

P R E F A C E

The Institute of African Studies is happy to present the first volume of the new series of its Research Review.

Much attention has been focused over the past decade on the role of women in societies the world over, not only in academic circles but also among policy making bodies at national and international levels. This issue addresses itself to the problems of economic and social development in emergent African nations.

This volume brings together a number of research findings of women researchers working on Ghanaian women. The publication of the papers presented in the late seventies has unfortunately been delayed due to insurmountable technical problems. We believe however that they still have points of interest to our readers.

Christine Okali, using the results of research carried out on a cocoa farm camp in the Brong Ahafo region, discusses the issue of division of labour between various members of the labour force. She concentrates on comparing and contrasting in detail, work done by men and women especially wives of male cocoa farmers. Some of her conclusions confirm previous findings carried out in Ghana and Nigeria while others relate to findings in the Third World in general.

In her article on women in the history and culture of Ghana Agnes Aidoo gives an animated account of the role of women in both traditional and transitional Akan society. She assesses the role and impact of women on the social structure and the economic and political life of their people. Aidoo proceeds not only by describing cultural norms but also by using a large number of detailed illustrations

from the beginning of the 19th century onwards showing historical moments at which women made a significant mark. She finally concludes that the colonial era had a negative effect on the substantive position and impact of women in society.

Eugenia Date-Bah tackles the relatively new phenomenon of the Ghanaian woman in industrial employment. Basing her discussion on a case study of a group of factory workers in the early seventies, Date-Bah looks at their characteristics especially in comparison with their male counterparts. Among other things, she is able to conclude that the relatively erratic work behaviour of women workers can be blamed on their domestic obligations. She also shows the problems posed to female employees both by the nature of factory work and the attitude of employers. As many Ghanaian women are self employed, she contrasts women in the factory and in self-employment.

Prudence Berger contributes a note on her research in progress on the role of women in social and economic change. In pursuance of the aim of contributing to a wider comparative project whose ultimate goal is to generate hypotheses on the nature and basis of women's participation in social and economic life in various parts of the world, Berger has conducted field research in a rural town in the Dormaa area of the Western Brong-Ahafo region. Her progress report shows an accumulation of relevant data on the changing roles of rural Ghanaian women in the economic and social life of their society.

The issue of migrancy and rural change is taken up from several different angles by Patricia Leyland Kaufert, basing her discussion on data collected from one town (Tsito in the Volta Region). The effect of

exploring a wide variety of variables in such a compact context is to focus attention in an intense manner on the many implications of out migrancy on a small community. Among many others, she emphasises the broad question of the migrant as communicator and in this context makes several inferences about the woman as an agent of change in the community.

ESI SUTHERLAND-ADDY