

Foreword

by the late Sir Hans Singer

The following study on the impact of institutions on the empowerment of women brings together two factors increasingly emphasized in developmental studies. The first is the crucial role of good governance based on strong and properly enforced legal, political, social as well as economic institutions providing the “freedom” of the pioneering work of Amartya Sen. The second factor is the emphasis on human resources, the “human face” of the UN Millennium Development Goals and the UNDP’s Human Development Reports.

With women representing half of the world’s human resources plus a deep influence on the development of the other half, the reference of the empowerment of women is obvious.

As many studies have shown, in the absence of these two factors our other development tools — aid, trade, debt relief — are unlikely to achieve the desired goal of development in freedom and relief from poverty. The educational empowerment of girls has rightly been made a specific item in the Millennium Development Goals. It is hoped that the following study will bring out the present situation and point the way to improvements, wherever needed.