

BOOK REVIEWS

Towards Financial Inclusion in India,
by K.G.Karmakar, G.D.Banerjee, N.P.Mohapatra,
Publisher : SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd.,
Pages : 575, Price : ₹ 995.

'Towards Financial Inclusion in India' is an analytical presentation of complex issues involved with financial inclusion process and social re-engineering. This book contains all the valuable information from authentic sources and helps in identifying the knowledge and practice gaps that require further research and study to prescribe appropriate remedies in connection with financial inclusion.

It appears that this book is one of the best reference books on defining on attaining hundred per cent Financial Inclusion, mapping demand side requirements to attain the inclusion process, gauging the innovations available in the supply side and forecasting the challenges to be faced in the future. Needless to add, this book is a must for every micro-finance practitioner who accesses the factor responsible for inclusion process in a geographical region as well as vis-à-vis the sector as a whole. The richness of the book lies in its diversity of perspectives, sectorial contents and breadth of issues covered as well as the depth of analyses. It is a rare blending of qualitative analysis with policy and action relevance inputs for the micro-finance sector in toto.

The book started with defining Financial Inclusion process and ended with initiatives to face the challenges of the future in the micro-finance sector. In total, there are four parts in the book containing 29 chapters in all, each part redefining an important aspect of the financial inclusion process. Some notable points from some parts are illustrated below reflecting the richness of the book.

For example in Part I, entitled as 'Financial Inclusion Analysed', the authors have provided practical suggestions for strengthening the rural banking system which can be supported in maximising its contribution to providing financial services to low-income clients. Similarly, in the last chapter of Part I on 'Institutional Changes Required for Financial Inclusion', the authors critically analysed the role of Regional Rural Banks and Cooperative Credit Institutions and stated that consequent to the amalgamation and reform process, these institutions have lost touch with the original objective of promoting these institutions as low-cost instruments of financial inclusion for the rural people.

In Part II on 'Mapping Demand Side Requirements', the authors have aptly suggested that small and marginal farmers have very little access to institutional credit and this needs to be addressed through interventions and processes of innovative schemes. In the fourteenth Chapter on 'Inclusion Technique for Farmers', the authors have stated that there is a need to have alternative sources of income by the farmers like dairy, animal husbandry, fisheries, poultry and so on, so that in case of natural calamities in one sector, income from other sources is available.

In Part III on 'Supply Side Innovations,' the authors have stressed that supply of raw materials and marketing of products are major problems for micro and small enterprises. Hence, Joint Liability Groups can play a major role and should be provided with adequate working capital to run the activities as per the laid down procedures. Further, it has been highlighted that the main lesson from formation of various groups and cooperatives for capacity building of the poor, marginal and

small farmers cannot be simply seen as extension of routine departmental activity but experiences of already existed cooperatives should be utilised for organising marginal and small farmers into groups through a dedicated agency meant for their promotion and capacity building.

In Part IV on 'Challenges for the Future', the authors stated that the administrative issues and implementation issues are necessary to be addressed if innovations are to be grounded at the grassroots level for the benefit of the last mile client. The authors suggested that this has to be achieved at the earliest because 'Financial Inclusion is not an option but a Compulsion'. In the twenty-ninth Chapter on 'Initiatives for Financial Inclusion: The Road Map', the authors recommended that notwithstanding the regulatory, operational and other aspects in focus, financial inclusion is a complex issue which cannot be solved single-handedly by any stakeholder in the system. Formal financial institutions such as banks, insurance companies, mutual funds, pension companies, and Central and state governments will have to join hands with small service providers to achieve total inclusion.

The book is a must reference for those who want to delve into the gamut of financial inclusion process as well as interested to know the status of various policy decisions taken by the Reserve Bank of India and NABARD in facilitating the growth and achievement of financial inclusion process in rural pockets of India. The authors should be highly appreciated as the book simplifies the most difficult and contentious issues in a most comprehensive manner and highlights the process in a most fascinating manner.

Dr. B.K. Swain

Administration and Development Planning in India, by V.Nath, Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 2011, PP-604, ₹1500.

The book is of enormous thematic relevance to both policymakers and practitioners, more so in the present context wherein all efforts are made to reach the last man in the last deciles with developmental benefits. The author expresses his anguish that somewhere down the line a host of known reasons continue to hinder the desired impact and thus defeating the best of the universally acknowledged strategies adopted both in planning and implementation process. This volume is a collection of one such practitioner belonging to the prestigious administrative service and had the privilege of directly associating with organisation of economic planning process, implementation of development plans and role of administration in these processes.

The book is divided into five sections. The first section includes author's association with UN institute of Training in Economic and Social Planning in the Middle East on administrative aspects of planning-Theory and Practice. Also, the section includes organisation of planning in France, India, Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Section two on Administration and Development Planning in India: Areas of Concern has ten chapters which includes a) Administrative Reforms and creation of small state 1947-2000; b) Area Development : Planning at District and Block levels; c) The Functioning and Duties of the Collector as a Leader; d) District Administration in Rajasthan in the 1960s : Reminiscences of a Former Collector; e) Training of Officers of the Indian Administrative Services; f) Panchayati Raj-The Promise and the Prospects; g) Decentralised District Planning under Economic Liberalisation; h) The Role of Technical Departments under Panchayati Raj; i) Regions for Planning and j) Changes in Political Culture between the 1950s and 1990s. Chapter Five has assumed great contemporary relevance in the light of the ongoing Telengana agitation and consequent demands for Statehood being