

service. Homelessness creates cultures of drinking and the impact of alcohol abuse to the addict, to society, family, the economy and employment is too severe for society to ignore. Segal's study highlights and reinforces the need to come up with effective and appropriate intervention strategies in preventing the occurrence or onset of the drinking problem and also rehabilitating the alcoholics. On the basis of available statistics on alcohol abuse internationally and its impact on society, alcoholism should be viewed as a scourge of our time and Segal's book has come at the right time, that is before the problem gets even more out of control.

The book is invaluable to professionals, both academic and practitioners concerned with social problems consequent from homelessness and alcoholism. Social workers, sociologists, health professionals and practitioners should find this book very handy in their endeavours to come to the root and solution of drug and alcohol abuse.

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Social Change and Economic Reform in Africa, Peter Gibbon (ed) Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, Sweden, 1993, ISBN: 91-7106-331-5. No price listed.

The phenomenon of economic reforms is crucial in Africa because the reforms are aimed at stabilising the economy in developing countries in general. This book is a documentation of facts and arguments brought up by some of the Africa-based authors. Their discussion on economic reforms, popularly referred to as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were based on studies that they carried out in Kenya, Tanzania, Lesotho and Zimbabwe. The book clearly portrays the relationship of the effects of SAP to issues of employment, education, health, poverty and the general standard of living of people in the aforesaid countries. It is important to mention, and for the reader to note, that almost all the authors examined the general overview of the economy in pre- and post-colonial eras and have reported that "*economic activities have remained depressed*" as a result of SAP. The initial intentions of implementing the reforms were genuine and were intended to increase and improve employment opportunities and the level of production, as well as to "*alleviate transitional social hardships*".

The countries of concern in this book adopted the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank sponsored adjustment programmes in an effort to achieve high economic growth. Unfortunately conditions began to decline and this became evident as a result of falling *per capita* state expenditure, deteriorating social

infrastructure and the decline in school enrolment and teacher quality and commitment. Health services and care and the quality of education and training also deteriorated. The level of unemployment also increased. This became a cause for concern, resulting in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) springing up in an effort to alleviate the pressures imposed on people by economic reforms.

Kenya, in particular, had 120 registered NGOs providing health care, social services, education and training. To some extent this represented a shift of services from the state to the people through NGOs. It was an advantage to the vulnerable groups because services trickled down to the masses.

In the world of employment, the formal sector contracted resulting in remarkable unemployment. The result was the introduction of the informal sector which Hart (1973) referred to as 'unregulated' economic activities. It goes without saying that the reader will come across other terms that clearly define the sector. The Kenyan and Zimbabwean writers associate the sector with women in relation to their participation in the economy and their response to changes in urban areas. Women are portrayed in this book as capable of utilising the informal activities to combat the economic pressures. The income they get sustains them since they stand a chance to lose and face double exclusion from the formal sector. Men also supplement their income by engaging in the informal sector when time permits or at the time of retrenchment. The informal sector which was initiated to complement the formal sector has proved to be quite important in terms of employment creation where the formal sector seems to be unable to absorb a reasonable workforce.

Throughout the book, the reader is kept anxious to understand the main reason behind the IMF and World Bank sponsoring SAP. The intentions are most welcome but the results in the overall assessment do not reflect a good picture. The authors have put this so vividly to the reader that one remains with a clear understanding of SAP, changes that took place and the responses to change that people implemented to counteract problems that have swept across the countries that introduced these economic reforms. The Africa-based writers appear to have consolidated information on social change and economic reforms from experiences in their countries for readers to understand the situation in which they find themselves. The book contains relevant information on the activities of NGOs, the informal sector, unemployment, Organised Labour in the case of Zimbabwe and in the Labour Reserve Economy in the case of Lesotho. The challenge that is brought about through publication of this book could be vital for academic and professional studies.

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