

Books Received

Does Approach Matter in Poverty Reduction? - An Empirical Study on Micro-Credit Food Assistance and Employment Programmes in Rural Bangladesh. By Monirul Islam Khan. Dhaka: Academic Press and Publishers Limited. 2003

The book presents the results of a comparative study of the effects of three very significant poverty reduction programmes in rural Bangladesh. The selected programmes include, "micro-credit", "food assistance" and the "employment to the women" commissioned by ASA, CARE-GOB and the BRAC-GOB respectively through the local body of Union *Parishad*. The latter two programmes are popularly known as the RMP and the IGVGD programmes.

The study focused on a number of issues including, economic change, health impact, and women's empowerment as well as on reducing social exclusion of the poor. In order to shed light on some important assumptions regarding the characteristics of the participants, an elaborate examination of the profile of the beneficiaries was also attempted. This approach allowed the review of some vital questions like who was actually served by such programmes. The effect of other programmes, apart from the selected ones, was tangentially touched upon to make the study a more rigorous one. Readers will find a brief but succinct review of the relevant programmes undertaken in the course of the past few years, especially their sequential history. In order to provide greater support, the book also referred extensively to the relevant theoretical issues. The empirical research, reinforced with a qualitative approach, was carried out in four districts of Bangladesh, namely, Mymensingh, Rangpur, Noakhali and Barisal, which represent the varying socioeconomic features of the people.

Women Gender and Discrimination. Edited by Kazi Tobarak Hossain, Muhammad Hassan Imam, Shah Ehsan Habib. Rajshahi: University of Rajshahi. 2004.

The volume provides an understanding of the dimensions of gender discrimination as well as women's development issues. This compilation brings to the readers issues ranging from female migration, women's participation in agriculture, micro-credit and female solidarity, commercial sex work to the need for sociological research on gender discrimination in Bangladesh.

Of the eleven topics discussed in the volume, Nazmunnessa Mahtab writes on gender inequality while Mahbuba Nasreen looks at gender and development. Two migration studies are authored by Tasneed Siddiqui who deals with "State as Agent of Patriarchy" and Muhammad Mizanuddin and Nazneen Sultana who cover female migration in Rajshahi. Shanti Rozario looks at micro-credit and dowry while Sadeka Halim looks into women's involvement in shrimp cultivation (reported on this website). Wardatul Akmam examines the level of women's participation in the white-collar professions in Bangladesh while Faizar Rahman deals with women in agriculture. Of the two problem areas, female child labour is covered by M. Zulfikar Ali Islam and Shah Ehsan Habib deals with female sex workers. The final essay is on a sociological perspective on gender discrimination by Muhammad Hassan Imam.

The volume seeks to highlight how women lack the benefits and how gender discrimination leads to uneven division of resources and power within society.