

Chen, John-ren and David Sapsford (eds.), 2005. Global Development and Poverty Reduction: The challenge for International Institutions. Edward Elgar Publishers, Ltd. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA. USA. Hardcover: Unknown. xx+ pp 320 + index

The book consists of three parts. In part one; the authors discuss matters patterning to “international institutions and poverty.” The topic covered are: (1) The role of international institutions in economic development and poverty; (2) Designing the role of international institution’s in raising the standard of living in the developing world; (3) Global development and stability, the challenge of international institutions; (4) Global development and industrialization; (5) International institutions and global inequality: theoretical ability and empirical failure; and (6) The effect of IMF lending and the freedom on the growth performance of developing countries.

In part II, the overall theme is on “Particular international institutions and poverty. In this section, the authors wrestle with the following topics: (1) WTO membership: What does it do for growth and poverty? (2) Multilateral debt management and the poor; and (3) the role of international institutions and the government in development. The case of Croatia’s poverty and inequality is examined as a consequence of the transition path.

Part III of the book focuses on “International institutions and regional issues. In this section, the following topics are discussed: (1) Institutions, integration and poverty in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (EEFSU); (2) Privatization of poverty: the case of Russia; (3) The 1997/98 economic crisis in Southeast Asia policy responses and the role of IMF; and (4) Development crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa: globalization, adjustment and the roles of international institutions.

Poverty and underdevelopment continue to plague many countries of the world institutions (the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund- IMF and many of their subsidiaries) might deploy in dealing with the problems of development and poverty.

The authors analyze the Bretton Woods institutions successes and failures in their quest to tackle underdevelopment and poverty problems around the world. There is a genuine attempt to provide the reader with ideas about how the goals and objectives of poverty alleviation and development can be achieved.

I have always been disturbed about the assertion that economic growth and development are panaceas to the problem of poverty in the world. Experience in the developing countries have shown that economic growth and development are only two of the necessary “ingredients” in poverty reduction. Well

planned economic, political and social infrastructures are necessary in order to provide steady growth that would uplift the poor and provide a sustainable investment in education development of citizens is utmost in such effort and it must be emphasized that the investment in the right type of education is necessary. How can the international institutions help in such deliberate, well organized and implemented plans?

This book provides ideas about the role of international institutions in development, and focuses on particular institutions in their efforts to reduce poverty and finally delves into the regional development and growth issues.

The final part of the book is more informative about development in poor countries especially in the section which deals with sub-Saharan Africa.

Although most of the book concentrates on Europe and Asia, there are lessons for African countries. This book is recommended for practitioners in the development field and students of international development studies.

Reviewed by
Valentine U. James
Fayetteville State University
Fayetteville, North Carolina