

Devaki Jain and Diane Elson (eds). *Harvesting Feminist Knowledge for Public Policy*. Sage Publications Pvt. Ltd. 2011. 396 pages. US\$ 43.26.

Harvesting Feminist Knowledge for Public Policy comprises 14 articles by feminist thinkers from all over the world, reflecting on problems of current patterns of development and calls for political, economic, and social changes to promote equality. In general the articles are about the "triple crises" of food, fuel, and finance and draw on the diversity of socioeconomic experiences of women in different countries. The authors argue for new ways of thinking about development, and offer ideas for reformulating development to secure social, economic, and political justice.

The article *Economics for a Post-Crisis World: Putting Social Justice First*, focuses on how to reframe the understanding of development by giving greater role to social investment, production, and consumption. The second article, *"Rebooting" Is Not an Option: Toward Equitable Social and Economic Development*, discusses how the neoliberal macroeconomic policies set in motion since the early 1970s have undermined the goals of dignified work, security, and inter-group equality, focusing in particular on the liberalisation of the financial sector and reorientation of central banks away from employment creation. The writer offers examples of policies for reform of the financial sector and central banks to make them capable of supporting the equitable creation of wealth and jobs, and the equitable enjoyment of human well-being.

The article *Globalisation, Labour, and Women's Work: Critical Challenges for a Post-Neoliberal World* examines the key challenges in labour market trends, including the changing processes of labour organisation, the growth of the informal economy, and the reorganisation of the care economy through feminisation of international migration. The author raises fundamental questions on how labour markets would need to be restructured if gender equality is to be achieved. Likewise, work and labour markets are also the subject of the article *Gender Dimensions of the World of Work in a Globalised Economy*. The issues are discussed in the context of the standards and procedures agreed through the International Labour Organisation.

The article *Gender, Global Crises, and Climate Change* explores the impact of climate change on access to food, water, and energy, discussing how women and men are differently affected, and how gender inequalities intersect with adaptation and mitigation strategies. Access to food and water is the key issue in the article *The Cost of the Commoditisation of Food and Water for Women*. It is based on the analysis of the costs of market driven policies for agriculture and water provisioning in Africa. It shows how these policies, in which officials and corporations collude, are curtailing the realisation of the right to water and the right to food, and deepening women's economic insecurity. The article *Questioning Economic Success through the Lens of Hunger* is also concerned with the inequalities produced by market forces, and critically examines India's economic success in the realm of food security. The writer calls for more proximate production systems, especially led by women farmers, as an insurance against food insecurity for poor households.

Modernity, Technology, and the Progress of Women in Japan: Problems and Prospects, Equity in Post-crisis China: A Feminist Political Economy Perspective, and Cuban Development Alternatives to Market-driven Economies: A Gendered Case Study

on *Women's Employment* consider the pressures that have limited the realisation of gender equality in development, drawing on the experiences of their respective countries: the Philippines, Japan, China, and Cuba.

In the article, *Removing the Cloak of Invisibility: Integrating Unpaid Household Services in the Philippines' Economic Accounts* it is argued that unless all of women's contributions to the economy are recognised, women will continue to be second-class citizens. The author discusses the attempts to measure unpaid work and include it in the GDP of the Philippines, charting both progress and setbacks. New economic measures that take into account women's unpaid work cannot be established without a strong, politically motivated, and united push by the women's movement.

The remaining three articles focus on feminist or women-led mobilisation to achieve equality. They emphasise that women workers in the informal sector—even though they are not protected by labour laws—can change their circumstances through collective organising.

All in all, the writers note the difficulties involved in trying to scale up local-level organisations in ways that retain women's autonomy. All the chapters, in diverse ways, offer proposals for alternative strategies to address the limitations and contradictions of currently dominant ideas and practices in development. They also recommend reforms in economic reasoning, growth that "Bubbles Up" rather than "Trickles Down", socially useful banking and finance at macro as well as micro levels, just and democratic public finance, socially responsible markets and fair trade, support for equitable property rights, economic and social rights as an objective of economic policy. In short, the authors insist that feminist analysis and women's voices should be in the forefront of these debates, putting forward ideas not about how more women can participate in economic and political spaces as they are, but how those spaces can be transformed to become more equal and sustainable for everyone.

Afaq Mehmood

Pakistan Institute of Development Economics,
Islamabad.