

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### **Bhabani Shankar Nayak. Political Economy of Gender and Development in Africa: Mapping Gaps, Conflicts, and Representation**

**United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023. ISBN 978-3031188282. e-ISBN 978-3031188299. Pp. 223. Hardback. £ 159.99. Ebook. £ 128.39.**

There is a crucial link between political economy and gender. Gender equality is a globally important issue. It can stimulate economic growth, enhance public and private sector performance, and diminish income disparities. *Political Economy of Gender and Development in Africa: Mapping Gaps, Conflict, and Representation*, edited by BS Nayak, addresses a major issue about political economy and gender, especially in Africa. The editor, BS Nayak, is a political economist and works as a Professor of Business Management and Programme Director of Strategic Business and Management at the University for the Creative Arts, UK. This edited volume comprises eight chapters that discuss the practical implications of gender and development in Africa. It focuses on how current political, economic, social, cultural, and religious systems undermine women's empowerment within these structures. Impressively, the editor presents an integrated explanation of the entries in multiple chapters of the book. Nayak contributed four entries, including two on financial inclusion, gender disparities, and development in Rwanda, one on the impact of aid on economic growth in Nigeria, and one on gender equality, education, and gender mainstreaming in Ghana. In addition, this book examines critical issues such as conflict resolution strategies for achieving gender justice, representation of women in public life, access to resources that can help materialize their rights, availability of support services, and so forth, all of which have a direct impact on the improvement of the lives of African women.

This volume takes a holistic approach to understanding gender and development issues by examining structural factors and individual agency when empowering women. It allows readers to examine threads connecting present needs with potential future emancipation from oppressive institutions or processes that perpetuate poverty among them. However, this has not been able to provide a comprehensive solution to the gender and development issues in Africa. Due to the study's exclusive focus on African nations, the relevance of some findings may be limited outside this region.

Chapter 1 discusses the contradictions within the legal framework and cultural norms regarding women's right to land and agriculture and their role in agricultural production. This chapter further highlights the importance of secure land rights for rural women in Global South countries, particularly those dependent on agriculture. Due to the significant gender disparity in land ownership and resource access, it is essential to protect land rights. According to the data, 97% of men possessed land, while only 3% did not. However, 96% of women had no legal rights over their lands accessed by their husbands or fathers.

Chapter 2 focuses on the portrayal of women and gendered roles in television advertising, examining the changes in marketing communication and television advertising spending in Tunisia during the past 35 years. At the same time, changes in costs influence market competition. In order to explain gender roles, this chapter states that Tunisia's spending on media communication and broadcast advertising has increased significantly over the past few decades. This increase in spending implies that marketing strategies have become more sophisticated. It emphasizes targeting specific audiences through television advertisements and implies that modern roles for men and women are presented to viewers without regard for their family status or professional occupations.

The following three chapters (chapters 3, 4, and 5) focus on Rwanda, discussing financial inclusion, gender gaps, the economy, access to finance, and their impact on economic development. It is concluded that gender equality and financial inclusion are two major components of long-term sustainable development. Increased financial access, especially for women, can be an effective tool to jump-start and sustain economic advancement in developing nations. Furthermore, there is a significant positive relationship between institutional equality, the number of total accounts, and the effect of interest rates on loan and deposit accounts on total accounts. This chapter suggests that sociocultural practices that generate inequality cause unequal access to financial resources. For example, a significant negative correlation exists between poverty, income inequality, and increased access to financial

resources.

Chapter 6 investigates the impact of aid on economic growth, which examines the impact of foreign aid on Nigeria's economic growth from 1981-2017, using the Harrod-Domar Model and Chenery and Strout's two-gap model. The former is an economic growth theory that proposes that a country's investment rate should equal its savings. Simultaneously, the latter investigates how external sources, such as international donors or organizations, may assist in addressing some of the country's economic challenges. This chapter concludes that foreign aid has played an essential role in assisting Nigeria to address its economic issues. Finally, it offers methods in which governments could better manage their resources so as not to rely too heavily on external sources such as international donors or organizations.

Chapter 7 carefully looks at gender equality, education, and gender mainstreaming in Ghana, discussing the implications of gender mainstreaming in education and how Sector-wide Approaches (SWAs) can be used to foster successful integrative and transformative initiatives for achieving gender equality. This chapter also highlights the necessity for governments and development agencies to take action in order to increase educational enrolment rates, particularly among girls. In addition, it also emphasizes that access to quality education should be available not only to privileged groups but to all segments of society, including marginalized groups such as women.


The final chapter of this edited volume examines Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in displaced contexts. This concluding chapter focuses particularly on the nexus of women's positioning within Somali culture outside Somalia to understand SGBV and its consequences. This chapter uniquely provides insight into the daily life of an SGBV survivor in a refugee camp, demonstrating how cultural contexts can support or permit certain forms of SGBV to persist. SGBV is a universal problem in refugee camps, and it can be addressed by interventions at both individual and community levels. It should consider legal aspects along with human rights principles such as non-discrimination on any basis, including sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, freedom from torture and cruel treatment, the right to privacy, et cetera.


Overall, those interested in the political economics of gender and development will find this edited volume a crucial resource for further study. Nayak provides good insight into the practical implications of gender and development in Africa. This book provides insight into how the existing political, economic, and social structures encourage women's empowerment. However, this book does not yet offer a concrete strategy to overcome these obstacles. This book can be a valuable resource for students, academics, researchers, policymakers, and political economy practitioners who formulate strategies to address political economy, gender, and development issues.

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