UNIT 1 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

Structure

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this unit is to provide a general introduction to the dimensions of social and cultural development. It is now well understood that historical, institutional, social, cultural, demographic, political, and ecological factors are all of great importance for the analysis of economic development. It is also well known that the concept of development is much broader than that of economic development alone. Development involves a wide range of changes in a variety of social indicators, such as health, education, technology, or life expectancy, which are directly, or, indirectly linked to economic changes, but, which need to be studied in their own right. Although, demographic and human factors play an important role in the primary production process, other social factors such as health, disease, mortality, life expectancy, and education are important as independent aspects of development.

The social and cultural dimensions of development are processes that result in the change of social structure in a manner that improves the capacity of a society to fulfil its aspirations. The aspirations range from a variety of issues including personal security, safety, happiness, nutritional satisfaction, education, and include health issues, hygiene, emotional, and intellectual satisfaction. It can also be summarized as the process of organizing human energies and activities at higher levels to achieve greater results. Development increases the opportunities for greater utilization of human potential, and society develops by consciousness. The process that is subconscious in the society emerges as conscious knowledge in pioneering individuals. Therefore, one can say that development is a process, and not a programme. While, not all social change constitutes development, the term is usually applied to changes that are beneficial to society, it may result in negative side-effects, or, consequences that undermine, or, eliminate existing ways of life that are considered positive. Therefore, the social and cultural dynamics of development are continuous processes of change which are

influenced by development quite substantially, and, they determine the direction of further and future development.

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- Establish relationship between society, change and development
- Explain the basic issues of social transformation
- Analyse various indicators of social and cultural change
- Identify the functional dimensions of society and development, and various problems of social change

1.2 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: EMERGING CONCEPTS

Social development is a cross-cutting approach to development that promotes policies and institutions in support of

- greater inclusiveness and equity in access to services, resources, and opportunities
- greater empowerment of poor and marginalized groups to participate in social, economic, and political life
- greater security to cope with the chronic or sudden risks, especially for the poor and marginalized groups and segments

Social development is the capacity of individuals and communities to take upon themselves the direction of their own development. The notion of human resource development becomes central in social development, as individuals collectively form a society. The old formulation that literacy leads to development is quite different from the new notion that literacy is embedded in social practice and has social meanings. Approaching the question of literacy from this perspective is not to consider education as an independent commodity, but to analyse carefully the literate competencies needed in a specific society, and to link education and literacy to the social practices people are involved in. Only by approaching literacy in this manner can adult literacy be seen as integral to the development process.

Social development can be summarized as the process of organizing human energies and activities at higher levels to achieve greater results. The development process increases the stances and opportunities for the utilization of human potential. In the absence of a valid theory in the sphere of social development, the concept of social development remains largely a process of trial and error experimentation. The dismal consequences of transition strategies in most Eastern Europe countries, the very halting progress of many African and Asian countries, the increasing income gap between the most and least developed societies, and the distressing linkage between rising incomes, environmental depletion, crime and violence, reflect the fact that humanity is vigorously pursuing a process without the full knowledge needed to guide and govern it effectively. Social development consists of two interrelated aspects – learning and application. Society discovers better ways to fulfil its aspirations, and it develops organizational mechanisms to express that knowledge to achieve its social and economic goals. The process of discovery expands human consciousness, and the process of application enhances social organization. Society develops in

response to the contact and interaction between human beings and their material, social and intellectual environment.

1.3 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT THEORY – A PERSPECTIVE

Historically, society has developed by a trial and error process of physical experimentation, not unlike the way children learn through a constant process of physical exploration, testing and even tasting. Physically, this process leads to the acquisition of new physical skills that enable individuals to utilize their energies more efficiently and effectively. Socially, it leads to the learning and mastery of organizational skills, vital attitudes, systems and institutions that enable people to manage their interactions with other people and other societies more effectively. Mentally, it leads to the organization of facts as information and the interpretation of information as thought. The conceptual mind is the highest, most conscious human faculty. Conceptual knowledge is the organization of ideas by the power of the mind. That conceptual knowledge becomes most powerful when it is organized into a system. Theory is a systematic organization of knowledge.

A comprehensive theory of social development would provide a conceptual framework for discovering the underlying principles common to the development process in different fields of activity, countries, and periods. It would also provide a framework for understanding the relationships between the accumulated knowledge generated by many different disciplines. If pursued to its logical conclusions, it would lead to not just a theory of social development, but a unifying theory of knowledge—which does not yet exist in any field of science or art. Historically, advances in our understanding of material and biological process have far outstripped advances in our understanding of social processes. As a result, vast social potential has been created, but society has not yet acquired the capacity to fully utilize it for its own development. A theory of development should aim at a knowledge that will enable society more consciously and effectively to utilize its development potentials.

In most discussions, development has been conceived in terms of a set of desirable results—higher incomes, longer life expectancy, lower infant mortality, and more education. Recently, the emphasis has shifted from results to the enabling conditions, strategies and public policies for achieving those results—peace, democracy, social freedoms, equal access, laws, institutions, markets, infrastructure, education, and technology. But, still little attention has been placed on the underlying social process of development that determines how society formulates, adopts, initiates, and organizes, and few attempts have been made to formulate such a framework.

A very large number of factors and conditions influence the process. In addition to all the variables that influence material and biological processes, social processes involve the interaction of political, social, economic cultural, technological and environmental factors as well. The basic principles of development theory must be as applicable to the development of early tribal societies as they are to the emergence of the post modern global village. Development theory must be a theory of how human society advances through space and time.

However, social development theory remains elusive because the very nature of social learning is a subconscious seeking by the collective that leads ultimately to conscious knowledge. We experience first and understand later. Our mental comprehension perpetually lags behind physical experience and struggles to catch up with it. Our view is that the very intensive, concentrated global experience of the past five decades provides fertile soil for the formulation of a more synthetic conceptual framework for social development. Such a framework can vastly accelerate the transfer and replication of developmental achievements around the world and make possible more conscious and rapid progress even for the most advanced societies in the world.

These observations suggest a starting point for formulation of a comprehensive conceptual framework.

- Social development theory should focus on underlying processes rather than on surface activities and results, since development activities, policies, strategies, programs, and results will always be limited to a specific context and circumstance, whereas social development itself encompasses a potentially infinite field in space and time.

- The theory should recognize the inherent creativity of individuals and of societies in which they fashion instruments and direct their energies to achieve greater results. It should view development as a human creative process, rather than as the product of any combination of external factors, or, objective instruments that are created and utilized as the process unfolds, and whose results are limited to the capacity of the instruments. Society will discover its own creative potentials only when it seeks to know the human being as the real source of those potentials.

- The implication of this view is that even though it may be influenced, aided or opposed by external factors, society develops by its own motive power and in pursuit of its own goals. No external force and agency can develop a society.

1.4 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT INDEX

The council for social development has enlisted certain indicators for social development, where a composite social development index has been made considering six major indicators of social development. These indicators are: demographic indicators, health indicators, basic amenities indicators, educational attainment indicators, economic deprivation indicators, and, social deprivation related indicators. The index has been constructed at two points of time, namely, 1991 and 2001and separately for each state. In the case of larger states with a population of more than 5 million the indexing exercise was done separately for rural and urban areas, whereas in the smaller states a combined area index was used.

In the Social Development Report 2008, besides the computation of the social development index (SDI) at the state level, the index was extended in two particular directions – capturing the disparity in development of different social groups, and, measuring gender disparity in social development. The SDI also captures social deprivation by developing separate SDIs for SCs, STs and others, on one hand, and for gender differences on the other. A brief description of the indicators and sources of the data used in the computation of the SDI are given below in tabular form.

Indicators	Sources
Demographic Indicators	
Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR)	National Family Health Survey (NFHS) Report-III(2005-06) State-wise Fact Sheets
Total fertility Rate (TFR)	NFHS-III(2005-06) State-wise Fact Sheets
Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)	NFHS-III(2005-06) State-wise Fact Sheets and Sample Registration System (SRS; October 2006) for all smaller States.
Health Indicators	
Percentage of Institutional Delivery	NFHS-III(2005-06) State-wise Fact Sheets
Percentage of Undernourished Children	NFHS-III(2005-06) State-wise Fact Sheets
Basic Amenities Indicators	
Percentage of Households Living in Pucca House	NFHS-III(2005-06) State-wise Fact Sheets
Percentage of Households with Access to Safe Drinking Water	NFHS-III(2005-06) State-wise Fact Sheets
Percentage of Households with Toilet Facility	NFHS-III(2005-06) State-wise Fact Sheets
Percentage of Households with Electricity	NFHS-III(2005-06) State-wise Fact Sheets
Educational Attainment Indicators	
Literacy Rate	National Sample Survey (NSS) 61st Round, Report No.516. (2005-06)
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	7th All India Education Survey (2002)
School Attendance Rate	National Sample Survey (NSS) 61st Round, Report No.516. (2005-06)
Economic Deprivation Indicators	
Unemployment Rate	NSSO and National Sample Survey (NSS) 61st Round, Report No. 515
Gini Ratio for Per Capita Consumption Expenditure	Sachar Committee Report, 2006
Social Deprivation Related Indicators	
Ratio between Literacy of the Scheduled Caste Population and Average Literacy of the Population	NSS 61st Round, Report No.516, Sachar Committee Report 2006 and Office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, 2006
Ratio between Literacy of the Scheduled Tribe Population and Average Literacy of the Population	NSS 61st Round, Report No.516, Sachar Committee Report 2006 and Office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, 2006

Ratio between Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure of Muslims to the Total Population	NSS 61st Round, Report No.516, Sachar Committee Report 2006 and Office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, 2006
Ratio between Literacy of Female Population and Average Literacy of Total Population	NSS 61st Round, Report No.516, Sachar Committee Report 2006 and Office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, 2006
Ratio between Female Unemployment Rates to Total Unemployment Rates	NSS 61st Round, Report No.516, Sachar Committee Report 2006 and Office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, 2006
Child Sex Ratio	NSS 61st Round, Report No.516, Sachar Committee Report 2006 and Office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, 2006

Source: http://www.csdindia.org/social-development-report/social-development-index

1.5 SOCIAL PROCESSES OF DEVELOPMENT

We have described social development as the release and channelling of social energies through more complex social organization to enhance productive capacity and achieve greater results. This process depends upon mechanisms to direct and channel the collective energies of the society into new and more productive forms of activity. We can identify four distinctly different levels, or, types of mechanisms that serve this function: social aspirations, government authority, socio-cultural structure, and social know-how, in the form of science, technology, and productive skills.

i) Social Aspiration

Economically, development occurs when productivity rises, enabling people to produce more, earn more, and consume more. To do so, they have to be motivated to learn new skills, adapt to new work processes, and, to adopt new technology, changes which, in past ages, have met with considerable resistance. The driving force behind the whole movement is psychological. At the deepest level, the energies of society are directed by the collective's subconscious aspirations. Society's self-conception of what it wants to become releases an aspiration of the collective for accomplishment. That aspiration exerts a powerful influence on the activities of the society. India's twin revolutions were spurred by a growing aspiration of Indian society for security, prosperity, and enjoyment. A similar aspiration spurs middle class Americans, today, to invest their savings in the stock market.

We have traced the evolution of social aspirations in India from pre-Independence to the present day. The earliest expression was an aspiration for political freedom and self-determination. After Independence this aspiration evolved into an urge for self-sufficiency, a willingness to try new things and take risks. More recently it has matured into a movement of rising expectations permeating all levels of Indian society.

ii) Role of Government authority

Like social aspirations, the authority of the government has the capacity to direct the flow of social energies through the instruments of law, public policies, administrative procedures, controls, incentives, and fear of punishment. Here, too, there is a graded hierarchy of stages through which government influences the development process. Monarchy is a highly centralized form of government organization with a significant capacity to restrict freedom and prevent unwanted activities, but with very limited power to promote social development because of its limited power to positively motivate and direct human initiative. Modern authoritarian states have augmented the power of government to compel and control by evolving complex organizational mechanisms to reach out into every field of social activity. Its members submit, by necessity, to the power of the state, but continuously seek ways around the strictures and demands it places upon them. As the 20th century experiments in Eastern Europe amply demonstrate, its power as an instrument for development is severely limited. Countries with authoritarian governments that have succeeded in releasing social initiative for economic development, such as China, Taiwan and South Korea, have done so by loosening social control over economic activities, while retaining it over political activities.

Modern forms of democracy greatly enhance the development capabilities of society. They are not only capable of enforcing a rule of law which, to a large extent, the population willingly accepts as being in its own interest. They also promote far greater development of individual aspirations, thought, capacity, skill, and initiative. The accountability of a democratically elected government necessitates that it continuously institute measures perceived as beneficial to the electorate. Working through decentralized self governing structures, it empowers more and more centres of activity in society, leading to greater creativity and innovation. The basic human rights it endorses elevate aspirations and release human energies for higher accomplishment.

The impact of democracy on development was illustrated by the Nobel laureate economist, Amartya Sen (1999), when he observed that no democratic country with a free press and independent judiciary has suffered a famine in this century. India's Green Revolution is a powerful testament to the power of governmental authority, though, in this, and every other instance, government's role cannot substitute for social readiness and social initiative, it can only aid in preparing that readiness, releasing that initiative, and organizing the new activities.

iii) Socio-cultural authority

Government exercises authority over its citizens through law, administration, and enforcement. Society exercises a far more persuasive authority over its members through its ideas, attitudes, customs, and values. Different societies may develop at very different rates and in different directions under very similar forms of government, due to differences in social and cultural authority. Modern societies are far more free and tolerant than those of previous centuries, yet, they continue to exert a very powerful force on their members; only, the character of that force has changed. From being predominantly negative in the form of prohibitions and strictures, now the

force of social authority acts far more as a spur to initiative, than a bar. The pressure felt by middle and working class families to 'keep up with the Joneses' has become pervasive throughout the world. The bold initiative of a poor farmer in rural India to dig a bore well and become prosperous could act as stimulus for the rapid development of ten surrounding villages because the competitive pressure of social authority would compel his neighbours to keep up with his level of accomplishment.

The spread of education tends to enhance this tendency. Apart from the practical knowledge and skills it imparts, modern education also instils a greater sense of individual self respect and social rights that impel an individual to seek and maintain his, or, her status in society. Here, we include the complete range of capacities that determine the ability of the people to physically direct their energies to achieve productive results. The most important of these are scientific knowledge, technology, and productive skills. These may appear very different in nature and action from social aspirations, government, and social authority, but the character of their influence on development is quite similar. They provide the direction for the efficient organization of mental, social, and material energies. Each of them carries with it an inherent authority, and, imposes a certain discipline on the expression of social energies. This authority usually takes the form of an impersonal authority of standards, rules, and systems, such as the rules for maintaining an orderly flow of air traffic.

Adopting a higher level of technology, whether it involves the cultivation of hybrid wheat, space travel, or electronic commerce requires adherence to more stringent procedures and greater organization, without which, it does not work. The Internet is a recent example of a technology that promotes freer and easier commercial and personal transactions, but accomplishes it by imposing rigorous standards of discipline on users in the form of a common computer language for communication.

Up till now, you have read about the social development index, social development theory, and the determinants of development. Now, answer the questions given in *Check Your Progress 1*.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a)   Write your answer in about 50 words.

   b)   Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1)   Describe the role of the individual in the process of value creation.

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2) Describe the role of a democratic government as a determinant of development.

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3) Explain, in brief, the conceptual framework of social development theory.

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1.6   SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF DEVELOPMENT

After reading the meaning and indicators of social development, let us now discuss various social dynamics of development. The various social dynamics of development are as follows:

- We define social development, in its broadest social terms, as an upward directional movement of society from lesser to greater levels of energy, efficiency, quality, productivity, complexity, comprehension, creativity, choice, mastery, enjoyment, and accomplishment. The development of individuals and societies results in increasing freedom of choice, and an increasing capacity to fulfil its choices by its own capacity and initiative.

- Growth and development usually go together, but they are different phenomena subject to different laws. Growth involves a horizontal or quantitative expansion and multiplication of existing types and forms of activities. Development involves a vertical or qualitative enhancement of the level of organization.

- Social development is driven by the subconscious aspirations and will of society for advancement. The social will seeks progressive fulfilment of a prioritized hierarchy of needs – security of borders, law and order, self sufficiency in food and shelter, organization for peace and prosperity, expression of excess energy in entertainment, leisure and enjoyment, knowledge, and artistic creativity.

- The development of society occurs only in fields where that collective will is sufficiently strong and seeking expression. Development strategies are most effective when they focus on identifying areas where the social will is mature, and when they provide better means for the awakened social energy to express itself. Only those initiatives that are in concordance with this subconscious urge will gain momentum and multiply. The development of the collective is subconscious. It starts with physical experience which

eventually leads to conscious comprehension of the process. Conscious development that is based on conceptual knowledge of the social process accelerates development, and minimizes errors and imbalances.

- Society is the field of organized relationships and interactions between individuals. Only a small portion of human activity is organized for utilization by society, so only a small portion of development potential (of technology, knowledge, information, skills, systems) is tapped.

- Every society possesses a huge reservoir of potential human energy that is absorbed and held static in its organized foundations—its cultural values, physical security, social beliefs, and political structures. At times of transition, crises, and opportunities, those energies are released and expressed in action. Policies, strategies, and programs that tap this latent energy and channel it into constructive activities can stir an entire nation to action and rapid advancement.

- The act is the basic unit of social organization. The evolution of more complex and productive activities woven together by people to form systems, organizations, institutions, and cultural values constitute the fabric or web of social organization.

- The essential nature of the development process is the progressive development of social organizations and institutions that harness and direct the society's energies for higher levels of accomplishment. Society develops by organizing all the knowledge, human energies, and material resources at its disposal to fulfil its aspirations.

- The process of forming organizations takes place simultaneously at several levels: the organization of peace and physical security in society; the organization of physical activities and infrastructure; the organization of productive processes through the application of skills and technology in agriculture, industry and services; the organization of social processes we call systems, laws, institutions and administrative agencies; the organization of data as useful information; the organization of knowledge through education and science; and, the organization of higher social and cultural values that channel human energy into higher forms of expression. Each of these levels of organization admits of unlimited development. Each of these levels of organization depends upon, and, interacts with the others. Elevating the organization at any of these levels increases the utilization of resources and opportunities and accelerates development.

- Development requires an enormous investment of energy to break existing patterns of social behaviour and form new ones. Development takes place when surplus social energies accumulate beyond the level required for functioning at the present level. The social energy may be released in response to the opening up of a new opportunity, or, confrontation by a severe challenge. Where different cultures meet and blend, explosive energies for social evolution are released. The expression of surplus energy through existing forms of activity may result in growth — a quantitative expansion of society at the existing level of organization. Channelling the surplus energy into more complex and effective forms of organized activity leads to development — a qualitative enhancement in the capabilities of the society. The fresh initiatives that lead to this qualitative enhancement usually occur

first in the unorganized activities of society that are not constrained and encumbered by the inertia of the status quo.

- The rate and extent of development is determined by prevalent social attitudes which control the flow of social energies. Where attitudes are not conducive, development strategies will not yield results. In this case the emphasis should be placed on strategies to bring about a change in social attitudes — such as public education, demonstration, and encouragement of successful pioneers.

- Development proceeds rapidly in those areas where the society becomes aware of opportunities and challenges and has the will to respond to them. Increasing awareness accelerates the process.

- Social progress is stimulated by pioneering individuals who first become conscious of new opportunities and initiate new behaviours and activities to take advantage of them. Pioneers are the lever, or, spearhead for collective advancement. Pioneers give conscious expression to the subconscious urges and readiness of the collective. Development occurs when pioneering individual initiatives are imitated by others, multiplied and actively supported by the society. Society, then, actively organizes the new activity by establishing supportive laws, systems and institutions. At the next stage, it integrates the new activity with other fields of activity and assimilates it into its educational system. The activity has become fully assimilated as part of the culture when it is passed on to the next generation as values through the family.

- Development is a process, not a program. Development is an activity of a society as a whole. It can be stimulated, directed, or assisted by government policies, laws, and special programs, but it cannot be compelled, or, carried out by administrative or, external agencies on behalf of the population. Development strategy should aim to release people's initiative, not to substitute for it.

- All resources are the creation of the human mind. Something becomes a resource when human beings recognize a productive or, a more productive use for it. Since there are no inherent limits to human inventiveness and resourcefulness, the potential productivity of any resource is unlimited. Human beings are the ultimate resource and the ultimate determinant of the development process. It is a process of people becoming more aware of their own creative potentials and taking initiatives to realize those potentials. Human awareness, aspiration, and attitudes determine society's response to circumstances. Development occurs only at the points where humanity recognizes its power to determine results.

- The development of social organizations takes place within a larger evolutionary context in which the consciousness of humanity is evolving along a continuum from physical to vital to mental. This evolution is expressed as a progressive shift in emphasis from material resources to technological and information resources; from the social importance of land to the importance of money and knowledge; from the hereditary rights of the elite to fundamental rights for all human beings; from reliance on physical forms of authority to laws and shared values. As society advances along this continuum, development becomes more conscious and more rapid.

1.7 CULTURE AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS

Culture is a bond that ties the people of a region or community together. It is that one common bond which brings the people of a community together. The customs and traditions that the people of a community follow, the festivals they celebrate, the kind of clothing they wear, the food they eat, and most importantly, the cultural values they adhere to, bind them together. Culture is seen as a system of social control, wherein people shape their standards and behaviour behaviour. The cultural values form the founding principles of one's life. They influence one's principles and philosophies of life. They influence one's way of living and, thus, impact social life. The importance of culture lies in the fact that it is a link between people and their value systems.

Culture refers to the pattern of human activity and the symbols which give significance to this activity. Culture is represented through the art, literature, costumes, customs, and traditions of a community. Different cultures exist in different parts of the world. The natural environment greatly affects the lifestyle of the people of that region, thus, shaping their culture. The diversity in the cultures around the world is also a result of the mindsets of people inhabiting different regions of the world. The cultural values of a community give it an identity of its own. A community gains a character and a personality of its own, because of the culture of its people. Culture is shared by the members of a community. It is learned and passed from the older generations to the newer ones. For an effective transfer of culture from one generation to another, it has to be translated into symbols. Language, art and religion serve as the symbolic means of transfer of cultural values between generations. In this sense, culture primarily refers to characteristic mental maps and values shared by members of a group or society. It excludes the material objects and artefacts that are produced by members of a culture. On the other hand, it also excludes institutions which structure human behaviour. There is a tendency to think of cultures as homogenous patterns.

It should also be kept in mind that there are contradictions and conflicts within every culture. There are cultural universals, which apply to all members of a social community, and cultural alternatives, which do not. There are cultural specialties, elements that are specific to certain subgroups in a community. In every society, there are a variety of groups with their own subcultures. Some of these are dominant insider groups, others are outsiders. Elements of cultural pattern may even be in conflict with each other. Cultures, as well as countries, are formed by the emergence of value systems (social stages) in response to life conditions. Such complex adaptive intelligences form the clue that bonds a group together, defines who they are as a people, and reflects the place on the planet they inhabit. These cultural waves, much like the Russian dolls (a doll embedded within a doll, which is again embedded within a doll) have formed, over time, into unique mixtures and blends of instructional and survival codes, myths of origin, artistic forms, life styles, and senses of community. While they are all legitimate expressions of the human experience, they are not equal in their capacities to deal with complex problems in society. Cultures should not be seen as rigid types, having permanent traits. Instead, they are core adaptive intelligences that ebb and flow, progress and regress, with the capacity to lay on new levels of complexity, or, value systems, when conditions warrant. Much like an onion,

they form layers on layers on layers. There is no final state, no ultimate destination, and no utopian paradise. Each stage is but a prelude to the next, then the next, then the next.

1.8 CULTURAL OBSTACLES TO DEVELOPMENT

The debate about cultural obstacles to development is done after a universal assumption that people across the world agree on the content and goals of development. It is well accepted that development is inevitably a highly value-laden concept, but that one can indeed identify the contours of a development concept, including increased welfare, productivity, health, education, and, an extension of political and social freedoms. If one looks at the dynamics of socioeconomic development from a macro perspective, the differences in dynamics in different parts of the world would be obvious. Some of the selected examples of the possible impacts of culture on development follow.

i) The caste system

In traditional Hindu societies in India, the caste system acts as an obstacle to the most efficient use of human capabilities and talents in the economic process. The caste system defines a religiously legitimized hierarchy of social estates, which are restricted in their interactions with each other. The groups also differ in political influence, landholding, and so forth. In the caste system, physical labour is typically a low caste activity, with correspondingly low status. Though caste has now been rejected as an organizing system in modern India, it still is deeply embedded in social life. According to Lal (1988), the caste system itself is the prime cause of slow economic growth in post independence India. In his view, the slow rate of growth between 1950 and 1990 is primarily due to inappropriate policies.

ii) The low status of physical work and efforts

In many cultures there are negative attitudes towards physical labour and effort. In African societies, the heaviest physical work in food production is usually left to the women, while men engage in activities that are associated with higher status. Another example of differences in work ethic is provided by Malaysia. The indigenous Malay population tends to look down on physical labour as something suitable for Chinese coolie labourers who were imported in the nineteenth century to work in mines and plantations.

iii) Gender discrimination

Inequality between the sexes and discrimination against women is embedded, in different degrees, in most world religions and cultures. Like the caste system, occupational discrimination by sex is a potential obstacle to the optimal use and allocation of human talents. In a great many societies, women have less access to paid jobs, health services, and, in particular, education. In some of the most orthodox Islamic societies, women are prohibited from engaging in education and paid work outside the house.

iv) The mysterious role of ethnic minorities in economic development

The economic role of the ethnic minorities is a dilemma and a puzzle of development. The Chinese have been extremely successful as entrepreneurs

all across East and Southeast Asia where they are minorities, likewise, the Palestinians in the Arab world, and Indians and Pakistanis, who dominate business activities in East Africa. In Europe, Jews have played a prominent role in finance, business, culture, and in intellectual pursuits. The interesting thing about these successful minorities is that they often originated from rather traditional cultures, and from societies that had long been economically stagnant. In spite of their economic success, or, perhaps because of it, these groups have usually been discriminated against.

v) Traditional versus modern cultures

Modernization theorists posited a dichotomy between traditional and modern societies. The economic core of modernization is industrialization, which requires a measure of congruence between economic development and the social and cultural environment. The dichotomy between modern and traditional societies involves changes in a number of cultural and institutional dimensions. Some of the most frequently mentioned dichotomies are given below.

a) Modernisation theory: dichotomies between modern and traditional societies

- *Achievement versus ascription*. In modern societies, social positions are assigned to individuals on the basis of achievement - meritocratic criteria. In traditional societies, social positions are assigned on the basis of birth, social origin, and other ascription, or arrangement into classes or categories.

- *Mobility versus hierarchy*. Modern societies are characterized by increased upward and downward social mobility in comparison with traditional static hierarchical societies.

- *Rational versus traditional behaviour behaviour*. Modern societies are characterized by rational thinking about ends and means. In pre-modern societies traditionally defined patterns of behaviour behaviour predominate.

- *Future orientation versus fatalism*. In modern societies, people believe that their actions influence their future. They are willing to make long term investments in a better future for themselves and their children. Traditional societies are characterized by fatalism and a short term horizon.

- *Nuclear families versus extended families*. It is argued that extended families and kinship relationships act as a break on economic development, because of the strong pressure towards redistribution amongst the extended family impedes capital accumulation. Modernization involves the breakdown of extended families and the emergence of nuclear families.

- *Increased role for civil society*. Modernisation implies an increased role for unions, parties, political pressure groups, and other associations of civil society.

- *Single- stranded versus multi-stranded social relationships*. Many transactions in modern markets and modern bureaucracies are

anonymous and specialized (single-stranded). In traditional societies, relationships are more personal and involve many dimensions. There are a variety of economic and financial exchanges, relationships of kin and tribe, friendship, relationships of authority and dependence in traditional societies.

- *Individual orientation versus collectivist, or, communal orientation.* In traditional societies, social obligations are more important than in modern societies, where people feel free to pursue their individual interests.

b) Reaction to Western penetration and cultural disruption

Reactions to Western cultural dominance and to modernization and economic change in general have taken a variety of forms, including traditional opposition movements; modern nationalist movements; Marxist and social movements. Some of the changes that have affected traditional communities' world over are given below.

- The accelerated rate of change implicit in the development process.

- Demographic growth, urbanization, education, and marginalization of traditional economic activities.

- The break up of traditional units of community, such as village and extended family.

- The overwhelming impact of Western culture, which is frequently transferred only in the rudimentary form of consumption oriented-behaviour behaviour and technology.

- The impact of mass communications, especially through radio and television.

- Homogenizing efforts at building national identity through mass media, political organizations and the school system, which conflict with geographic, tribal and kinship lines of affiliation.

- Inadequate adaptation of education and training to the opportunities of employment and the needs of self employment.

- Rapid loss of authentic traditional cultural legacies, which are primarily orally transmitted, due to increased mobility and perceived lack of short term relevance for the young.

vi) The role of the individual and the process of value creation

Society has no direct means to give conscious expression to its subconscious collective aspirations and urges. That essential role is played by pioneering conscious individuals–visionary intellectuals, political leaders, entrepreneurs, artists and spiritual seekers who are inspired to express and achieve what the collective subconsciously aspires to, and is prepared for. Where the aspirations and actions of leaders do not reflect the will of the collective, it is ignored or rejected. Where it gives expression to a deeply felt collective urge, it is endorsed, imitated, supported, and systematically propagated. This is most evident in times of war, social revolution, or communal conflict.

India's early freedom fighters consciously advocated the goal of freedom from British rule long before that goal had become a conscious aspiration of the masses. The leaders spent decades urging a reluctant population to conceive of itself as a free nation, and to aspire to achieve that dream. When, finally, the collective endorsed this conception, no foreign nation had the power to impose its will on the Indian people.

During the World Academy of Art & Science's meeting on development theory in Washington DC in May 1999, there was a broad consensus of participants that the formation of values was a critical aspect of the development process. Here, we propose to re-examine the process of development as a process of value formation. If gross physical actions are the most visible and tangible form of human initiative, the creation of values is the most subtle and intangible. Yet human existence is powerfully determined by the nature of its values. Physical skills, vital attitudes, mental opinions, and values represent a gradation of internal organizing principles that direct human energies, and determine the course of individual and social development.

All human creative processes release and harness human energy and convert it into results. The process of skill formation involves acquiring mastery over our physical-nervous energies so that we can direct our physical movements in a precisely controlled manner. In the absence of skill, physical movements are clumsy, inefficient, and unproductive, like the stumbling efforts of a child learning to walk. Human beings acquire social behaviour behaviours in a similar manner. Here, apart from the physical skills required for communication and interaction with other people, vital attitudes are centrally important. Each, social behaviour expresses not just a movement, but an attitude and intention of the person. Acquiring social behaviours requires gaining control over our psychological energies and channelling them into acceptable forms of behaviour. The developmental achievements of modern society are founded upon such intangible social attitudes as confidence in the government, trust in other people, tolerance, and cooperation. Without such attitudes, our money would become valueless paper and our institutions would cease to function.

The same process takes place at the mental level. The mind's energy naturally flows as thought in many different directions without any structure to contain, or, organize it. The acquisition of knowledge involves construction of a mental structure of understanding that is analogous to the structure of skills and attitudes that govern the expression of our physical and vital energy. It forms an organizational framework for learning, and application of what is learned. Human values are formed by a similar process and act in a similar manner. Although the word is commonly used with reference to ethical and cultural principles, values are of many types. They may be physical (cleanliness, punctuality), organizational (communication, coordination), psychological (courage, generosity), mental (objectivity, sincerity), or spiritual (harmony, love, self-giving). Values are central organizing principles or ideas that govern and determine human behaviour.

Unlike the skill or attitude that may be specific to a particular physical activity, or, social context, values tend to be more universal in their application. They are expressed in everything we do. Values can be described as the essence of the knowledge gained by humanity from past experiences, distilled from its local circumstances and specific contexts to extract the fundamental wisdom of life derived from these experiences. Values give direction to our thought processes,

sentiments, emotional energies, preferences, and actions. Centuries of experience have been distilled by society into essential principles. Values such as hard work, responsibility, integrity in human relations, tolerance, and respect for others, are not just noble ideas or ideals. They are pragmatic principles for accomplishment which society has learned and transmitted to successive generations as a psychological foundation for its further advancement. The values of a society are a crucial aspect of its people's self-conception of who they want to become.

Because values are intangible to our senses, and their formation is the result of a very long process, we tend to overlook their central role in development. Social values constitute the cultural infrastructure on which all further social development is based. In this sense, values are the ultimate product of past development and the ultimate determinant of its future course.

By now you are familiar with the emerging concepts of culture and development. Now, answer the questions in Check Your Progress 2.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Explain, in brief, the emergence of culture.

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2) How is gender discrimination a cultural obstacle to economic development?

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1.9   LET US SUM UP

There are enormous issues linked with the social and cultural dynamics of development, and in this section we have discussed the concepts, dynamics, meanings, and broad issues involved in social development. We have seen that the social and cultural dynamics of development are a continuous process of changes which are substantially influenced by development, and that the process also determines the direction of further and future development. We have covered the emerging concepts of social and cultural development, social development theory, social development index, cultural obstacles to economic development, and determinants of development: social aspiration, and, lastly, a summary of social development principles.

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1.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Describe the role of individual in the process of value creation.

   Answer: That essential role is played by pioneering, conscious individuals – visionary intellectuals, political leaders, entrepreneurs, artists, and spiritual seekers who are inspired to express and achieve what the collective subconsciously aspires to, and is prepared for. Where the aspirations and actions of leaders do not reflect the will of the collective, it is ignored or rejected. Where it gives expression to a deeply felt collective urge, it is endorsed, imitated, supported, and systematically propagated. This is most evident at times of war, social revolution, or communal conflict.

2) Describe the role of a democratic government as a determinant of development.

   Answer: Modern forms of democracy greatly enhance the development capabilities of society. They are not only capable of enforcing a rule of law, which, to a large extent, the population willingly accepts as in its own interest, they also promote far greater development of individual aspirations, thought,

capacity, skill, and initiative. The accountability of a democratically elected government necessitates that it continuously institute measures perceived as beneficial to the electorate. Working through decentralized self governing structures, it empowers more and more centres of activity in the society, leading to greater creativity and innovation. The basic human rights it endorses elevates aspirations and releases human energies for higher accomplishment.

3) Explain, in brief, the conceptual framework of social development theory.

Answer: The following observations suggest a starting point for the formulation of a comprehensive conceptual framework.

- Social development theory should focus on underlying processes rather than on surface activities and results, since development activities, policies, strategies, programs, and results will always be limited to a specific context and circumstance, whereas social development itself encompasses a potentially infinite field in space and time.

- The theory should recognize the inherent creativity of individuals and of societies, by which they fashion instruments and direct their energies to achieve greater results.

- The implication of this view is that even though it may be influenced, aided, or opposed by external factors, society develops by its own motive power, and in pursuit of its own goals. No external force and agency can develop a society.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Explain, in brief, the emergence of culture.

Answer: Cultures, as well as countries, are formed by the emergence of value systems (social stages) in response to life conditions. Such complex adaptive intelligences form the glue that bonds a group together, defines who they are as a people, and reflects the place on the planet they inhabit. These cultural waves, much like the Russian dolls (a doll embedded within a doll, which is again embedded within a doll) have formed, over time, into unique mixtures and blends of instructional and survival codes, myths of origin, artistic forms, life styles, and senses of community.

2) How is gender discrimination a cultural obstacle to economic development?

Answer: Inequality between the sexes and discrimination against women is embedded, to different degrees, in most world religions and cultures. Like the caste system, occupational discrimination by sex is a potential obstacle to the optimal use and allocation of human talents. In a great many societies, women have less access to paid jobs, health services, and in particular education. In some of the most orthodox religious societies, women are prohibited from engaging in education and paid work outside the house.