

Book Reviews

M. C. Behera. *Globalising and Rural Development: Competing Paradigms and Emerging Realities*, New Delhi/Thousand Oaks/London: Sage Publications. 2006. Paperback. Indian Rs 550.00.

Rural development provides an understanding which is both broader and more specific than development in terms of economic growth. It is broader because it entails much more than economic growth as factors affecting it are not contained within the discipline of formal economics. Rural development includes not only attention to production, but also to the analysis of distributional issues and, therefore, demands an inter-disciplinary approach in which the broader social and political factors interacting with economic processes are subject to examination. Even in this age of globalisation, rural development has acquired a central role in the international development discourse. This is because there is a shift in the development paradigm along with the process of globalisation and nations need to formulate their rural development strategies fitting into this international discourse.

This volume is a compilation of seventeen papers focusing on interlinkages between globalisation and rural development. A large body of the literature is available both on rural development and on globalisation but a comprehensive work to capture the influence of the changing paradigm of rural development on poverty alleviation, participation, equity, gender, food security and sustainability in the context of globalisation is rare. Therefore, this volume provides studies focusing on a wide range of theory, approach and evidence in the broad field of rural development. The objective of this volume is not to provide a discussion on the broad and specific nature of rural development in the context of globalisation, nor to offer suggestions for rural development policies, but it is to present a collection of papers from multi-country experiences to identify the commonalities and differences in approaches to rural development with a view to providing a framework for the analysis of the process and interacting forces which operate toward the development of the rural people. The seventeen papers of the different contributors are arranged under three themes: 'Globalising Rural Development', 'Sustainability and Endogenous Rural Development: Concepts and Strategies' and 'Participation, Gender, Poverty and Food Security: Policy Issues'.

The first theme includes seven papers which deal with the emerging role of the state, state-led intervention in the context of globalisation, and the role and the potential of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for rural development. Robert Chamber's paper on the State and the Rural Development: Ideologies and an Agenda for the 1990s' argues that the successive ideological fashions in development have differed in detail but shared the same bias of originating in the cores and being imposed on the peripheries. He puts forward his views on the basis of his experience during the 1970s and 1980s and recommends that the role of the state in this process should be that of liberator and an enabler for the poor, promoting and permitting them both diversity and choice.

The role of the state is further emphasised in the paper by Maano Ramutsindela entitled 'State Restructuring and Rural Development in South Africa' against the backdrop of unsuccessful rural development. He writes that the right to development, as recognised in the UN declaration, appears obvious on paper but highly problematic on the ground, particularly in most rural areas of the south. Indeed, there has been frustration with development as a concept and as a practice.

In the third paper, Farida Akhter in her paper entitled 'Rural Development in the Era of Globalisation: Fragmented Realities' has been critical of the state's role ensuring rural development and instead prescribes agricultural movement for rural development in Bangladesh. The paper argues that 'rural development' is an interventionist tool and has undergone various transform actions through curious terms and associations. A similar tone can be noticed in the paper written by S. Tunji Titilola and Femi Ogundele where rural development in Nigeria has not been very effective in spite of the serious concern of the state in this regard. The paper provides a vague picture of rural development with reference to rural-urban disparities and rural development programmes and policies in the country. The paper prescribes that development in collaboration with donors and other development partner calls for a more holistic strategy which would enhance the rural environment with a view to raising the standard of living in Nigeria.

Nathan Porath's paper entitled 'Enwrapped by Thai Development: the Sedentarisation Process of Hunting and Gathering People of South Thailand' has explored the impact of state-led intervention on less-development communities like hunter-gatherers within the country itself. His paper describes the development process and sedentarisation of hunting and gathering peoples living in Thailand.

'Non-governmental Organisations in Rural Development' by Damodar Suar, Laxmi Bilash Hota and Himadri Sinha Specifies the Categories of the NGOs in Rural Development. It compares the faint differences in approaches of NGOs and governmental organisations to rural development. The shortcoming of NGOs in terms of their dependency on official funding is highlighted in Mokbul Morshed Ahmed's paper entitled 'The NGO Debate in "Development": A Review'. He argues that although many NGOs have shown some success in reaching the poor organising them to raise awareness for education and providing micro credit the vast majority of the poorest in the south remained beyond their reach.

The second theme, namely, Sustainability and Endogenous Rural Development: Concepts and Strategies include five papers which stress the sustainable livelihood framework and the impact of rural development quests in some European and Asian countries following the endogenous approach.

In the first paper Binayak Rajbhandari entitled 'Sustainable Livelihood and Rural Development in South Asia: Issues, Concerns and General Implications' elaborates the perspectives of the resource-poor people of South Asia. His concern is the need to resist economic globalisation, and therefore, he suggests a sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) as the most appropriate and effective development approach for healthy rural communities in the region. The second paper draws on the experiences of the GRANO project in the region of Brandenburg in East Germany; It focuses on a system of local self-administration, experiences of a local resource management project and on sustainable development. The next three papers under this theme deal with endogenous development in different contexts.

The last theme entitled, 'Participation, Gender, Poverty and Food Security: Policy Issues' include five papers which largely focus on participatory and other methods while addressing problems like food security, women's empowerment and poverty alleviation.

The first paper 'Engendering Participatory Development in the Analysis of Household Food Security: Small-scale Farmers in the Vihiga District of Kenya' presented by Eliud Wandabwa, stresses on engendered participation in the analysis of household food security and advocates the development and implementation of policies for achieving sustainability on the basis of options and recommendations emerging from small-scale farmers deeply affected with hunger. The second paper also provides a somewhat similar viewpoint in a theoretical perspective. The author looks at women's empowerment in the sample states namely West Bengal, Orissa and Jharkhand and makes some suggestions for strengthening the process of empowerment in effective mode.

The fourth paper by Niaz Ahmad entitled 'Social Forestry, Poverty Reduction and Rural Development in Bangladesh' stresses social exploration on projects that contribute to poverty alleviation. The last paper 'Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Rural India: A Critical Assessment' by Sibranjan Misra examines such strategies as land reform, access to credit, public distribution system and targeted programmes which have been adopted as a legitimate political objective in different countries.

To conclude, this volume provides an understanding of rural development in the context of globalisation in a multi-country setting and a multidisciplinary framework. The book is a collection of multidimensional research papers which are both conceptual and empirical in nature. This volume further provides an opportunity for discussion of issues that relate to rural development in the context of globalisation. It will also provide a framework for empirical exercises to be carried out with respect to rural development in different areas of the world.

Naseem Akhter

Pakistan Institute of Development Economics,
Islamabad.