

Shorter Notices

Ejaz Akram. *Ideals and Realities of Regional Integration in the Muslim World: The Case of the Economic Cooperation Organisation.* Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008. 266 pages. Hardbound. Rs 495.00.

This book has focussed on regionalism in Southwest Asia as Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) has played an insufficient role to integrate the Muslim countries of the ECO. It is argued that for regional unity economic cooperation in isolation cannot work, unless accompanied by political will, a strong common identity at the state level and institutionalised regional security. In other words, for any regional formation to function successfully, the political will of the member states and the active interest of their populations are necessary. The book argued that ECO has remained inefficient organisation in the past because of the adjournment of its strategic and political decisions. Important political decisions, such as regional security require a collective will from the member states. Such political will is not imminent until the region rediscovers a common denominator of identity and interests. This common source of identity—a shared culture and history is embedded in the core identity of this region.

The book is divided in two parts. In Part One besides introduction the chapter on “Regionalism and Security” with the help of existing literature on the relationship between regionalism and security investigates the general theoretical nexus between regionalism and security in some more successful and well-known regional formations.

Part Two of this book deals with the general political economy of the ECO region. First chapter in this part gives a history of the ECO, how it was born out of the defunct RCD. Originally in the ECO, the emphasis was on security cooperation; later on economic dimension was added to it. The second chapter in this part analyse trade among the ECO member states. This chapter challenges the discourse of Muslim unity purported by some statements of member states, as none of the ECO member states are each other’s trading partners. Final chapter in this part gives a comprehensive examination of the regional security of the ECO and how trade is linked with security of this region in the context of global and regional political economy. This chapter also looked at the ECO and regionalism in theoretical perspective in the light of the existing literature.

Part two is followed by the concluding discussion. It is an interesting book to read given the current global scenario. (*Afa Malik*)

Abdul Raouf and Niaz Ahmed (eds.). *Quality Assurance in Higher Education: A Global Perspective.* Islamabad: Higher Education Commission. 2008. 204 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

This book is an end product of an international conference that focussed on quality in higher education. Practitioners from around the world presented latest developments in this area. The book is divided in four parts. Part One includes five chapters. These chapters reflect on the quality of higher education in international perspective. For instance, chapter one based on the Chilean experience discusses the impact of quality assurance mechanism on higher education institutions. Chapter Two examines the role of quality assurance agencies in the 21st century. The author in Chapter Three talked about accreditation and quality assurance in university education based on his experience in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Ghana, South Africa, Pakistan, Malawi, Bangladesh, Madagascar, Mauritius and the United States. Chapter Four discusses quality in contemporary higher education and the role of academic governance. In the fifth chapter quality assurance policy for higher education in developing countries is discussed. In particular, the author in this chapter has critically examined the quality assurance policy in India.

In the second part, five contributions have reflected on quality related factors. The first chapter in this part presents human resource management and quality assurance in a public sector university. The second chapter demonstrates integration of quality management systems for universities. The third chapter deals with professional development of academics and its needs assessment. Next two chapters deliberate on methods of grading performance and performance indicators for higher educational institutes.

In the third part quality assurance practices have been discussed. One of the contributors reflects on the use of EFQM, BNQA and ISO 9001 in higher education. Second contributor informed about the experience of quality assurance in higher education in Jordan. The third and final chapter in this part examines monitoring and managing quality in higher education.

Finally, two chapters in the fourth part assess quality in terms of teaching as well as learning in medical institutions. (*Afia Malik*)

C. Christine Fair. *The Madrassah Challenge: Militancy and Religious Education in Pakistan.* Lahore: Vanguard Books. 2009. 145 pages. Hardbound. Price not given.

Since 9/11 terrorist attacks madaris in Pakistan have become the focal point for policy makers around the Western World. Though none of the attackers had studied in Pakistani madaris but it is believed that these madaris provide support for militancy in the region.

This book based on primary information collected via interviews, survey data and opinion polls; as well as secondary literature has addressed questions regarding the number of madaris in Pakistan; their share in the education market; the socioeconomic background of madrassah students; the connection between madaris and militancy; and

the support from madrassah leadership, educators, and students for reforming these educational institutes.

The first chapter examines the religious education in Pakistan in the larger context of the country's educational system. The second chapter looks deeper into the religious educational institutions, both formal and informal, with particular focus on the formal institution, that is, madaris. In the third chapter the author argued that it is not fair to make unqualified claims that madaris produce militants in Pakistan. But at the same time it does not mean that madaris have no role in militancy as evidence indicates that some madaris in the border areas may have a limited role in terrorism. The author explains that madaris may help create an environment favourable to jihad in the region, even though its students are not well represented across the ranks of all militant organisations. The fourth chapter reflects on measures adopted by the government of Pakistan to reform these madaris. In the final chapter, the author draws important policy implications and suggested a number of initiatives that might help in reducing concerns arising from alleged link between religious education and security inside and outside Pakistan. This in depth and timely contribution is a useful reading from policy perspective. (*Afia Malik*)

Saleem H. Ali. *Islam and Education: Conflict and Conformity in Pakistan's Madrassahs*. Karachi: Oxford University Press. 2009. 214 pages. Hardbound. Pakistani Rs 495.

Islamic educational institutions have been deeply examined in recent years because of their apparent linkage to militancy. This book attempts to consider varieties of educational traditions within Islam and their adaptive strengths and weaknesses within a changing world.

Selecting Islamabad as the urban case and Ahmedpur East as the rural case for studying madrassahs, this empirical study documents the demographic characteristics of areas in rural and urban Pakistan where madrassahs are widespread using geographic information systems, thus providing some background to the rise of this phenomenon. Further, using the data collected from survey, interviews and focus group discussion, it reflects on the linkages between madrassahs and regional conflict on the basis of recruitment and career placement dynamics of madrassah graduates.

This book bring integrative and analytical clarity to the issue of Islamic education; moving away from both the propagandist negative accounts about madrassahs as well as the naively positive accounts that downplay the impact of traditional education on Islamic societies. Its main objective is to avert the rise of existing regional conflicts as well as the apparent conflict between Islam and the West, while providing guidance to policy makers regarding their attempts to reform educational institutions. (*Afia Malik*)

Mahmood Hasan Khan. *Participatory Rural Development in Pakistan: Experience of Rural Support Programmes.* Karachi: Oxford University Press. 2009. 534 pages. Hardbound. Rs 595.00.

This volume on *Participatory Rural Development in Pakistan* narrates the experience of nine Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) with reference to their contribution in the uplift of marginalised rural communities. It is an attempt to influence governments and the international donor community to involve these organisations in an endeavor to reduce poverty.

The first two chapters provide background information on the subject, that is, RSPs, which is explained in the next ten chapters. In the first chapter, the author outlines the socio-economic transformation of Pakistan in the last sixty years, with particular focus on rural poverty and the economy in transition. Secondly, this chapter reviews the government sponsored rural development programmes in which the intended recipients were hardly involved as active participants. In the second chapter, the organisational model of RSPs is explained. The author begins with the explanation of Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, and how it is replicated by other RSPs that flourished in almost all parts of Pakistan. Common practices and issues in RSPs are also highlighted in this chapter.

In the rest of the chapters the author enlightens the reader with the experience of nine RSPs: what they have done; how they have done; and what they have achieved. The emphasis is more on the change they have brought. Five cases described in the volume are those with large regional outreach: Agha Khan Rural Support Programme, National Rural Support Programme, Sarhad Rural Support Programme, Punjab Rural Support Programme and Sindh Rural Support Programme. Two cases are those which were initiated as donor funded projects but later transformed into RSPs: Balochistan Rural Support Programme and Thardeep Rural Development programme. Final two cases are somewhat idiosyncratic RSPs, Ghazi Barotha Taraqiati Idara (that set off to support the population affected by Ghazi Barotha Hydro Power project) and Lachi Poverty Reduction Project (that was initiated to develop innovative packages of natural resource management for livelihoods to reduce rural poverty in semi arid and arid zones). In the last chapter the author glanced at the Rural Support Programmes Network, and reflects on the opportunities and challenges for RSPs in scaling up the process of social mobilisation in Pakistan.

It would be an interesting reading for those in the field of development studies in general, and in the field of rural development planning in particular. *(Afia Malik)*

Naureen Talha. *Jinnah's Role in Stengthening Pakistan's Economy (1947-48). Chair on Quaid-i-Azam and Freedom Movement.* Islamabad: Quaid-i-Azam University, 2008. 252 pages. Hardbound. Rs 250.00.

The book aims at presenting Jinnah's vision of the Economy of Pakistan. It shows up Jinnah's contributions to the economic strengthening of Pakistan both before and after independence. According to the author the main convincing reason for the Indian Muslims' demand for Pakistan was economic. It brings forward the fact that from 1940 to 1947 Muslim leadership worked very hard to overcome their economic backwardness in India. Muslim League Economic Planning Committee was formed with its main emphasis on the development of Pakistan zones. The author explores the achievements as well as the projects Jinnah started. Jinnah was deeply engaged in establishing a network of Muslim owned Economic institutions with his deep foresight while support came from a core group of industrialists and businessmen.

After an introduction, the book is divided into six chapters. The Chapter one of this book outlines the collapse of Muslims post Mughal era and their troubles during the British rule while the second chapter of the book throws light on Jinnah's efforts to plan for future development of Indian Muslims.

The third chapter of the book explains the concept of economic independence and the feeling of Economic nationalism among the Muslims during 1943-47. It gives the detail of some of the important institutions like Federation of Muslim Chamber of Commerce and Industry, printing presses, Muslim-owned banks etc., started with Jinnah's inspiration. Chapter Four of the book tells about Jinnah's efforts to create Muslim trade and industry and reports that were submitted to give suggestions to industrialise Pakistan. In chapter five Hindu approach toward the economic viability of Pakistan and the weak foundations of both East and West Pakistan were discussed in detail.

The last chapter of the book identifies the economic achievements and development projects initiated by Jinnah. The opening of State Bank of Pakistan, Pakistan's own currency notes, its own airline, start of various development projects, sound industrial and commercial policy, opening of new branches of banks, new industrial units all these achievements were the result of Jinnah's inspiration and direction. Thus Jinnah's achievements for Pakistanis in the first year were as notable and miraculous as his winning a separate homeland. (*Nadia Zakir*)

Bertus Wennink, Suzanne Nederlof and Willem Heemskerk (eds.) *Access of the Poor to Agricultural Services*. Amsterdam: KIT. 2008. 157 pages. Hardback. Price not given.

This bulletin gives a brilliant account of the increasing role played by rural-based farmer's organisations in poverty ridden Sub-Saharan Africa. For both the public and private sectors, these organisations arrange the purchase of inputs and sale of output on a more cost effective basis; represent the interests and collective voice of farmers; impart knowledge services such as agricultural research, advisory and other types of farmer's training. The book answers two major questions: How do the poorest class gain access to, and benefit from, agricultural services? What is the role of farmer's organisations in socially inclusive access to these services, and to what extent is membership of the farmer's organisations a determining factor for this?

The bulletin is categorised into two parts. Part I discusses the social inclusion of the deprived and vulnerable farmers, in the context of poverty, sustainable livelihoods, and empowerment, and subsequently providing a tentative conceptual framework for an active social inclusion strategy. Part II contains description of case studies of Tanzania, Rwanda, and Benin that were used for the analysis of social inclusion. They investigate the current role of farmer's organisations in facilitating access of the poorest to agricultural services. These are also of great help to identifying the conditions under which farmer's organisations can enhance social inclusions. (*Nishat Fatima*)

Alfred Watkins and Michael Ehst (eds.) *Science, Technology, and Innovation: Capacity Building for Sustainable Growth and Poverty Reduction*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2008. 211 pages. Hardback. Price not given.

This World Bank report is a description of its long time contribution in building science, technology and innovation capacity (STI). It summarises the case studies presented at the February 2007 World Bank Global Forum on STI Capacity for Sustainable Growth and Poverty Reduction, held in Washington D.C. The forum emphasised that STI Capacity is no more an ingredient of the policies of wealthy nations only, but the developing and emerging economies are also striving to build technical, vocational, managerial and scientific capacity with a view to transform their societies, foster sustainable development and reduce poverty. So STI may also be assumed to stand for "solve, transform, and impact", as proposed by one of the speakers.

The presentations highlight the different strategies to introduce and further disseminate STI capacity building program, and the pre-requisites (targeting investment in education and training, improving research and development, supporting industrial innovation, and fostering policies for an enabling environment to create and apply knowledge), which the economies must fulfill in order to reap maximum possible benefits after its implementation. (*Nishat Fatima*)

Douglas Zhihua Zeng (eds.) *Knowledge, Technology, and Cluster-Based Growth in Africa*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. 2008. 130 pages. Hardback. Price not given.

This book gives an insightful knowledge of the forming and evolution of enterprise clusters in Africa, and the contribution of knowledge, human capital and technology in their success. These clusters are groups of firms engaged in related economic activities (upgrading the diversity and sophistication of their business activities), which help in augmenting national productivity. They grow and compete by diffusing knowledge and technological know-how in a more effective way. They provide jobs for the continent's growing population, thus enabling the poor families not only to survive, but also to educate their children and, eventually, bringing them out of the poverty trap.

The book contains 11 case studies of African economies. The evidence has been gathered through surveys and field visits, with a focus on knowledge, technology, and policy. They attract a great deal of attention of development economists, as each study comprehensively takes into account the respective economy by giving the cluster profile, mode of their networking and ultimately stating policies and incentives. However, some of the policy implications drawn from these cases are by no means uniformly applicable across regions, and more research is required to make their operation consequential. (*Nishat Fatima*)

Aswathanarayana, U. (eds.) *Food and Water Security*. Leiden: Taylor and Francis Balkema. 2008. 315 pages. Hardback. Price not given.

The book is aimed at creating awareness among the developing countries that food security is a fundamental human right. Despite of the availability of economically viable and environmentally-sustainable technologies to alleviate the food deficiencies, the developing countries lack those economic instruments and managerial systems which are consistent with the agro climatic, socio-economic situation and food preferences in a country. The underlying purpose of this book is to identify feasible techno-socio-economic-combinations, which a developing country can choose in accordance to their needs. It addresses three imperative issues in detail: soil, water, and agronomic practices. The book establishes a fact by giving the instance of China, that food availability is a necessary but not the sufficient condition for food security.

The chapters in this volume are based on the presentations made in the Panel Discussion on the Biophysical and Socioeconomic dimensions of Food Security in the developing countries, in Hyderabad, India. The book generalised the problem of food security in India for the rest of the developing economies. The multipurpose development role of the Village Knowledge Centers and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), regarding food and water security, health, sanitation, etc in the villages is also discussed. (*Nishat Fatima*)