

## Unit 2

### CONCEPT AND DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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#### 2.0 Objectives

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The unit aims at familiarising you with some of the important components of social development like relationship of development with economic growth, its social goals, strategies, etc. which provides a key to understanding the concept of social development. After studying this unit you will be able to :

- Understand social development as an alternative unified approach to development.
- Ascertain the relationship between economic growth and social development.
- Enumerate the dominant factors that characterise development.
- Identify the social goals of distributive equity.
- Indicate the strategies for social development.

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## **2.1 Introduction**

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The idea of 'development' is a new one in human history. It argues that poverty need not be the lot of mankind; that life need not be nasty, brutish and short. It dares to bring about a progressive and sustained improvement in the standard of living of all people.

The idea of development arose out of two historical circumstances. One was the dramatic recovery of post Second World War Europe and Japan, made possible by Marshall Aid and by the will of the war damaged countries to rebuild their economics. This experience demonstrated that rapid and sustained change was possible. The second was the contemporaneous beginning of decolonisation process. The need from the perspective of the newly independent countries, was to translate their new-won independence with a better life for the ordinary citizen, in terms of better food, clothing, shelter, health, education and so on. Hence attempts were being made to refine the concept of development. Human resource development has been conceived as the "ultimate objective of development process". The critical importance of human capital for economic development has been recognised. Development has been viewed as a simple unified process involving both social and economic instruments. It is finally accepted that economic advancement is no more possible without a firm social base, as the social process is not a simple and straight forward outcome of economic growth.

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## **2.2 Concept of Social Development as an Alternative Unified Approach to Development**

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Giving a human touch to the developmental process, social development is considered to be an alternative unified approach to development in developing countries like India. Social Development signifies human ascent. It refers to change that is intrinsic to the entity, to change that is held to be as much a part of the entity's nature as any purely structural element. The idea of development is a culmination of the process which began with the dominant ideology of economic growth. The idea of development gets flopped if the benefits of growth are appropriated largely by the top 10-20% of the population.

UN provides a unified approach to social development. It states :-

- a. that no sector of population should be left outside the scope of change and development.
- b. that social development should effect structural change and activate all sections of population to participate in the development process.
- c. that there should be equitable distribution of income and wealth.
- d. that high priority should be given to the development of human potentials including vocational and technical training, provisions of employment opportunities and meeting the needs of deprived sections of society.

Development as a concept is broader than economic growth or economic development. Non-economic aspects of development do not follow as an inevitable by-product of economic growth. Economic phenomenon is in fact a social phenomenon, they are social in nature and have social consequences. Any development planning limited to economic interrelationship, neglecting social conditions and social implications, is bound to be misleading. So development has to be seen as a complex whole.

According to Gore 'the concept of social development is inclusive of economic development but differs from it in the sense that it emphasises the development of the society in totality that is, in its economic, political, social and cultural aspects. In the broadest sense "it signifies all aspects of development that are of collective nature that is to say 'pertaining to society as a whole. In a narrower sense , it would be used with reference to the human welfare aspects of development, that is improving the physical quality of life and more equitable distribution of material and cultural goods. Social development may be used in connection with structural transformation in society seeking changes in system of stratification and in degrees of mobility.

In order to achieve these goals, economic development is essential, which mean increase in production leading to a high rate of growth as measured by GNP and which also provides for substantial increase in opportunities for employment. In Indian context, rural development is prominent and integral part of social development.

Social development requires decentralization of power and decision making so that process of planning at the grass root level is made possible. This means active people's participation in making political and economic decision involving their welfare. There should be combination of central leadership, central coordination and central resources contribution with decentralised decision making and mobilization of local resources to make social development programmes more effective.

### **Check your progress I**

#### **1. Short answers**

a) Which two historical circumstances gave birth to the idea of development?

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b)What is the ultimate objective of development?

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c) Economic development is not same as social development. Why?

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2 Discuss the unified approach to social development?

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### **2.3 Relationship between Economic Growth and Social Development**

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Social development refers to the overall progression of the society. However, such modification in the social order are not possible unless the needs of the people are also satisfied. The need satisfaction of individual necessarily requires the prosperity of the economy. These two can be sustained by a cultural milieu which is supportive of economic prosperity and social equality and justice. The concept of social development thus is an amalgam of the social, economic and cultural resurgence of a society.

Economic growth has freed more and more individual from the economic wants, but in the process, rather than broadening their sympathies for their fellow-beings, the successful persons are becoming more and more selfish and are being alienated from their societies. Hence in economically developed societies, people have been preoccupied only with the ideals of freedom and equality and have rarely paid attention to the third idea of fraternity. Therefore, one may say that the three principal ideals of society are indivisible and for their successful realisation, all three should be pursued in their togetherness.

It is seen that, 'liberty, equality and fraternity' are as much the attributes of the developed individual as those of the developed society, as the individual and the society are interrelated. A developed individual is defined as one who is self-reliant, creative and sociable and a developed society is one which provides its members with freedom of choice and action, equality of opportunity and the scope to mix freely with one another. For the true development of individual and the society, the development of the economy is necessary in so far as it sustains, the above attributes of the individual and the society. But by itself it is insufficient since it does not automatically lead to such attributes.

The increase in the power and status of the dominant group in the economic hierarchy is made possible by the network of effective ties among these people, who are all socio-economically powerful. By the same token, the disadvantaged groups in the economic hierarchy are left behind because they have no effective ties with the powerful persons and the members of their own affiliational groupings are placed in similar disadvantaged circumstances. As a rule, all over the world, the poorer sections belong to ethnic or affiliation groupings different from those of the most powerful members of their society. For the same reason, the same groups of people remain poor for generations and even for centuries together, as witnessed by SCs, and STs in India.

Economic development, as it is promoted today, draws the economy more and more into the hands of market forces which favour the strong and deprive the weak. For example, when a subsistence economy is rendered market oriented, new occupations are introduced which displace the older ones. The workers in the old economy do not get the opportunities to work in new occupations. The new occupations usually require skills at higher levels, for which the disadvantaged sections are ill-equipped. Therefore, very often people at the bottom of hierarchy are unable to avail themselves of the developmental opportunities even when they are presented to them. It has often been found that the developmental resources intended for poor sections are under-utilised in areas where most people are poor. On the other hand, the better off sections manage to snatch away much of the resources meant for the poor. Not able to take advantage of the development opportunities does not mean that underprivileged people are incapable of developing themselves. Only the prevailing system militates against their going forward. It therefore calls for a new approach towards their development the approach of "putting the last first".

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## 2.4 Dominant factors that characterise development

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In the process of addressing this global challenge, the very notion of development was expanded, refined and even restated. It has changed from an understanding of the idea in terms of economic growth, to a much broader idea that takes in all aspects of human life. Development can be characterised by two dominant factors: economic reality, and socio political exigencies.

**Economic Reality:** While discussing development in relation to Third World Countries, it was considered that low standard of living in these countries was a consequence of low productivity. The imperative, therefore, was to increase production and make the whole system more efficient. In the Third World Countries, dual economies exist. There are enclaves of highly productive modernized economies located as islands in a 'sea' of subsistence economies. It was felt that there should be expansion of modernised economies including agriculture and absorb the subsistence sectors thereby eliminating poverty. The only solution to solve the problem of poverty is to increase production. So the Third World Countries adopted the formula of modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation. It was thought that the benefits of increased production would eventually "trickle-down" to the poor, thus eliminating poverty. But the observed fact was that growth did not translate itself into improvements in the life of the poor.

As far as India is concerned, it has the world's second largest population with over one billion people in 2000 with a growth rate of 2 percent. Its rapidly expanding population has not only retarded economic progress but by increasing pressures on natural resources, contributed to severe environmental deterioration, and produced a labour force whose growth and size continue to exceed the economy's absorptive capacity. Absolute poverty remains. Widespread illiteracy is around 50 percent and infant mortality rate remains close to 75 per 1000. Over 40 percent of the world's poor --



-- those who live on less than \$ 1 a day --- reside in India. Poverty conditions cover over one-third of India's rural population and one-fifth of its urban residents.

Agriculture is the primary economic activity, occupying three-quarters of the labour force and accounting for 30 percent of GDP. At present India is self-sufficient in grain production. But in the near future, situation is going to be difficult. This is because, Indian farmlands have suffered severe ecological damage through deforestation, soil erosion and other degradation which have affected over 2 million square kilometres of land. Production has stagnated and the possibility of expanding cropped area remains doubtful. Poverty reduction strategies have to focus on dryland irrigation on which most of the poor are dependent. Despite increasing stocks of food grain, food security has not been ensured because of distribution problems in bureaucracy and political game playing.

There are increasing concerns that any improvements in economic efficiency and economic growth may be achieved leading to greater income inequality, higher employment, continued environmental damage, and declining real income for the poor and middle classes.

Since development is seen as social progress, the yardstick is not only GNP but also social indicators of health, education, housing, employment etc. to gauge how the poor are faring in the development process. An economist , Dudley Seers, has expressed his concern in this regard as follows:

*“The question to ask about a country's development is therefore: What has been happening to poverty, unemployment and inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then there has been development. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development, even if per capita income doubled.”*

Thus the major challenge facing the Indian government in twenty-first century is how to balance economic growth with equity, efficiency with employment, food production with distribution, and free markets with poverty alleviation.

**Socio-political exigencies:**

Political structure, power and interest groups: Economic policies alone do not determine the outcome of national approaches to critical development problems. The political structure and the vested interests and allegiances of ruling elites (e.g large landowners, urban industrialists, bankers, foreign manufacturers, the military, trade unionists) will typically determine what strategies are possible and where the main roadblocks to effective economic and social change may lie.

The constellation of interests and power among different segments of the populations of most developing countries is itself the result of their economic, social and political histories and is likely to differ from one country to the next. Most developing countries are ruled directly or indirectly by powerful elites, although small in number, to a greater extent than the developed nations are.

**Stability and flexibility of political institutions:** Many Third World Countries have very recently gained political independence and have yet to become consolidated nation-states with an effective ability to formulate and pursue national development strategies. Until stable and flexible political institutions can be consolidated with broad public support, the social and cultural fragmentation of many countries is likely to inhibit their ability to accelerate national economic progress. Researchers have found that development is more influenced by the stability of the political regime than by its type (democracy or autocracy). They also found that in the transition from dictatorship to democracy, the tremendous pressures from competing interest groups tend to slow down the economic growth and development but in the longer run, stable democracies experience higher growth than dictatorship.

**Lack of political will:** The available evidence makes it clear that in countries with development plans, lack of political will is the prime reason why most plans are never carried out. Where a country's political leadership makes development a central concern, the people can also be motivated through a judicious use of economic incentives.

Such a political will to develop on the part of national leaders will require an unusual ability to take a long-term view and to elevate national social interests above factional class, ethnic, or tribal interests. It will also necessitate the cooperation of the economic elites, who may correctly use their privileged positions challenged by such a development posture. Thus it requires an unusual ability and a great deal of political courage to challenge powerful elites and vested interest groups and to persuade them that such development is in the long-run interests of all citizens even though some of them may suffer short-term losses.

Effective social and economic change thus requires either the support of elite groups or the power of the elites be offset by more powerful democratic forces. In short, social development will be impossible without corresponding changes in the social, political and economic institutions of a nation.

### Check your progress II

1. What are the three principal ideals of society?

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2. List the dominant factors that characterise development.

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3. What is the yardstick given by Seers to indicate social development?

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## 2.5 Social Goals of Distributive Equality

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In layman's language, development is understood as the sustained elevation of an entire society and social system towards a "better" or "more humane" life. It is a society where fruits of development are distributed equitably, and where rich not become richer and poor do not become poorer. What constitutes the good life? How could one explain that there is equitable distribution of resources in a particular society? To answer these question, Professor Goulet and others believe that 'distributive equity' should aim at achieving social goals which are common to individuals and societies. These relate to fundamental human needs that find their expression in almost all societies and cultures at all times. Let us examine them.

### **Life Sustenance : The Ability to Provide Basic Needs**

All people have certain basic needs without which life would be impossible. These "life sustaining" basic human needs include shelter, health and protection. When any of these is absent or critically in short supply or distributed unequally, we may state without reservation that a condition of "absolute underdevelopment" exists. A basic function of all economic activity , therefore is to provide as many people as possible with the means of overcoming the

helplessness and misery arising from a lack of food, shelter, health and protection. To this extent, we may claim that economic development is necessary condition for the improvement in the 'quality of life' and for the realization of the human potential. Rising per capita incomes, the elimination of absolute poverty, greater employment opportunities and income inequalities, therefore constitute the necessary but not 'sufficient conditions for development'.

## **2. Self Esteem : To be a Person**

The second goal is self esteem – a sense of worth and self respect, of not being used as tool by others for their own ends. All people and societies seek some basic form of self esteem, although they may call it authenticity, identity, dignity, respect, honour or recognition. The nature and form of this self esteem may vary from society to society and from one culture to another. With the advent of economic and technological advancement, national prosperity has become an almost universal measure of worth. Development is legitimised as an indisputable measure of gaining esteem.

## **3. Freedom from Servitude : To be able to Choose**

The third goal of distributive equity is concept of freedom. Freedom here is not to be understood in the political and ideological sense, but in the more fundamental sense of freedom or emancipation from ignorance, misery, subordination, institution and dogmatic beliefs. Freedom involves the expanded range of choices for societies and their members together with the minimization of cultural constraints in the pursuit of social goals. The concept of human freedom should encompass various components of political freedom including personal security, the role of law, freedom of expression, political participation and equality of opportunity.

We may conclude that development is both a physical reality and a state of mind in which society has, through some combination of social economic and institutional processes, secured the means for obtaining a better life.

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## 2.6 STRATEGIES OF DEVELOPMENT

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Development strategies can be defined as the practical paths to development which may be pursued by international, non government organisations and community based organisation, or indeed individuals states, in an effort to stimulate change within particular nation, region and continents. Hettne (1995) provides a definition of development strategies as efforts to change existing economic and social structures and institutions in order to find enduring solutions to the problems facing decision makers. Hettne argues that the term 'development strategies' implies an actor, normally the state. In order to sound more practical it is necessary to think of wider set of development oriented actors, including all those mentioned above.

The choice of strategies for development was decided by Third World Countries on the basis of one fundamental societal decision; which come prior, distributive justice or augmentation of production ? In countries beset with mass poverty, population pressure and feudal obscurantism, distributive justice was more difficult decision for it involved open class struggle for bringing about basic institutional changes. The augmentation of production was less problematic. Distributive justice, amounted almost to distributing poverty, and the second implied growth with or without distributive justice depending upon the structure of power , the constellation of class forces and their relative strengths and weaknesses. A large number of Third World Countries opted for growth first and India was one of them.

Upon the first decade of development (i.e. upto 1970) the GNP growth was considered a natural indicator of development. There were at least two major assumptions about this growth strategy : (1) that a certain amount of saving and investment are important preconditions for economic growth. It was postulated that if a country was able to attain a rate of growth of 6 to 8 % it could reach the take off stage. For this a net investible saving of 18-21 % was necessary. If this was not possible through domestic savings, the balance required should be met through foreign aid and MNC involvement. Any foreign involvement would naturally mean that the investor will look forward to an area of investment which would get him maximum profit. (2) the second assumption was that the GNP growth will automatically trickle down, to the lower income groups. Both these assumptions proved fallacies and the theory that the development path will proceed from initial inequality to greater equality proved unfounded.

The consequence of such a policy for many developing countries was that the limited capital available indigenously, coupled with foreign investments introduced a typically modern industrial sector which went on extending in the form of modern enclaves without creating the necessary linkages within the domestic economy. As a result these countries could not develop any capacity to absorb increases of population or the requirements of their entire economies. This created a 'dualism' within the economics with enclaves of prosperity amidst masses of exacerbating inequalities. The trickle never reached 'down' to the bottom. This strategy of 'development' created more problems than it could resolve for the society as a whole.

In order to counter the failure of the growth strategy the 'basic needs' approach was evolved (1) to relieve as quickly as possible absolute poverty through intensive direct assistance to those in desperate circumstances (2) to meet the basic needs of all in terms of material wants such as food, clothing, shelter and

fuel, and also as some social needs such as education, human rights and what is called 'participation' in social life through employment and political involvement.

However, the basic needs' did not imply the dethronement of GNP, for the new strategy of distribution with growth could only take place within an expanding economy. It is pointed out that rich instrumental redistribution will encounter much less political resistance than would be the case if redistribution has to make the upper income group worse off in absolute terms.

The dynamics of the development process looks all too familiar. The process is initiated by helping the privileged and the better off classes with resources, skills etc. to improve their economic conditions consequently making them more powerful. Meanwhile the condition of the underprivileged deteriorates.

As unrest and terrorism threaten the security of the privileged classes, state intervention steps in to diffuse the terrorism through target oriented programmes. This constitutes the price that needs to be paid for maintaining the stable progress of the privileged classes. This is near replication of the global phenomenon of GNP growth followed by increased prosperity of the few and increasing poverty of the many, followed by the 'basic needs approach.

**Check your progress III**

1. List the social goals of distributive equality.

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2. What does the 'basic needs approach' aim at?





Economic development – refers to rapid structural and institutional transformation of entire society in a manner that will efficiently bring the fruits of economic progress to the broadest segment of population.

People-building – means development of human potentials through vocational training and providing employment opportunities.

Social equity – means equitable distribution of income and wealth so as to move towards social justice.

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## **2.9 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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Pimply P.N, Singh, K.P. and Mahajan, A.(1989): Social development: Processes and consequences (ed), Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

Todaro, M.P. (1997): Economic development in the third world, Hyderabad: Orient Longman.

Gore, M.S. (1985): Social aspects of development, Jaipur: Rawat.

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Srivastava, S. P. (1998): The Development Debate: Critical perspectives (ed.), Jaipur : Rawat

Dreze Jean and Sen Amartya (1996): Indian Development: Selected Regional Perspectives, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

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## **2.10 MODEL ANSWERS**

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### **Check your progress I**

1a) The idea of development arose out of two historical circumstances. One was the dramatic recovery of post Second World War Europe and Japan, made possible by Marshall Aid and by the will of the war damaged countries to rebuild their economic. This experience demonstrated that rapid and sustained

change was possible. The second was the contemporaneous beginning of decolonisation process.

1b) The ultimate objective of developmental process is human development.

1c) Economic development is confined to economic growth whereas social development is a broader concept which encompasses all the aspects of development such as economic, political, social and cultural aspects.

2. UN provides a unified approach to social development. It states :-

- a. that no sector of population should be left outside the scope of change and development.
- b. that social development should effect structural change and activate all sections of population to participate in the development process.
- c. that there should be equitable distribution of income and wealth.
- d. that high priority should be given to the development of human potentials through vocational and technical training, provisions of employment opportunities and meeting the needs of deprived sections of society.

### **Check your progress II**

1. The three principles of an ideal society are freedom, equality and fraternity
2. The dominant factors that characterise development are:
  - a Economic reality
  - b. Socio political exigencies

- c. Stability and flexibility of political institutions
  - d. Lack of political will
3. According to Seers if poverty, unemployment and inequality (all three) have declined from high levels, then there has been development. If one or two or all of these central problems have been going from bad to worse, then it cannot be called development.

### **Check your progress III**

1. There are three social goals given by Prof. Goulet. They are:
- a. Life sustenance – the ability to provide basic needs.
  - b. Self esteem -- to be a person.
  - c. Freedom from servitude -- to be able to choose.
2. The basic needs approach aims :
- (1) to relieve as quickly as possible absolute poverty through intensive direct assistance to those in desperate circumstances
  - (2) to meet the basic needs of all in terms of material wants such as food, clothing, shelter and fuel, and also some social needs such as education, human rights and what is called 'participation' in social life through employment and political involvement.