The author concludes by effectively supporting the inclusive economics of Gandhi as the most suitable of methodologies to deal with present-day economic issues. Overall, this is an unusual

book which could attract the attention of philosophers, political scientists, and students of economic thought. (Mir Annice Mahmood)

Asian Development Bank. *Progress in the Fight Against Corruption in Asia and the Pacific*. Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2001. 291 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

Corruption has become a way of life in most if not all countries of the world. Undocumented domestic economies operate side by side with the documented ones. The downside of corruption is that it corrodes the political, economic, and social structures of society. This volume deals with the problem of corruption in a member countries in Asia and the Pacific region. The book consists of papers read at a conference held at Seoul in December 2000. The overall consensus at the conference was the support given to the member states in their fight against corruption—by the establishment of a framework that would implement both national and regional anti-corruption strategies.

The book can be divided into five parts. The first part of the book consists of four country case-studies: the Peoples Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, Pakistan, and China. The main focus of these country case-studies is to assess and evaluate the progress made against combatting corruption with the guidelines laid down in an earlier workshop (prior to Seoul 2000) held at Manila. In particular, the case-study on Pakistan highlights some of the reasons why corruption is endemic in the country. For example, the lack of political will, a judicial system that is overburdened and cumbersome, and finally, the lack of an institutional set-up that makes public officials accountable to the people. Part I also focuses on bribery, which is a common form of corruption among government officials, and how the media and education programmers can be utilised to curb corrupt practices.

Part II of the book examines the issue of reducing the incidence of corruption in areas where it is endemic. These include the police force, government procurement, and tax administration. It is important that corruption among those responsible for enforcing the law be minimised, so far as possible. If not, then the whole edifice of society is weakened. Measures aimed at preventing corruption include raising the standard of recruitment, as well as conduct, and having a system in place through which an accountability process can take place in a transparent manner. Similar measures are needed in the area of government procurement and tax administration.

Part III of the volume reviews the private sector's fight against corruption. It is interesting to note that there have been some success stories. This has been made possible by reducing the discretionary powers of public officials as well as by increasing the numbers of direct contacts between private sector representatives and

public officials. One practical example is the “one-stop services” facilities introduced in Indonesia and, to some extent, Pakistan. Such a facility reduces the number of contacts between the public servant and the representative of the private sector. Issues related to improving corporate governance were also discussed in this part. The importance of education and training was stressed with the recognition that a commitment to integrity was rated highly, particularly in South East Asia, and in East Asian societies.

Part IV of the volume deals with the actual action taken against the scourge of corruption. It is important that an environment be created which can nullify the debilitating effects of corruption. Here, both the public and private sectors can play a role in bringing about such an environment. Furthermore, non-governmental organisations, aid agencies, and the media need to interact as well, along with the government and private sector, to create an enabling environment that effectively deals with combatting corruption.

Part V of the book concludes the proceedings of the meeting, with suggestions to promote regional cooperation in the fight against corruption. (Mir Annice Mahmood)

Bhagirath Lal Das. *The World Trade Organisation: A Guide to the Framework for International Trade.* London: Zed Books, 1999. xix+452 pages. Paperback. £ 19.95.

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) came into existence in January 1995. This organisation outlines the rules and regulations by which nation-states conduct international trade in goods and services. The Organisation also has a responsibility to protect intellectual property rights. Prior to the formation of the World Trade Organisation, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was the body that framed rules for the conduct of trade between countries.

This book can be divided into eight parts. Part I deals with the history that led up to the establishment of the World Trade Organisation. The important rounds of trade negotiations—the Tokyo and Uruguay Rounds—are discussed, highlighting the new issues that affect trade relations between the developed as well as developing countries.

Part II of the book examines the general principles that lie at the core of the World Trade Organisation. One of these principles is the most-favoured-nation treatment, which, in other words, means non-discriminatory treatment among member states. A simpler exposition of this principle means that if country A gives any particular benefit to the export or import of a commodity of a most favoured nation, then that same concession has to be given to other member countries for the like commodity. Discrimination is not permitted. However, exceptions to the full

implementation of the principle exist. To name one in particular, the Generalised System of Preferences, where preferential tariffs are given to the developing countries by the developed ones. The second major principle of the WTO agreements deals with national treatment. This briefly means that countries treat domestic goods and imported ones without any discrimination or distinction. In other words, tariffs should not be used in a manner that favours domestic production at the expense of imported goods.

Part III deals with the important issue of market access. This can be limited by tariff safeguards, balance-of-payments provisions, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and trade-related investment measures.

Part IV discusses the various measures that give rise to unfair trade. These include subsidies, countervailing measures, and dumping duties. Part V looks at various sectors that have been covered by multilateral agreements. These include agriculture and textiles. Both sectors are different from industry and both have been subject to restriction on trade in one form or another. The WTO attempts to support freer trade in these two sectors. Part VI deals with procedures and other matters relating to goods. This part reviews the following areas of interest: customs valuation, import licensing, rules of origin, foreign pre-shipment inspection, and state trading enterprises, Part IV of GATT 1994, and plurilateral agreements.

Part VII of the book deals with the issue of services and intellectual property rights. The issue of the protection of intellectual property rights is important because of the large-scale piracy that exists in the extensive knowledge-based products, particularly in the computer software industry and the entertainment sector. The implementation of patent and copyright laws, etc., is to be considered significant if technological innovation is to be encouraged. The last part of the book discusses dispute settlement and institutional matters. The WTO has a more detailed and well-defined system for the settlement of disputes as compared to the GATT, both for the enforcement of rights as well as the observance of obligations as spelled out in the WTO agreements.

The book provides a comprehensive introduction to the World Trade Organisation. It is presented in an easy-to-read format so that students of international economics and related disciplines could readily follow the complexities that arise in dealing with subjects linked to international trade. (Mir Annice Mahmood)

Graham Bannock, R. E. Baxter, and Evan Davis. *Dictionary of Economics*. Delhi: Profile and Penguin Books (South Asian Edition), 2001. 439 pages. Hardbound. Price not given.

This Dictionary of Economics published by The Economist Books is one of the latest editions in this specialist field. It supplements other similar dictionaries brought out by the same publisher. These others include *The Economist Guide to Economic Indicators* and *The International Dictionary of Finance*.

The Dictionary of Economics has over 1500 entries. It is targeted at two types of users: those who have little or no knowledge of economics except for what they read in the daily newspapers or watch on the television; and those students who are about to embark on obtaining a degree in economics. The editors focus on two areas of particular interest in this book. These are economic theory with international economics, monetary economics, and welfare economics as one major component, the second being the history of economics.

Prominent economists such as Maurice Allais, a leading French economist who had among his students Malinvaud and Debeu, are also its subjects. Allais was the first French economist who won the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1988. Users familiar with his work would recall his book on general equilibrium and economic efficiency without any assumption of convexity. Kenneth Arrow is another internationally renowned economist listed in the dictionary. He was also awarded the Nobel Prize in 1972, sharing it with Sir John Hicks. Notable economists include Irving Fisher, Ragnar Frisch, Friedrich van Hayek, Sir William Petty, Alban William Housego Phillips, Milton Friedman and others too numerous to list over here. By including such outstanding economists, the dictionary also highlights their main contributions to economic thought, economic theory, and history. One could quibble here that some of the entries are on the shorter side, and that they could have been elaborated further. However, the system of cue-referencing and indexing helps the reader to go from one concept to the other very easily. Another strong point of this dictionary is that it includes the terms and special words used by econometricians and statisticians. In short, the book is quite up to date, which is one of its strongest features. (Mir Annice Mahmood)

Anne Marie Goetz. *Women Development Workers: Implementing Rural Credit Programmes in Bangladesh.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 443 pages. Hardbound. Indian Rs 595.00.

The book investigates the question of institutional change from the point of view of women field workers in rural development programmes. It is based on research focusing credit programmes that provide rural women access to non-traditional resources and opportunities in development. Two rural development and credit programmes are selected, the Rural Development Programme of Bangladesh Rural

Advancement Committee (BRAC), an NGO, and the Rural Poor Programme of the government's Bangladesh Rural Development Programme. The selection criterion is the general approach of both the programmes to rural poverty alleviation in Bangladesh. In the 1990s, the two organisations worked hard to involve a large number of women staff in their field-level operations and made institutional changes to improve the access of poor people, especially women, to credit.

The attitudes and work practices of field-level staff in both types of organisations are studied. The question explored is whether women development agents are able to manage development in women's interest, given the problems they face in the form of resistance to gender equality, from colleagues within organisations and from other interest groups in the rural environment where they work. The author compares the behaviour of male and female development workers when they interact with their female clientele, the difference of opinion on women's interest between women workers and their male colleagues, and the conditions in which they work. Using organisational theory, the book explores the ways in which different organisational structures, practices, and cultures affect women's capacity to act in the light of women's needs and interests at the field level, and to channel their views to the management. One of the major findings in the book is that woman workers are more critical of gender relations and are more sensitive to social and economic problems faced by poor women, so they can be a good source for women's empowerment.

Based on extensive quantitative and qualitative data, the book is organised in seven chapters. The first chapter describing the intention and scope highlights the concepts of women's interests, identities, power, and participation in the development process. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the research process, methodology, and related problems. It gives the general idea of gender and development challenges in Bangladesh. Describing the details of the two organisations selected for research, it also examines some of the current debates about micro-finance institutions. Chapter 3 compares the class, education, marital status, and family situations of female development agents with those of their male counterparts. It explains how women feel in development work, and how they react to the criticism they face on their mobility and on working for poor women. It also deliberates on the ways in which the women development workers adjust themselves in the new role of working woman. Chapter 4 focuses on the implementation practices of field workers in development programmes. It evaluates the interests that are perceived and promoted by field workers in their everyday work. Chapter 5 examines how the staff management practices in rural development organisations hinder the integration of women in their staff. This chapter also discusses the gendered characteristics of the organisational culture and the gendered structure of

space and time, and how they affect women's capacity to work. Chapter 6 investigates women's experiences of authority in development organisations; how they try to exercise the authority associated with their position, and how they are affected by the exercise of authority by others over them. The chapter identifies the strategic and ideological problems they face to command authority for their views.

The last chapter highlights the theme of 'institutional capacity building in development from a gendered perspective', that is, getting development institutions right for women staff and women clients. It also summarises the findings of the book.

(Afia Malik)

State of Consumer Rights, 2000. Islamabad: Consumer Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2001. 117 pages. Paperback. Rs 300.00.

In Pakistan, consumers face a lot of problems in the form of low quality, unsafe, inefficient, and hazardous goods and services, and above all, no mechanism through which their grievances can be redressed. The reason lies in poor governance and monopolistic and unregulated market structures. 'Civil initiative' to protect the 'consumers' is a recent phenomenon, and the majority of the people is unable to comprehend it. Generally, it is taken as an activity catering to the needs of a particular class and not the marginalised and poorer sections of society. It is a misleading notion, as 'consumer' is a broad category, including the marginalised and poorer sections of society. Therefore, for developing countries like Pakistan, where a sizeable population lives below the poverty-line, issues like access to basic goods and services, equity, and the protection of the marginalised need to be made an integral part of the consumer rights movement.

In Pakistan, no policy for consumer protection has ever been formulated with the comprehensive view of the relevant problems. Most of the public policies are aimed at promoting business and attracting foreign investment. Even if consumer problems are addressed at the policy level, the implementation mechanism is slow, inefficient, and even regressive. Consumer rights relate to a wide range of areas, and these are: the right to basic goods and services; the right to be protected from hazardous production processes; the right to true information needed to make a decision in the market; the right to a fair settlement of just claims; the right to acquire knowledge; and the right to a physical environment, which enhances the quality of life. There is no institutional mechanism for making these rights enforceable. The government has established some regulatory bodies and put some consumer-sensitive provisions in the relevant acts. But the problem is these regulatory bodies lack real autonomy and have a tendency to support the requests of public service providers. Moreover, the government intervenes frequently and influences the regulators, one way or the other.

This Report provides relevant data and information on consumer issues and interprets these from the point of view of consumers, including those who are inarticulate, disadvantaged, and marginalised. Using an interdisciplinary approach, it reviews the existing laws, which are directly or indirectly related to the issues of consumer protection. These laws include the Model Consumer Protection Act, 2000, drafted by the Consumer Rights Commission of Pakistan, pending with the Pakistan Law Commission and the Ministry of Law for enactment.

The Report also analyses the implications of overemphasis on corporatisation and privatisation in Pakistan in various sections of society. Apart from consumer laws, the Report elaborates on a wide range of sectors in separate chapters. The areas covered are in the following sequence: education, health, food and edibles, drinking water, environment, power, telecommunications, petroleum and gas, transport, banking, insurance, privatisation, and print and electronic media. The report is quite interesting for those working on social and development issues. (Afia Malik)