

Unit 9

Dependency Theory of Underdevelopment

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Learning objectives

In this chapter you will critically analyse and evaluate:

- the contributions of dependency theories;
- dependency theory as articulation of the poorer nations; and
- relevance and critique of dependency theory.

9.1 Introduction

The units of Block II familiarised us with different perspectives on development such as modernisation theories, and liberal, Marxian and Gandhian perspectives on development. Now let us turn to the theories that generated as a response to growth model of development. The present unit deals with dependency theory which was developed as a critique of western oriented development model. Dependency theories were one of the strongest critics of the growth-oriented theories which came largely from Western nations. The dependency theory, which came from the Latin American world, in that sense, is critique, which was from the south on the richer North. There are minor variations between the theories. What we will attempt in this unit is to try and present the core essential features of dependency theories. We will also examine dependency theories for the implications it has on economies of Third World countries and whether it has any relevance to present economic disparities between the richer Northern nations and the poorer Southern nations.

9.2 Dependency Theory: The Beginning

Dependency Theory developed in the late 1950s under the guidance of the Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, Raul Prebisch. Prebisch and his colleagues were troubled by the fact that economic growth in the advanced industrialised countries did not necessarily lead to growth in the poorer countries. Indeed, their studies suggested that economic activities in the richer countries often led to serious economic problems in the poorer countries. Such a possibility was not predicted by neoclassical theory, which had assumed that economic growth was beneficial to all, even if the benefits were not always equally shared.

Prebisch's initial explanation for the phenomenon was very straightforward: poor countries exported primary commodities to the rich countries, who then manufactured products out of those commodities and sold them back to the

poorer countries. The “Value Added” by manufacturing a usable product always cost more than the primary products used to create those products. Therefore, poorer countries would never be earning enough from their export earnings to pay for their imports.

Prebisch’s solution was similarly straightforward: poorer countries should embark on programs of import substitution so that they need not purchase the manufactured products from the richer countries. The poorer countries would still sell their primary products on the world market, but their foreign exchange reserves would not be used to purchase their manufactures from abroad.

Three issues made this policy difficult to follow. The first is that the internal markets of the poorer countries were not large enough to support the economies of the scale used by the richer countries to keep their prices low. The second issue concerned the political will of the poorer countries as to whether a transformation from being primary products producers was possible or desirable. The final issue revolved round the extent to which the poorer countries actually had control over their primary products, particularly in the area of selling those products abroad. These obstacles to the import substitution policy led others to think a little more creatively and historically at the relationship between rich and poor countries.

At this point dependency theory was viewed as a possible way of explaining the persistent poverty of the poorer countries. The traditional neoclassical approach said virtually nothing on this question except to assert that the poorer countries were late in coming to sound economic practices and that as soon as they learned the techniques of modern economics, their poverty would begin to subside. However, Marxist theorists viewed the persistent poverty as a consequence of capitalist exploitation. And a new body of thought, called the world-systems approach, argued that poverty was a direct consequence of the evolution of the international political economy into a fairly rigid division of labor which favored the rich and penalised the poor.

9.3 How Can One Define Dependency Theory?

The debates among the liberal reformers -Prebisch, the Marxists -Andre Gunder Frank, and the world-systems theorists -Wallerstein (see Box 9.1) was vigorous and intellectually quite challenging. There are still points of serious disagreement among the various strains of dependency theorists and it is a mistake to think that there is only one unified theory of dependency. Nonetheless, there are some core propositions which seem to underlie the analyses of most dependency theorists.

Dependency can be defined as an explanation of the economic development of a state in terms of the external influences—political, economic, and cultural—on national development policies (Sunkel 1969: 23). Theotonio Dos Santos emphasises the historical dimension of the dependency relationships in his definition:

[Dependency is]...a historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favors some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economics...a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected (Dos Santos 1971: 226).

There are three common features to these definitions which most dependency theorists share:

First, dependency characterizes the international system as comprised of two sets of states, variously described as dominant/dependent, center/periphery

or metropolitan/satellite. The dominant states are the advanced industrial nations in the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The dependent states are those states of Latin America, Asia, and Africa which have low per capita GNPs and which rely heavily on the export of a single commodity, or a few commodities, for foreign exchange earnings.

Second, both definitions have in common the assumption that external forces are of singular importance to the economic activities within the dependent states. These external forces include multinational corporations, international commodity markets, foreign assistance, communications, and any other means by which the advanced industrialised countries can represent their economic interests abroad.

Third, all the definitions of dependency indicate that the relations between dominant and dependent states are dynamic because the interactions between the two sets of states tend to not only reinforce but also intensify the unequal patterns. Moreover, dependency is a very deep-seated historical process, rooted in the internationalisation of capitalism.

Latin America today is, and has been since the sixteenth century, a part of an international system dominated by the present developed nations. Underdevelopment in Latin America is the outcome of a particular series of relationships to the international system (Bodenhimer 1971: 157).

Box 9.1: World-Systems Theory

In the 1960s international financial and trade systems were beginning to be more flexible, in which national governments seem to have less and less influence. These were the new conditions under which the Third world was trying to elevate its standards of living. It is this which made people like Immanuel Wallerstein conclude that there are new activities in the capitalist world-economy which cannot be explained by old theories.

This school originated in Fernand Braudel Centre for the study of Economics, at the state University of New York at Binghamton. Having originated in sociology it extended its impact to anthropology, history, political sciences. Wallerstein and his followers felt that there were wider forces in the world that impacted and influenced small and underdeveloped nations and the nation-state level of analysis is no longer useful to explain conditions in underdeveloped countries. The factors that had greatest influence on small countries were new global systems of communications, the new world trade mechanisms, the international financial systems, and transfer of military links. These factors have created their own dynamic at the international level, and at the same time, these elements are interacting with internal aspects of each country.

In short, dependency theory attempts to explain the present underdeveloped state of many nations in the world by examining the patterns of interactions among nations and by arguing that inequality among nations is an intrinsic part of those interactions.

Reflection and Action 9.1

Read the Box on world-system theory carefully and answer the following questions:

- 1) Can we explain underdevelopment and development in purely economic terms?
- 2) Do you agree with world-system theory that the world is interconnected and therefore underdevelopment in one nation can be explained in terms of a series of factors which affect them that are located elsewhere. Explain with a suitable example.

9.4 Structural Context of Dependency: Is it Capitalism or is it Power?

Most dependency theorists regard international capitalism as the motive force behind dependency relationships. Andre Gunder Frank, one of the earliest dependency theorists, is quite clear on this point:

...historical research demonstrates that contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries. Furthermore, these relations are an essential part of the capitalist system on a world scale as a whole" (Frank 1973: 3).

According to this view, the capitalist system has enforced a rigid international division of labor which is responsible for the underdevelopment of many areas of the world. The dependent states supply cheap minerals, agricultural commodities, and cheap labor, and also serve as the repositories of surplus capital, obsolescent technologies, and manufactured goods. These functions orient the economies of the dependent states towards the outside: money, goods, and services do flow into dependent states, but the allocation of these resources are determined by the economic interests of the dominant states, and not by the economic interests of the dependent state. This division of labor is ultimately the explanation for poverty and there is little question but that capitalism regards the division of labor as a necessary condition for the efficient allocation of resources. The most explicit manifestation of this characteristic is in the doctrine of "comparative advantage".

Moreover, to a large extent the dependency models rest upon the assumption that economic and political power are heavily concentrated and centralised in the industrialised countries, an assumption shared with Marxist theories of imperialism. If this assumption is valid, then any distinction between economic and political power is spurious: governments will take whatever steps are necessary to protect private economic interests, such as those held by multinational corporations.

Not all dependency theorists, however, are Marxists and one should clearly distinguish between dependency and a theory of imperialism. The Marxist theory of imperialism explains dominant state expansion while the dependency theory explains underdevelopment. Stated another way, Marxist theories explain the reasons why imperialism occurs, while dependency theories explain the consequences of imperialism. The difference is significant. In many respects, imperialism is, for a Marxist, part of the process by which the world is transformed and is therefore a process which accelerates the communist revolution. Marx spoke approvingly of British colonialism in India:

England has to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia (Marx 1853).

For the dependency theorists, underdevelopment is a wholly negative condition which offers no possibility of sustained and autonomous economic activity in a dependent state.

Additionally, the Marxist theory of imperialism is self-liquidating, while the dependent relationship is self-perpetuating. The end of imperialism in the Leninist framework comes about as the dominant powers go to war over a rapidly shrinking number of exploitable opportunities. World War I was, for Lenin, the classic proof of this proposition. After the war was over, Britain and France took over the former German colonies.

The dependency theorist rejects this proposition. A dependent relationship exists irrespective of the specific identity of the dominant state. That the dominant states may fight over the disposition of dependent territories is not in and of itself a pertinent bit of information (except that periods of fighting among dominant states afford opportunities for the dependent states to break their dependent relationships). To a dependency theorist, the central characteristic of the global economy is the persistence of poverty throughout the entire modern period in virtually the same areas of the world, regardless of what state was in control.

Finally, there are some dependency theorists who do not identify capitalism as the motor force behind a dependent relationship. The relationship is maintained by a system of power first and it does not seem as if power is only supported by capitalism. For example, the relationship between the former dependent states in the socialist bloc (the Eastern European states and Cuba, for example) closely paralleled the relationships between poor states and the advanced capitalist states. The possibility that dependency is more closely linked to disparities of power rather than to the particular characteristics of a given economic system is intriguing and consistent with the more traditional analyses of international relations, such as realism.

9.5 The Central Propositions of Dependency Theory

There are a number of propositions, all of contestable, which form the core of the dependency theory. These propositions include:

- 1) "Underdevelopment" is a condition fundamentally different from "undevelopment". The latter term simply refers to a condition in which resources are not being used. For example, the European colonists viewed the North American continent as an undeveloped area: the land was not actively cultivated on a scale consistent with its potential. Underdevelopment refers to a situation in which resources are being actively used, but used in a way which benefits dominant states and not the poorer states in which the resources are found.
- 2) The distinction between underdevelopment and undevelopment places the poorer countries of the world in a profoundly different historical context. These countries are not "behind" or "catching up" with the richer countries of the world. They are not poor because they lagged behind the scientific transformations or the Enlightenment values of the European states. They are poor because they were coercively integrated into the European economic system only as producers of raw materials or to serve as repositories of cheap labor, and were denied the opportunity to market their resources in any way that competed with dominant states.
- 3) Dependency theory suggests that alternative uses of resources are preferable to the resource usage patterns imposed by dominant states. There is no clear definition of what these preferred patterns might be, but some criteria are invoked. For example, one of the dominant state practices most often criticised by dependency theorists is export agriculture. The criticism is that many poor economies experience rather high rates of malnutrition even though they produce great amounts of food for export. Many dependency theorists would argue that those agricultural lands should be used for domestic food production in order to reduce the rates of malnutrition.
- 4) The preceding proposition can be amplified as follows: dependency theorists rely upon a belief that there exists a clear "national" economic interest which can and should be articulated for each country. In this

respect, dependency theory actually shares a similar theoretical concern with realism. What distinguishes the dependency perspective is that its proponents believe that this national interest can only be satisfied by addressing the needs of the poor within a society, rather than the satisfaction of corporate or governmental needs. Trying to determine what is the “best” for the poor is a difficult analytical problem. Dependency theorists have not yet articulated an operational definition of the national economic interest.

- 5) The diversion of resources over time (and one must remember that dependent relationships have persisted since the European expansion beginning in the fifteenth century) is maintained not only by the power of dominant States, but also through the power of elites in the dependent States. Dependency theorists argue that these elites maintain a dependent relationship because their own private interests coincide with the interests of the dominant States. These elites are typically trained in the dominant States and share similar values and culture with the elites in dominant States. Thus, in a very real sense, a dependency relationship is a “voluntary” relationship. One need not argue that the elites in a dependent State are consciously betraying the interests of their poor; the elites sincerely believe that the key to economic development lies in following the prescriptions of liberal economic doctrine.

9.6 The Policy Implications of Dependency Analysis

If one accepts the analysis of dependency theory, then the question of how poor economies’ development becomes quite different from the traditional questions concerning comparative advantage, capital accumulation, and import/export strategies. Some of the most important new issues include:

- 1) The success of the advanced industrial economies does not serve as a model for the currently developing economies. When economic development became a focused area of study, the analytical strategy (and ideological preference) was quite clear: all nations need to emulate the patterns used by the rich countries (see Unit 10 for more details on growth theories and its critics).
- 2) Indeed, in the 1950s and 1960s there was a paradigmatic consensus that growth strategies were universally applicable, a consensus best articulated by Walt Rostow in his book, *The Stages of Economic Growth*. Dependency theory suggests that the success of the richer countries was a highly contingent and specific episode in global economic history, one dominated by the highly exploitative colonial relationships of the European powers. A repeat of those relationships is not now highly likely for the poor countries of the world.
- 3) Dependency theory repudiates the central distributive mechanism of the neoclassical model, what is usually called “trickle-down” economics. The neoclassical model of economic growth pays relatively little attention to the question of distribution of wealth. Its primary concern is on efficient production, and assumes that the market will allocate the rewards of efficient production in a rational and unbiased manner. This assumption may be valid for a well-integrated, economically fluid economy where people can quickly adjust to economic changes and where consumption patterns are not distorted by non-economic forces such as racial, ethnic, or gender bias. These conditions are not pervasive in the developing economies, and dependency theorists argue that economic activity is not easily disseminated in poor economies. For these structural reasons, dependency theorists argue that the market alone is not a sufficient distributive mechanism.

- 4) Since the market only rewards productivity, dependency theorists discount aggregate measures of economic growth such as the GDP or trade indices. Dependency theorists do not deny that economic activity occurs within a dependent state. They do make a very important distinction, however, between economic growth and economic development. For example, there is a greater concern within the dependency framework for whether the economic activity is actually benefiting the nation as a whole. Therefore, far greater attention is paid to indices such as life expectancy, literacy, infant mortality, education, and the like. Dependency theorists clearly emphasize social indicators far more than economic indicators.
- 5) Dependent states, therefore, should attempt to pursue policies of self-reliance. Contrary to the neo-classical models endorsed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, greater integration into the global economy is not necessarily a good choice for poor countries. Often this policy perspective is viewed as an endorsement of a policy of autarky, and there have been some experiments with such a policy such as China's Great Leap Forward or Tanzania's policy of *Ujamaa*. The failures of these policies are clear, and the failures suggest that autarky is not a good choice. Rather a policy of self-reliance should be interpreted as endorsing a policy of controlled interactions with the world economy: poor countries should only endorse interactions on terms that promise to improve the social and economic welfare of the larger citizenry.

9.7 Critics of Dependency Theory

Dependency theories have provided an alternative approach to looking at unilinear growth models. They have critically evaluated the continued unequal relationships between countries, which have their history partly in colonialism and imperialism. While the dependency theories have provided a welcome critique from the South about the North, they were not without some shortcomings and critics. The principal criticism of dependency theories has been that the school does not provide any substantive empirical evidences to support its arguments. There are few examples that are provided but many exceptions are there which do not fit in with their core periphery theory, like the newly emerged industrial countries of South East Asia.

It has also been said that dependency theories are highly abstract and tend to use homogenising categories such as developed and underdeveloped, which do not fully capture the variations within these categories.

Another point of criticism is that the dependency school considers ties with multinational corporations as detrimental, while one view has been that they are important means of transfer of technology. Another criticism which is leveled against the dependency theorists is that they base their arguments on received notions such as nation-state, capitalism and industrialisation. Some of the Eurocentric biases are inherited in these theories of dependency school: for example they assume that industrialisation and possession of industrial capital are crucial requisites for economic progress. There is an inability to think beyond the state as the primary and essential agent of economic development. Also there is a Eurocentric bias in overlooking or de-emphasising of production undertaken by women, and in not realising the hazardous implications for the environment of industrialisation and over exploitation of resources. A singular criticism, which is charged against the dependency theories, is that they do not reflect the changed socio-economic and political situations of the contemporary world. While many of the criticisms are justified, what we need to ask ourselves is whether the essential ideas and the ideology behind the dependency theory has any relevance in the present context?

9.8 Relevance of Dependency Theories

Increasing globalisation, which appears an inevitable social condition and process, has pointed out to the interconnected nature of the world today. Never has there been so much flow of capital, finances, goods, people, ideas and so on. Some of these interconnections had been pointed out by the Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean (ECLAC) in the 1950s and by dependency theorists later, including the world-system theorists. “Both theories view the problems of underdevelopment and development within a global context, as interconnected economic, political and social processes. Dependency theory forecast that the world system will tend to concentrate production in the hands of relatively few transnational corporations, making the world an oligopolic market. From this, the theory also forecast a long trend to slow down production and to speed up income polarisation” (Rojas 1984).

The economic divide and income gap between industrialised countries and developing countries has widened continually. The polarisation between North and South is more pronounced than ever. The United Nations *Human Development Report*, 1997 shows that the share of world trade for 48 least developed nations, representing 10% of the world’s population, has halved in the past two decades. There is a widening gap between the rich and the poor as these figures show: The share in the global income of the poorest 20% of the world’s people has fallen from 2.3% in 1960 and 1.4% in 1991 to a current level of 1.1 %, while the ratio of the income of the top 20% to that of the poorest 20% rose from 30:1 in 1960 to 60:1 in 1991, and grew still further to a figure of 78:1 in 1994. In other words the rich are getting richer while the poor are getting poorer (see figure 9.1).

These trends show no sign of slowing down, even though the United Nations estimates in the *Human Development Report* that it will take only 1% of the global income and around 2-3% of the national income in all but the most impoverished countries to fund a programme to eliminate world poverty. These figures call attention to the fact that these growing disparities between people and nations have to be accounted for and analysed (*Human Development Report* 1997).

Since the aim of uneven development, dependency theories or world-system theory has been to account for the international political economy which is an interconnected world, there is reason to examine these theories for their rationale, though on the face of it they do not seem to be reflecting contemporary circumstances and situations and some of their formulations have been questioned. However, in the face of growing interconnected economies and political economy, it is worthwhile to critically evaluate the theories.

Group of Countries	1960	1970	1980	1990	1999
Industrialised countries (21)	83.2	83.2	78.4	83.3	84.3
Sub-Saharan Africa (50)	2.5	2.3	2.8	1.4	1.1
South Asia (8)	3.9	3.1	2.2	2.0	2.3
Middle East and North Africa (9)	1.8	2.6	5.5	3.1	1.8
Latin America and the Caribbean (41)	6.7	6.8	7.7	5.9	6.7
East Asia and the Pacific (27)	2.0	2.1	3.3	4.4	3.8

Fig.9.1: GDP as percentage of aggregate GDP for 156 market economies

Source: World Development Indicators and *World Development Report*, several years.

Reflection and Action 9.2

- 1) Do you think the dependency theory can be used to explain the internal disparities in a nation?
- 2) Most development theorists think that state interventions are very important for the development of a nation. Do you agree with them?
If you do:
- 3) Do you think, therefore, that the role of the state is undermined by powerful Transnational Corporations and agencies such as IMF and World Bank, who are known to influence state policies?

9.9 Dependecny Theory: An Overview

Apart from all of its methodological and definitional deficiencies, dependency theory has been empirically undermined by the recent historical experience of many less developed countries. Those who may still hold to its fundamental premise that underdevelopment is a process that perpetuates economic backwardness, rather than a condition from which Less Development Countries (LDCs) can escape, simply choose to ignore recent economic history. However, it has been contended here that dependency is useful in the limited sense that it offers an international political economy framework for understanding underdevelopment. Economics alone cannot account for many of the factors that restrict economic and social progress. A reference to political economy dynamics in both domestic and international arenas is necessary. Dependency analysis rightly emphasises the interdependence of economic and political relations in the international arena. If the political-economic dynamics it spells out are often mistaken, at least it gets the frame of reference right. In the final analysis, the study of underdevelopment is patently incomplete if we see the world through economic lenses alone. After fifty years of development experience since the discipline of development economics was born, scholars are increasingly coming to terms with the reality that underdevelopment is the result of a bewildering array of factors, not only economic and political, but also social, cultural, etc. We can say retrospectively that the dependency movement was simply too intellectually ambitious in seeking to account for underdevelopment with a general theory of political economy. As one of the pioneers of development theory, Albert Hirschman wrote thirty years ago:

The attempt to produce general statements about the relationship between politics and economics is likely to produce only banality and frustration. For relationships at this level are either evident and hence uninteresting, or are so complex and dependent on so many other variables as to be unpredictable and inconclusive (Hirschman 1971: 8).

It would be difficult to phrase more succinctly what has doomed dependency theory to the dustbin of history.

Globalisation means that Latin American economies are subjected to the discipline of international financial markets as well as the threat of exit by local and international investors. Dependency theorists would predictably use this insight to validate their thinking by asserting that global economic integration restricts the room for maneuver of many governments in matters, fiscal and monetary. While this is undeniable, reduced freedom of policy action is not necessarily deleterious for development. In fact, many economists assert that the new discipline imposed on developing nations by international markets has weeded out the worst examples of irresponsible, populist policies of times past by tying politicians' hands. The international economic scene is quite different from when dependency tenets were first being formulated in the 1950s and 1960s. But again, it is up to Latin American governments to take advantage of the new opportunities and to limit the new risks that come with

this new world economic landscape. Their policies give them some leverage as to the extent to which they want to control their individual economic destiny. That is the good news. Dependency theory, in a more pessimistic fashion, did not allow for that possibility.

9.10 Conclusion

In this unit we have learnt that dependency theories have a recent origin. It was developed during the middle of 20th century in Latin America, mainly as a critique of modernisation theories. They rejected the arguments of modernisation theorists that modernity and development reach bottom most in its own due course. They argued that the economic activities in the richer countries often led to serious economic problems in the poorer countries.

Here we have tried to define dependency theory and examined the social context that lead to the origin of dependency theory. We have also seen the central propositions of dependency theory and how they explain the causes and continuance of underdevelopment in the contemporary world. Finally the major criticisms against dependency theory and their relevance in this globalisation era are also analysed in the unit.

9.11 Further Reading

Frank, A. G. 1973. "The Development of Underdevelopment" In Cockcroft, James P. (etal) (eds.) *Dependence and Underdevelopment*. Anchor Books: New York

Lall, S.1975. Is Dependency a Useful Concept in Analysing Underdevelopment?' *World Development* Vol. 3

Unit 10

Social and Human Development

Contents

- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Growth Models of Economic Development
- 10.3 Criticism of Growth Oriented Theories of Development: The Need for a Holistic Perspective
- 10.4 The Human Development Reports: From Income to Cultural Freedom
- 10.5 What is Human Development?
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- 10.9 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

In this unit you will learn about the need for critiquing dominating development models and critically evaluate:

- growth models of development;
- need for a holistic perspective; and
- human development report and a critical evaluation of it.

10.1 Introduction

When the term development is mentioned, the immediate association one has is of wealth. When we ask people who are the developed nations, often the answer refers to countries such as the United States of America, Japan, Germany and so on, the so-called developed nations. And as for what is development, again the association is with wealth; a lot of industries, everybody owning a car, good roads, skyscrapers and so on. This association of wealth with development has struck the popular imagination and therefore for a lot of people development means a lot of wealth.

This idea of development goes back to the adoption of growth models to achieve development, especially via newly emerging nation-states that were trying to emulate the successes and riches of the wealthy or developed nations of the West.

It has generally been agreed that economic growth and income levels are important but more important is how well the resources of wealth are exploited for general well being of human beings. Some countries have been successful in managing their growth to improve the human condition. However there is no automatic link between economic growth and better human conditions. And if a link is seen what one ponders what are those conditions or policies that translate high-income levels into human development. We will be addressing these and other questions related to the issue of human development in this unit on social and human development.

This unit will begin with the discussion by analysing the antecedents of human development in the growth models of development which were adopted by many countries, and how these models failed to meet human development needs. We will then discuss what human development is and in what way it

is a holistic perspective as compared to the growth model. We will also examine the various factors and indices to measure human development. The *Human Development Report* prepared by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) will be examined and analysed to see what the relative positions of different countries are. If certain countries are lagging behind in achieving this human development potential, then it will be worth while to look into the conditions and policy issues that come in the way of human development. Our particular interest is India but we will be looking at the Indian situation in the context of other nations and in the global perspective as well.

10.2 Growth Models of Economic Development

In this section we will talk about the dominant ideas and discourse of development which held sway and which continue to hold the imagination of people whenever there is a discussion on economic development. Before we go on to discuss some of the main features and principles and the leading thinkers of this model of development, let us look at the philosophical and conceptual lineages of the concept of development.

“Economic development” or “development” is a term that economists, politicians, policy makers, academics and lay people have used widely, so much so that it became a household term in late 20th century. The concept, however, has been in existence in the West for centuries. Modernisation, Westernisation, and especially Industrialisation are other terms people have used when discussing economic development.

The word development is invariably associated with the idea of progress. The concept of progress in turn finds its roots in the concept of evolution which had captured the imagination of scholars of the 19th century. For instance when Aguste Comte talked about the progress of society, he visualised societies moving from the simple to a complex and yet rational and scientific state. This also implied that one moved from a society dominated by a non-scientific cultural mould dominated by age-old tradition, to one where rationality and the scientific spirit dominated. Thus when newly independent nations of the post-colonial world strove to develop themselves, the idea that they needed to adopt modern rational ideas was very influential.

Along with modernisation another concept that came to be closely associated was industrialisation. The idea of progress as we mentioned was evolutionary and linear in its implications. Therefore the countries which were not developed had to go through, even if by grafting infrastructures and such conditions, a stage similar to that of those which was developed already. The developed countries had a predominant industrial base and of course they all went through a history of the social process of industrialisation. When we examine some of the theories of economic development which advocated growth, in terms of incomes or heavy industries, they were very much influenced by the discourse of that time. Let us briefly look at some of these theories.

By end of World War II, various countries were struggling to take their nations forward and progress the way the former coloniser countries have progressed. A variety of theories were on offer around this period.

- a) **Linear Stage Growth Theory:** The idea of different stages of development as we have mentioned goes back to ideas of evolutionism which finds echoes in Adam Smith and Karl Marx. Adam Smith first noted that every society goes through four stages, namely, hunting, pastoral, agricultural and manufacturing. According to Karl Marx there are four stages through which every society must go, namely, Feudalism, Capitalism, Socialism and Communism. Walt W. Rostow’s “stages of growth” model of development is yet another addition to these ideas.

The argument that the historical experience of the developed countries in transforming their agricultural subsistence societies to modern industrial giants may have important lessons for the developing countries, led to the formation of Rostow's stage theories (refr. unit 5 for Rostow's stage theories).

- b) **Structural-Change model:** Following the prescriptions of Harrod and Domar who feel that, the main obstacle or constraint to development is the relatively low level of new capital formation in most poor countries. Arthur Lewis comes up with another variation on the growth model. According to him investments in industrialisation would attract rural folk to urban areas and this in turn would provide higher standard of living as they would earn more wages. Furthermore, as the level of labour productivity was so low in traditional agricultural areas, people leaving the rural areas would have virtually no impact on output. Indeed, the amount of food available to the remaining villagers would increase as the same amount of food could be shared amongst fewer people. This might generate a surplus which could then be sold generating income.

Those people that moved away from the villages to the towns would earn increased incomes and this in turn generates more savings, according to Lewis. The lack of development was due to a lack of savings and investment. The way to development was to increase savings and investment. A growing industrial sector requiring labour provided the incomes that could be spent and saved. This would in itself generate demand and also provide funds for investment. Income generated by the industrial sector was expected to trickle down throughout the economy.

There was great deal of criticism of these models from the so called third world countries. They offered critique which pointed out to the vested interest of these Western models (you must have already familiarised yourself with some of these in the previous unit). After the initial tremor created by the dependence theories subsided and the neoclassical economists bounced back with another set of theories which became known as the neo-classical counter-revolution.

- c) **Neo-classical counter-revolution:** Unlike the dependence theories, which believed that underdevelopment was an externally induced phenomenon, the people behind the neo-classical counter-revolution believed that underdevelopment is an internally induced phenomenon. The central argument of the neo-classical counter-revolution is that underdevelopment results from poor resource allocation due to incorrect pricing policies and too much state intervention by over interfering governments. The third world is underdeveloped because of the heavy hand of the state and the corruption, inefficiency, and lack of economic incentives that permeate the economies of developing nations. According to this theory what is needed is the promotion of free and open market and *laissez-faire* economics within the context of permissive governments that allow the "magic of the marketplace" and the "invisible hand" of market prices to guide resource allocation and stimulate economic development (source: [_http://www.hn.psu.edu/faculty/mahmud/econ333/sum99/Lect3&4](http://www.hn.psu.edu/faculty/mahmud/econ333/sum99/Lect3&4)).

10.3 Criticism of Growth-Oriented Theories of Development: The Need for a Holistic Perspective

The prescriptions offered by the above theories were adopted by the first generation of newly independent nations. They generally accepted that they

were poor because they were traditional and had followed subsistence agriculture based production. Hence there was an initial investment in heavy industries, as was done by India too. The adoptions never really did yield results and the theories themselves came under heavy criticism especially from the hitherto colonised and newly independent nations, who were in the race to climb the development ladder. Underlying these theories were a series of both economic and deeper philosophical assumptions, which were highly Eurocentric or Western oriented.

In some of these theories, especially Rostow's, the assumption that underdeveloped countries have no history of development, since they are still at the first stage of being a "traditional society", is a historical proposition. It suggested that the so-called underdeveloped countries have no history of development. An examination of colonial history shows that this is not the case. The burgeoning industries, mostly traditional ones were deliberately destroyed. The destruction of the cotton textile industry in India is an example of that. There are numerous such instances in colonial history.

Furthermore, classical and neoclassical theories with their stress on consumption and huge investments have been found to be unsustainable, upsetting the fragile ecological balance. By providing the developed West as a model to be emulate, as the last stage of Rostow's model suggests, there is a continued sense of inequality, as more countries compete for fewer resources. It is only the rich and powerful who invariably have access to the earth's resources, creating an inequitable situation. The developed countries account for only a quarter of the world's population, they consume approximately 80 percent of the world's resources. Thus, the goal of mass consumption for the developing world is impossible, as this level of consumption cannot be sustained for a larger number of people.

Some of these points were not only raised by the advocates of dependency theories of Latin America but by all Third World countries. And as more facts and figures started pouring in on the state of the ecology and the environment, particularly at the Earth Summit of 1990, it was realised that the growth models were far from sustainable.

Most of the above discussed theories were pro-capital and pro-manufacturing. It was increasingly found that creation of surplus and more wealth did not necessarily create well-being. Not only that the wealth which was invariably intended to trickle, never did. Apart from the economic and environmental perspectives, in the development critique, there was a spate of criticism from social and cultural perspective. Though there were certain revisions and new approaches, which addressed the human angles – "like the" Human Resources Development approach and the Basic Human Needs approach.

The human resources development approach looked at human potential as a means to further capital accumulation. Human beings were the supply part of that commodity production, they were not the ends themselves. The welfarist model and the basic needs approach looked at human beings as beneficiaries of development rather than as active participants. According to the basic needs approach provision of basic needs such as food, water, shelter was important. In a large sense they did not look at the human beings as the goal of development.

In the later 1980's and early 1990's there were a series of development critiques, which emerged within sociology and anthropology. These critiques questioned the basic philosophical and epistemological orientation of development. They felt that the development discourses drive to manipulate and dominate nature and the nonlinear view of history need to be critically examined. These approaches center on the analysis of development as a cultural discourse and

the role that it plays in shaping and defining reality. Many anthropologists in this framework (but not all) call for the abandonment/deconstruction of the whole epistemological and political field of post-war development toward a post-development era. They argue that the pervasiveness of development discourse and ideology denaturalises the historical and political realities of the development enterprise. It is argued that development discourse acts as a regime of representation or hegemonic worldview that systematically shapes and constructs identities of the so-called Third World peoples and does not allow people to think of alternative organising principles for the attainment of well-being. Those works most associated with this type of “post-development” critique are those of Arturo Escobar (1995), Wolfgang Sachs (1992), Rahnema and Bawtree (1997).

It is criticisms like these which together raised many questions on the issue of what well-being is. After all, the national averages of income or wealth do not capture the actual situation of distribution of incomes. It was increasingly realised that development has to capture the many-sided aspects of well-being that address not only the basic needs of human beings such as food, clothing, shelter, access to health, etc. but such social issues as gender equity as well and also address issues of sustainability. The holistic perspective was increasingly brought forth to the centre-stage particularly in the late 1980s and 1990s. Various methods were sought to look at comparative pictures of societies that address these social issues rather than per capita income etc. Countries which were believed to be very wealthy did not necessarily have greater equality of incomes or good human right records. So many factors were taken into consideration which addressed the overall well-being of the people that this came to be known as human development.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was the first to come up with a report in the year 1990 that addressed the human aspect of development. While acknowledging the importance of Growth in National Production (GDP) it wanted to see “how this growth translates into or fails to translate into human development in various societies”. Let us examine this seminal report called the Human Development Report which was undertaken under the flagship of the project director Mahbub-ul-Haq.

Reflection and Action 10.1

One obvious outcome of development discourse has been a desire on the less developed nations to imitate the ways of the “developed” nations not only in terms of technologies but in life styles too. In our own Indian context the reference group – a group for emulation – has been the rich and the urban dwellers. A sign of wealth is not only the money one has but the trappings that show you are wealthy and modern as well. For example, in a village society in India a *pucca* cemented house is preferred over a thatched house. There are many such instances of imitation and adoption of so-called modern and developed technologies and lifestyles. In this context the following questions arise:

- 1) Do you think the modern preferences for architecture are environmentally suitable, especially in a hot desert climate for instance?
- 2) Can you think of other elements of imitation which you think are environmentally and economically unsuitable? Do write them down.
- 3) Give few examples of what you think are good development programmes in the context of rural India, explain why you think they are good examples.

10.4 The Human Development Reports: From Income to Cultural Freedom

The *Human Development Report* of 1990 was the first in a series of reports which brought the people into the centre-stage of the development debate, as is outlined in the foreword of the report of 1990. It says: “The purpose of

development is to offer people more options. One of their options is access to income not as an end to itself but as a means to acquiring human well-being. But there are other options as well, including long life, knowledge, political freedom, personal security, community participation and guaranteed human rights. People cannot be reduced to single dimension as economic creatures" (*Human Development Report 1990*: iii).

The report is essentially meant to point out to those aspects of development that addresses human dimensions. It is not meant to be a model of development, like the ones that have been advocated earlier, for instance the growth models. The report is meant to "analyse practical country experience to distill practical insights. Its purpose is neither to preach nor to recommend any particular model of development. Its purpose is to make relevant experience available to all policy makers" (Ibid).

The human development reports make contribution in measure and policy analysis of human development. While the first report brought in the very notion of human development, subsequent reports have addressed various specific issues of human development – the social, political and economic. The latest report, for instance, stresses on cultural liberty in today's diverse world. The report attempts to capture, through figures and facts, difficult and slippery phenomena and concepts such as cultural liberty and cultural diversity. According to the *Human Development Report, 2004* "human development requires more than health, education, a decent standard of living and political freedom. People's cultural identities must be recognized and accommodated by the state, and people must be free to express these identities without being discriminated against in other aspects of their lives. In short cultural liberty is a human right and an important aspect of human development and thus worthy of state action and attention" (HDR 2004: 6).

Now let us have a look at the various themes and foci of human development reports starting from 1990-2004 (Source: UNDP.org).

- **1990, *Concept and Measurement of Human Development***

The report addresses, as its main issue, the question of how economic growth translates or fails to translate into human development. The focus is on the people and on how development enlarges their choices. The report discusses the meaning and measurement of human development, proposing a new composite index.

- **1991, *Financing Human Development***

Lack of political commitment rather than financial resources is often the real cause of human development. This is the main conclusion of *Human Development Report, 1991*; the second in a series of annual reports on the subject.

- **1992, *Global Dimensions of Human development***

The richest 20% of the population now receives 150 times the income of the poorest 20%. The Report suggests a two-pronged strategy to break away from this situation. First, making massive investments in their people and strengthening national technological capacity can enable some developing countries to acquire a strong competitive edge in international markets (witness the East Asian industrialising tigers). Second, there should be basic international reforms, including restructuring the Bretton Woods institutions and setting up a Development Security Council within the United Nations.

- **1993, *People's Participation***

The report examines how and to what extent people participate in the events and processes that shape their lives. It looks at three major means

of peoples' participation: people-friendly markets, decentralised governance and community organisations, especially NGOs, and suggests concrete policy measures to address the growing problems of increasing unemployment.

- 1994, *New Dimensions of Security*

The report introduces a new concept of human security which equates security with people rather than territories, with development rather than arms. It examines both the national and the global concerns of human security.

- 1995, *Gender and Human Development*

The report analyses the progress made in reducing gender disparities in the past few decades and highlights the wide and persistent gap between women's expanding capabilities and limited opportunities. Two new measures are introduced for ranking countries on a global scale by their performance in gender equality and there follows an analysis of the under-valuation and non-recognition of the work of women. In conclusion, the report offers a five-point strategy for equalising gender opportunities in the decade ahead.

- 1996, *Economic Growth and Human Development*

The report argues that economic growth, if not properly managed, can be jobless, voiceless, ruthless, rootless and futureless, and thus detrimental to human development. The quality of growth is therefore as important as its quantity for poverty reduction, human development and sustainability.

- 1997, *Human Development to Eradicate Poverty*

Eradicating poverty everywhere is more than a moral imperative; it is rather a practical possibility. That is the most important message of the *Human Development Report, 1997*. The world has the resources and the know-how to create a poverty-free world in less than a generation.

- 1998, *Consumption for Human Development*

The high levels of consumption and production in the world today, the power and potential of technology and information, present great opportunities. After a century of vast material expansion, will leaders and people have the vision to seek and achieve more equitable and more human advance in the 21st century?

- 1999, *Globalisation with a Human Face*

Global markets, global technology, global ideas and global solidarity can enrich the lives of people everywhere. The challenge is to ensure that the benefits are shared equitably and that this increasing interdependence works for people—not just for profits. The report argues that Globalisation is not new, but that the present era of Globalisation, driven by competitive global markets, is outpacing the governance of markets and the repercussions on people.

- 2000, *Human Rights and Human Development*

Human Development Report, 2000 looks at human rights as an intrinsic part of development and at development as a means to realising human rights. It shows how human rights bring principles of accountability and social justice to the process of human development.

- 2001, *Making New Technologies Work for Human Development*

Technology networks are transforming the traditional map of development, expanding people's horizons and creating the potential to realise in a decade progress that required generations in the past.

- 2002, *Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*

This report is first and foremost about the idea that politics is as important to successful development as economics. Sustained poverty reduction requires equitable growth — but it also requires that poor people have political power.

And the best way to achieve that in a manner consistent with human development objectives is by building strong and deep forms of democratic governance at all levels of society.

- 2003, *Millennium Development Goals: A Compact Among Nations to End Human Poverty*

The range of human development in the world is vast and uneven, with astounding progress in some areas amidst stagnation and dismal decline in others. Balance and stability in the world will require the commitment of all nations, rich and poor, and a global development compact to extend the wealth of possibilities to all people.

- 2004, *Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World*

Accommodating people's growing demands for their inclusion in society, for respect of their ethnicity, religion, and language, takes more than democracy and equitable growth. Also needed are multicultural policies that recognise differences, champion diversity and promote cultural freedoms, so that all people can choose to speak their language, practice their religion, and participate in shaping their culture so that all people can choose to be who they are.

As we can see from the above accounts the reports have tried to capture the many aspects and choices that people have or do not have that go in to the making of development of a human being. Various indices have been developed over the time to be able to present a contrasting picture as well as to capture many aspects of human development. Thus, it seems that through these reports one can see the expanding ambit of development that addresses the changing processes, situations and choices that people have. You must be wondering if human development is all-inclusive than what it is all about. Let us try and understand what "human development" is in our next section.

10.5 What is Human Development?

The notion of human development essentially addresses the human in development — all those elements which make a person human not only in terms of what she /he needs for basic survival such as food, clothing or shelter, health, etc, but a sense of dignity, what Adam Smith called the ability to mix with others without being ashamed to appear in public (HDR 1990: 10). It is the process of enlarging people's choices. The human development approach looks at income as a means, not as an end, to people's development, in contrast with the earlier growth models. It is felt that there is no automatic link between income growth and human progress. HDR, 1990 has the following to say: "The term human development here denotes both the process of widening people's choices and the level of their achieved well-being. It also helps in distinguishing, clearly, between two sides of human development. One is the formation of human capabilities, such as improved health or knowledge; the other is the use that people make of their acquired capabilities. In contrast with earlier theories and models, the human development approach broadens the concept to not only include issues such as basic needs and income, but also people's choices — on what people should have to be able to ensure their own livelihood without ending up as mere beneficiaries. "Human development is, moreover, concerned not only with basic need satisfaction but also with human development as a participatory dynamic process. It applies equally to less developed and highly developed nations" (Ibid).

Box 10.1: Human Development Defined

Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices. In principle, these choices can be defined as infinite and change over time. But at all levels of development, the three essential ones are for people to lead a long and

healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for decent standard of living. If these essentials are not available, many other opportunities remain inaccessible.

But human development does not end there. Additional choices highly valued by many people, range from political, economic and social freedom to opportunities for being creative and productive, and enjoying personal self-respect and guaranteed human rights.

Human development has two sides. The formation of capabilities – such as improved health, knowledge and skills; and the use people make of their acquired capabilities – for leisure, productive purposes or being active in cultural, social and political affairs. If the scales of human development do not finely balance between the two sides, considerable human frustrations may result.

According to this concept of human development, income is clearly only one of the options that people would like to have, albeit an important one. But it is not the sum total of their lives. Development must, therefore, be more than just the expansion of income and wealth. Its focus must be people.

(Source: *Human Development Report*, 1990)

10.6 Measuring Human Development

The choices people make, as the development reports have pointed out, is a process which is best understood in the specific contexts of their time and space, for choices change and are specific to cultures. Some choices may seem irrational. Over the years various human development reports have laid stress on different aspects of these choices. The question that comes to mind is if the choices are so wide and specific to cultures, is it possible to measure them and is it possible to make comparisons. The report of 1990 does realise the problem of presenting a complex picture of all the choices people make. It says “Too many indicators would produce a perplexing picture – perhaps distracting policy makers from the main trends. The crucial issue therefore is of emphasis” (Ibid).

In the initial reports, three indicators were considered most important and comparative figures were provided. The three elements, which were considered essential to human life, are **longevity, knowledge and a decent living standard**. There is no standard mechanism for measuring human development indicators. For example, longevity can be calculated by longevity at birth as an indicator. For the second indicator, knowledge, literacy figures are the main indicators, though there are debates about what kind of literacy, the quality of it and so on. But literacy is still the beginning and therefore a good indicator. As for the third element, decent living, it is very difficult to look for indicators. It requires data on access to land, credit, income and other resources. Except for income, data on other indicators is rarely available. And even the indicator of income does not always tell the whole story, especially since incomes are mostly in the national average. However, by actually looking at purchasing power of income helps in assessing the buying power of the money that people have.

One of the major problems of calculating indicators is that they are shown as a national average. The average does not reveal the wide disparities that may exist in society. For instance, there are wide disparities between male and female literacy as well as between the rich and the poor. These disparities exist for other indicators as well – health, longevity and income. There have been attempts to adjust these disparities. If inequality is seen as reducing the value of average achievement, as given by unweighted average mean that can be adjusted by the use of inequality measures. Such distributional corrections can make a significant difference to an evaluation of a country 's performance.

When it comes to other equally essential elements of human well-beings such as cultural freedom, security, human interactions, it becomes very difficult to conceptualise these categories and equally difficult to measure them (see Box 10.2).

Box 10.2: Measuring Cultural Liberty

To date, cultural statistics have dealt with the production and consumption of “cultural goods” – films, books and theatre. But can cultural liberty and its opposites – living mode exclusion and social, economic and political exclusion along ethnic, linguistic, or religious lines be measured?

Measuring living mode exclusion

Language, religion, history, clothing, customs, ceremonies, cuisine and values among other things, interact to define cultural identity, all of these ways to understand culture provide ways to exclude cultural identities such as language policies, treatment of different religions, school curricula and attitudes within society. Information can be collected on these issues but rarely is. Beyond the simple data availability problems are the analytical challenges of converting information in to statistically useful numbers. One possible approach is qualitative assessment expert assessment of the severity of the situation – on issues that are important to many cultural identities, such as language and religion.

Measuring participation exclusion

Measurement of social, economic, and to lesser extent political exclusions along ethnic, linguistic and religious lines is more advanced. Often lacking, however, is a breakdown by culturally identified groups. Some data collection includes such questions on religion, ethnic and linguistic identity and some post-censal surveys focus specifically on these cultural groups, but they could be more comprehensive and comparable. An important issue is allowing people to register multiple identities. Political exclusion is more difficult to capture. There are some hard data, such as representation in parliament and voter participation. But other issues, such as freedom of expression movement and organisation, are more difficult to capture and require qualitative approach.

Next steps

More work can be done at the country level, where understanding of the issue may be greater. This could involve improved data monitoring and collection such as including questions on identities in survey questionnaires and post-censal surveys targeted at specific cultural groups as well as qualitative assessments.

At the international level leadership by an international statistical body could bring sharper focus to what is a formidable and urgent task. For example, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics has already done much work in measuring culture. The coordinating institution could advocate for collection of information, such as the inclusion of national surveys of question on cultural identity, and could be the lead depository for these data. In more qualitative areas of cultural and political exclusions enormous benefits could accrue from having an international institution take the lead on comprehensive approaches to these complex issues at the country level.

No index of cultural liberty

There are demands not only to produce statistics on issues of culture but also to go farther and produce a cultural liberty index. A lesson of the human development index and other composite indicators is that measures need not be grounded in a conceptual framework and must be policy relevant as well as measurable and comparable.

Conceptual and methodological challenges are enormous for capturing such an issues as discriminatory policy and social practice and the extent of historical neglect that cultural groups face.

The problem is more than empirical. Unlike some other aspects of human development, such as health and education, where many countries face common challenges, the challenges in dealing with cultural exclusion are more diverse. It will never be fully possible to compare homogenous Japan with diverse India, or how Europe is dealing with issues posed by immigration with how Latin America is meeting the demands of indigenous people for land self rule

(Source: *Human Development Report*, 2004)

10.7 Critical Evaluation of Human Development Approach

As we mentioned earlier the human development covers many dimensions of well being but for the purpose of focus and measurability and comparability the Human Development Report team had focused on three important elements of human development; life expectancy or longevity, access to knowledge or literacy and standard of living which is largely measured in terms of income levels with its purchasing power.

The Human Development Index (HDI) focuses on the three above mentioned indicators. The reports aver, however that “Although the HDI is a useful concept, it is important to remember that the concept of human development is much broader and more complex than any summary measure can capture even when supplemented by other indices. The HDI is not a comprehensive measure. It does not include important aspects of human development notably the ability to participate in the decisions that affect one’s life and to enjoy the respect of others in the community” (*Human Development Report 2004*: 128) The report adds that a person can be wealthy, educated and healthy but not participating in the development processes that add to his/her well-being. It is omissions like these, which have been highlighted in the early reports on human development. In 1991, prompted by these omissions, there was an attempt to come up with a “Human Freedom Index” and a “Political Freedom Index” in 1992. These measures were popular but they were soon abandoned, which is a testament to the fact that such complex phenomena are very difficult to quantify. Though they have been difficult to capture as human development index, many reports have attempted not to undermine the issue by devoting several reports on aspects such as democracy, political freedom, multiculturalism, etc. The HDI measures average achievements in a country but does not capture the differences in each category. Two countries with the same average literacy level may have disparities between men and women. The Gender Related Development Index (GDI) introduced in *Human Development Report, 1995* measures achievements in the same dimensions using the same indicators as the HDI but captures inequalities in achievement between men and women. It is simply that the HDI is adjusted downwards for gender inequality. The greater the gender disparity in basic human development, the lower is a country’s GDI relative to its HDI. The countries with worst disparities between their GDI and HDI values are Saudi Arabia, Oman, Pakistan, Yemen and India.

Similarly, having a high GDP index does not necessarily rank you high on HDI index as well-being is not just about incomes alone. Some countries have done a lot to distribute their incomes much more equitable and have strived to provide health facilities and education. Thus, a country like Bolivia, with a much lower GDP per capita than Guatemala has achieved a higher HDI because it has done more to translate that income into human development.

Reflection and Action 10.2

As you might have noticed in the HDI ranking India is way below some of the other countries who have much less GDP index. It also has a very low GDI (Gender Development Index)

- 1) Make a list of countries in south Asia who have less GDP than India but who rank higher than India in HDI.
- 2) What do you think are the main reasons for huge gender disparity in India?
- 3) Do you think elements of development such as political participation and freedom are more or as important as life expectancy and education. Give reasons for your answer.

The human development report has been a welcome change and major critique of mainstream welfare economic and growth oriented measures of economic development, and to that extent it has brought about a humane orientation to economics. The human development approach is not however without some lacunae. We address some of these shortcomings in this section and critically evaluate the reports. Our vantage point of evaluation is largely from a sociological and social perspective. A detailed analysis has been done of this approach from economics point of view, to which we refer in a cursory way.

Underlying the Human Development Reports are the contributions of Amartya Sen and his close associate Mahbub-ul-Huq. The report was influenced greatly by concepts such as "capabilities", which was introduced in to the vocabulary of economics by Sen. He introduced the term capabilities to understand the multi-dimensional aspect of well-being in terms of choices people make for their capabilities. The concept of capability or choices attempt to identify what those choices may be. Included in some basic and valid choices are such elements as empowerment, equity, sustainability, membership in a community or group(s) and security. Various attempts were made to capture these elements in the series of reports, which were published over the years. The HDI as a measure of relative achievements of various countries remains the chief indicator of development. And as some critics like Apthorpe (1997) have pointed out that this measure only captures such items as longevity, education and income, which only captures human capital and not choices that people make. Another point which was raised by Apthorpe, who is an influential anthropological voice in development studies, is that the global human development report is dominated by economists and therefore remains an economist dominated world though their plea has been to take it away from pure economics to social dimensions. According to Apthorpe the "human" in the development report gives a good feeling, but it can divert attention from serious social and political analysis and hence from real understanding of human life. The social aggregates used are demographic trends and sectoral and never about social institutions, social structures or social groups own categories.

Besides these, the universalising and global trends and categories do not reflect the differentiations within, and many times some of these categories are problematic. For instance when we talk of freedom, we have to realise that what might be considered freedom by one set of people might be considered an oppression by others. For example, wearing a veil might be liberating for some women who want to escape from over-sexualised treatment of women in the West. In the "Human right" debates there have been many such voices, which have pointed out to this kind of universalisation and how they do not necessarily represent communities and people's categories. One of the charges leveled against the human categories in the human development approach is that they stem from a liberal position, which talks about individual aspirations and rights and choices and not about deeper levels of analysis.

There have been criticisms that the categories and terms do not have epistemological groundings. Ananya Mukherjee Reed (2004) in her critique of the Human Development Report of 2004 and its recommendations of multiculturalism, points out that while the report acknowledges the various symptoms of the problematic of multiculturalism, it refuses to acknowledge the salience of the underlying structures that generate those symptoms. Reed further adds: "Is anything really lost in speaking of issues and yet not of the phenomena that these issues comprise as a totality? I believe so. As Marilyn Frye, the feminist philosopher explains with her metaphor of the birdcage, if one looks at a cage one wire at a time, then it is not quite clear how it might have the power to imprison a living being. If however, one examines the cage in its entirety, focusing on the specific pattern, which connects the wires to make possible the imprisonment, then a different picture emerges. The problem is not simply one of omission. It gives the mistaken impression that the cage is

only a simple sum of the wires; and that liberty can be won by removing one wire at a time. She also says that this kind of understanding comes essential from a distributive paradigm of justice". She quotes Young to support her argument as thus: "The focus on distribution ignores and tends to obscure the underlying structural/institutional context within which those distributions take place; this context includes any structures or practices, the rules and norms which guide them, and the language and symbols that mediate social interactions within them, in institutions of state, family and civil society, as well as the workplace (Makhajee Reed 2004)". This emphasis on patterns of distribution is typical of liberal models of justice, which as Marx pointed "frequently presuppose institutions of private property, wage labor, and credit, when these might come into question for a more critical conception of justice". Indeed, the precise goal of policy approaches premised on the liberal distributive model is to accommodate political demands within existing structures of property rights, gender relations, divisions of labour and cultural norms" (source: <http://www.networkideas.org/>).

10.8 Conclusions

There is no doubt that the human development approach, with its attempts to bring about social dimensions of development, is an improvement over the growth oriented, top-down approaches and models of development which really try to understand that human beings are the ends in an effort to bring about development. In our first few sections of this unit we have tried to see how this change was brought about through a series of debates and new approaches. This unit has been essentially devoted to understanding the human development. Since *Human Development Reports* of UNDP are a basic crux of this approach, we have referred to the series of reports extensively. We tried to follow the definitions and the problematics involved in trying to measure difficult and complex phenomena such as liberty, freedom, cultural rights etc. While the efforts have been nobler on the part of the team which put together the various reports, the endeavour has largely been one of bringing a humane perspective to economics and not a serious epistemological critique of present practices of economics; this aspect has been brought out in our section on evaluation of these reports.

10.9 Further Reading

Human Development Report 1990. Oxford University Press: New Delhi

Human Development Report 2004. Oxford University Press: New Delhi

Haq, Mahbub ul 1998. *Reflections on Human Development*. Oxford University Press: New Delhi

Unit 11

Gender Perspective on Development

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Learning Objectives

In this unit you will critically analyse and understand:

- the importance of gender perspective in development;
- gender perspectives and development planning in India; and
- policies and strategies which address gender issues.

11.1 Introduction

This unit on gender perspectives on development, in a way, is a continuation of our previous unit, which is on social and human development. The human development approach goes beyond growth as an indicator of development, to assessing other more important indicators, which directly address the issue of well-being and empowerment. It asks the question who gets what from the development process. This unit too addresses the same question with reference to women.

Though women constitute nearly half of the total human population their share in the fruits of development is abysmally low. This low status has raised the issue of what development ought to be. Gender perspective, it is felt, has to be an integral part of any development process. Women have always been a part of the survival of any community.

Not only have they taken up the primary responsibility of rearing the young and integrating them into the ways of society they have also worked towards the fulfilment of the everyday needs of the family and the community. Women cook, clean, wash, gather food and fuel, till land, work in offices as labour, etc. However, only some of their work is acknowledged. This has been the root problem of looking at women as separate entities and not as an integral part of the development process. With increasing debates on these women's issues there has been an acknowledgement for the need to add a gender perspective into the development discourse. In this unit we will address issues related to this, we will also look at the Indian scenario and examine various planning initiatives to see how far we have reached in making women an integral part of development discourse. Before we go on to do that we will first try and understand what we mean by the term gender.

11.2 The Concept of Gender

When we use the terms male and female, we commonly refer to the anatomical differences between these two sexes. When we use the word gender, however, we are going beyond anatomical or biological differences between male and female to their socially constituted roles and status. For example when one uses the word femininity the social expectations of feminine qualities may be nurturing, caring, delicate, irrational intuitive, submissive, non aggressive, etc. When a woman does not meet these social expectations of feminine attributes, she may be considered not female enough or transgressing her role either as daughter, mother, sister, all of which have some role expectations. These roles as you might be aware are socially conditioned and arise of structures of power. In a patriarchal set up the entire system is geared towards keeping women at a lower level. The tilt of power and status in such institutional differentiation clearly favours the male, with the establishment of asymmetric relationships of dominance. However, despite such divisions being almost universal, nuances and impacts of gender varies significantly across situations and contexts. As a variable of social stratification, gender has to be analysed in association with other variables like class, race, ethnicity and caste.

Gender relations contribute to the social meaning of female and male and thus depend on the considerations of appropriate behaviour and activity for women and men. The focus of gender in practice is on social roles and the nature of interaction between women and men. The valid understanding then is that gender relations are also social relations and not biological or natural. When accessing development with reference to women we are in essence trying to understand this gender aspect of women.

Having understood the term gender let us now look at how women's issue came up in development discourse. Gender is one of key terms for social analysis. It is important to understand the social, economic, political and cultural forces that determine how men and women participate in and benefit from the development process.

Box 11.1: Simone de Beauvoir (1949) on "Second Sex"

In her book *Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir, a French writer and feminist wrote: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological or economic state determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilisation as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as another".

Like all other social relations, gender relationships are also affected by and have an effect on, how societies and economies change over time (Pearson, 1992). The processes of socialisation and social relations of production have a distinct impact on the location of women's lives across countries and regions.

11.3 Women, Gender and Development

Much of the formative intersection between the ideas of feminism and women in development took place during the context of the U.N. "Decade of Women" -1976-85. "Equality, Development and Peace" was the slogan that was proposed at the International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City in 1975. Equality was seen as an issue that came from industrialised West, peace from the Eastern Bloc and development as a key issue that concerned Third World women. What exactly constituted key women's issue was constantly being debated and it was eventually realised that women's issue should not be kept as a separate section (see Box 11.2 for more details).

Box 11.2: Emerging issues in U.N. Decade of Women-1976-85

Women were proposing new visions of development towards which several international meetings in the late 1970s and 1980s made public declaration about feminist visions of development from a global perspective. Following are some of the major international meetings with their vision and plan:

Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development (APCWD), 1979, held in Bangkok was sponsored by UN. "It proposed one of the first global definitions of feminism as an ideology with two long term goals:(1) The achievement of women's equality, dignity and freedom of choice through women's power to control their own lives within and outside the home and (2) the removal of all forms of inequity and oppression through the creation of a more just, social and economic order nationally and internationally"(cf Tinker 1990: 77). One of the paramount goals of feminist vision of development was empowerment of women.

Workshop on "Developing Strategies for the Future: Feminist Perspectives", 1980, held in Stony Point, New York. It approached development as political process and stated dissatisfaction with limited definition of development, which confined itself to economic indices such as GDP. It asked for integrationist approach and empowerment of women.

"Dakar Declaration on Another Development with Women", 1982, was held in Senegal. The declaration "believed that the most fundamental and underlying principle of Another Development should be that of structural transformation, a notion which challenges the economic, political and cultural forms of domination, at the national, international and household level" (Ibid: 79).

Nairobi End of the U.N. Decade World Conference, 1985: A Third World Women's Group was formed to define the issues of development from the "vantage point of women"- DAWN(Development Alternatives With Women for a New Era). It called for cultural diversity of women's movement and issues but a structural unity in trying to understand subordination. It emphasized the active involvement of women in structural transformation and a deep commitment to self-reliance, which rests on indigenous culture rather than on Western models.

Source: Tinker 1999.

It is this continuous realisation of women's integral role in development process that brought in concepts such as "Women in Development". The Women in Development (WID) approach promotes women's integration in development efforts by focusing on women, looking at how the process of development has made an impact on the position of women in society. The study of women in development focus upon development and the economics of development i.e., the distribution economic benefits rather than its growth singularly. The key question in such contexts is essentially "who gets what". Indicators of human development show that women have an unequal share in the processes of development and they are often endowed with negative development merits. When resources are stretched, then, it is women, the most marginalized in the first place, who suffer first and most. Women have the smallest share of the resources pie of the world; when its pie shrinks women's losses are greatest". (Seager and Olson 1986). The World Bank's early Women in Development programme tended to treat women as a special target group of beneficiaries in the various projects and programmes. However "a major criticism of the Women in Development approach is that it treats women as beneficiaries. It starts from the premise that women have been excluded from development. But women's time, energy, work and skills are involved in every aspect of the development process; it is the inequality of gender relations and the continuing subordination of women that ensure that women's contribution is not matched by recognition and remuneration in social, political and economic terms" (Pearson 1992).

The problem with the women in development approach is that it targets women in order to make them a part of mainstream development while ignoring the fact that women are already an intrinsic part of the development process. Women are always there. The understanding of women's 'free labour' is that there is no need to compensate it, and subsequently there is no cost in terms of resources allocated. The 'real' picture, however, is that female domestic labour provides a critical and necessary support enabling the male workforce and society to function. Women's role in society is a combination of productive and reproductive role. Women's productive role includes all tasks that enhance the income and economy of the household and the community, e.g. crop and livestock production, handicrafts production, marketing and wage employment.

Reproductive activities are those carried out to reproduce and care for the household and community, including the activities involved in fuel and water collection, food preparation, child care, education, health care and home maintenance. These activities tend to be viewed as non-economic, generally carrying no monetary compensation and are usually out of the budgets of the national income accounts. Women's role in society in reality is life-sustaining. According to Sen and Crown (1988), "in every society women's daily invisible efforts to feed, clothe and nurture their families are the actions that sustain their communities". This reality of social reproduction, derives from a sexual division of labour that is tied to gender division and male dominance.

While sex is a physical distinction, gender is social and cultural. Moghadam (1994) finds that the division of labour between men and women is a matter of gender roles and not sex roles - determined by culture rather than by sex and the key to understanding the division of labour patterns is in the culture rather than in human physiology or anatomy. Moreover, culture is not a constant but a variable with the extent of its impact depending on factors like the depth and scope of development, state policy, the class and social structure.

While a woman in development refers to the current situation of people, it tends to demarcate "women" as a separate practice area. The frame of "Women in Development" (WID) has been supplanted by that of "Gender and Development" (GAD), since the late 1980s. The latter broadens the scope of intervention to include systemic relations of inequality involving the relations between both men and women, together with a critical look at the entire development perspective, process and the underlying assumptions. The gender and development approach to policy framework includes modalities of reflecting ways in which men and women relations constrain or advance efforts to boost growth. The gender empowerment approach as defined by the European Commission (1993) identifies "women's participation in decision-making. It seeks to increase self-reliance and self-confidence so that they will become more active players in society." Gender empowerment redresses the imbalance in the status of women through affirmative action to improve the quality of women's lives.

Reflection and Action 11.1

Women, as we have been mentioning, have always worked for the survival and needs of a family and the larger community and society. Yet they are paid wages or salaries for only some of the work that they are engaged in. Given this state of affairs attempt the following activities:

- 1) Make a list of work that women do for which they are not paid any wages.
- 2) To make this list we encourage you also to a) actively observe the women who do this work, in your everyday settings, and b) talk to them about how they feel about their work.
- 3) Based on this observations and your talk with the women, write a report on women's work and share it with your fellow students or coordinator/teacher.

11.4 Gender and the Constitution: Women in India

There is growing criticism against the top-down approach and growth oriented development perspectives, as they fail to consider women as an integral part of development and as they continue to add to the growing inequalities between the haves and have-nots, women being the have-nots. Let us see in what way India has been addressing women and development. To get a sense of where we are, we need to understand where the foundations are and for that we will first examine the constitutional guarantees and in our next section the planning and policy issues with regards to women.

The underlying principles of the gender role presumed by the Indian State are embodied in the Indian Constitution, which is foremost among the basic documents which declare the intention of the Indian State. The primary imperative for women's equality is rooted in Part III (Fundamental Rights) of the Constitution. The sub article of Article 15 dealing with the Right to Equality lays down:

"The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them."

Further, the Constitution in the same article at sub-article (3) lays down: "Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children".

The Constitution thus gives equal status to women as citizens, while also taking into consideration some special disabilities which the State may come forward to rectify through affirmative action. Para IV of the Constitution of India, dealing with the "Directive Principles of State Policy" has references to the principles to be taken into account by the State wherein concern for women is exhibited (Desai 1994). Articles 39, 42 and 44 refer to certain principles which may not be enforceable in the courts of law, but provide guidance to the state treating women as equal citizens. However certain other sections of the Constitution like the Right to Freedom of Religion, as embodied in Articles 25 to 28, as interpreted by the State legislated in the form of personal laws, fundamentally deny equality to women in almost all basic facets of her life. They deny equality in personal, economic, sexual, social, educational, cultural and even with regard to her right to body as well as with regard to hold certain beliefs, values and norms and codes of personal conduct (Ibid).

Further, the economic assumption, embodied in the Constitution, as formulated in the Articles 23 and 24 in the Fundamental Rights, dealing with Right against Exploitation, does not consider the day-to-day immense and incessant appropriation of surplus labour of women, witnessed in every family, as exploitation, not to mention how women invariably are paid less for their work than men. Right to freedom of religion and right against exploitation are fundamentally discriminatory against women and while not agreeing to designate women's labour at home as exploitation, it has been supportive of gender bias of the state. The state permission to personal religious laws, permits the world on religious prescriptions of varied discriminately norms and practices towards women. Personal laws orient towards the domestic 'private' space. The Constitution mostly addresses itself to the 'public sphere' personal laws, having implications on the private life, essentially family life has holistic implications for shaping women's status, position, rights and obligations in society. The relegation of women in the private sphere through personal laws, has transformed the entire issue of gender justice and development into individualised and limited pathologies to be dealt with by specialised bodies.

The manner in which social policies discriminate against women and prescribe certain tasks and behaviour of development reveal the essence and values that are the guiding factors of the state. The understanding of what women's consciousness should be is conjured with the state's definition of femininity and this definition of femininity is not marginal but absolutely central to the purposes of welfarism (Elizabeth 1989).

Reflection and Action 11.2

We have a series of mandates and provisions that have been incorporated in our constitution that attempt to raise the social status of women in India, as well as number of legislations which have been enacted.

In what way do you think these constitutional provisions and enactments have helped to raise women's status in India? Illustrate your answer with an example from your own life's experience.

11.5 Development Planning in India

Early development planning in India, since the 1950s identified social welfare services as the only category which tackled problems of women, among the other target groups. Such an approach was the outcome of the understanding of women as a category for whom special (and separate) programs, services, safeguards, etc. were put in place. Social Welfare Services targeted to reach out to vulnerable groups divided into several categories.

The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), set up in 1953, was confronted with the arduous problem of the lack of any governmental machinery and for welfare related activities it undertook the task of promoting welfare through voluntary organisations. It also encouraged women's organisations to take up such activities in partnership with government. As part of this strategy women's organisations were promoted, especially those working with the grassroots. *Mahila Mandals* were promoted as 'delivery mechanisms' for essential services like education, health, especially for maternal and child health, both by the CSWB and the Community Development Programme through the first and the second Five-Year Plans. According to Vina Mazumdar, this combination of institution building and woman resource development was also expected to prepare women to participate in the political and developmental processes. Thus though the language of these strategies reflected contemporary meaning of 'welfare', there was a conceptual thrust (even though inadequately articulated) towards actively involving and stimulating the participation of women's organisations in the process of change. However, increasing bureaucratic control, top-down designing and streamlining of programmes and declining resource support to organisational and institutional development from below both reflected and contributed to the low priority and non-serious approach to basic issues in promotion of gender equality.

The Third, Fourth and the Fifth Five-Year Plans saw a decline in support to strategies of organisation building and human resource development. The Report of the National Committee on Women's Education (1958-59) saw some priority being accorded to Women's Education. From the period of the Third Plan there was a distinct rise in the priority according to the issue of population control. Directives from the Planning Commission, from the 4th Plan onwards, failed to integrate Family Planning with Maternal and Child Health (MCD) planning for supplementary nutrition of children and nursing and expectant mothers from poverty groups were not integrated with MCH. The Community Development Programme (1952) was another significant step in the early years of development planning. It aimed at decentralised development in the rural areas through community efforts. In the sections to follow let us look at various plan strategies and policies to see how and what place women had in the development process.

11.6 The CSWI's Critique and Parliamentary Mandate

In the year 1971, the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Government of India appointed a committee called Committee on the Status of women in India to study the status of women in India. The Ministry was acting on a UN request for a status of women report for International Womens' year in 1975. The Committee had two tasks: (i) to examine the constitutional, legal and administrative provisions that have a bearing on the social status of women, their education and employment and (ii) to assess the impact of these provisions.

The Committee came to the conclusion that there was an increase in the marginalisation of women in the economy and society. The CSWI report *Towards Equality* (1974) found demographic trends of declining sex ratio, disparities in the life expectancy and death rates between men and women; and the difficulties involved in women's access to literacy, education and livelihood. It was of the view that the Indian State had failed in its constitutional responsibility of gender equality. The planning process for development in agriculture, industry, fishery, livestock, etc. and other important sectors of the Indian economy, contained no acknowledgement of the millions of women involved in these sectors due to livelihood reasons. This process of marginalisation of the large majority of women in the economy, together with their neglect and devaluation by the society with the support of the state, definitely demonstrated gender bias. The increasing investment on education, health and the opening of public employment opportunities had benefited a very small section of the female population. This privileged section of women were again threatened by escalation of social practices like dowry, inequality meted out as a consequence of the personal laws, the non-enforcement of the existing laws, which sought to offer protection to women (like the labour laws or criminal laws) and lack of women's overall "visibility" in the sense of the inclusion of their needs, concerns and perspectives in the planning process.

Even though the parliamentary debate on the *Towards Equality* report sought the removal all disabilities that Indian women continue to suffer from. The declaration of National Emergency (1974-77) within a few weeks after it has been tabled in the Parliament pushed back any serious action on the CSWI recommendations.

11.7 Post-Emergency Planning of Women's Development (1977-80)

The period between 1977 and 1980 witnessed significant policy review exercises by the government. Among them were the Report of the Working Group on Employment of Women (1977-78), Report of the Working Group on Development of Village Level Organisations of Rural Women, 1977-78, Report of the National Committee on the Role and Participation of Women in Agriculture and Rural Development (1979-80). These review exercises constituted a substantive base to the conceptualising of fundamental problems and strategies for women's development in India. The Indian agenda of women's development got incorporated into the United Nations' mid-decade Programme of Action, mediated through the Non-aligned Movements, special Conference on Women and Development in Baghdad, 1979. India gained membership of the Commission on the Status of Women (1978-80) and the preparatory committee for Mid-Decade Copenhagen Conference (1980) and Programme of Action. India's contribution to the emphasis on Third World perspectives on development was acknowledged during the mid-decade conference and there was the consequent adoption of employment, health and education as a sub-theme of the decade's agenda.

Vina Mazumdar's examination of the conceptual approach enroled through these few years identified women's development needs as having multiple dimensions, cutting across economic, social and political sectors requiring explicit examination of women's situation on various sectors. She called for earmarking of a share of various sectoral allocations for women, instead of limiting it to women specific programmes or agencies. She also called for promotion of rural employment and development. Through women's own collective organisation, organisations such as SEWA, etc. which were paving the way towards such path.

The Sixth Five-Year Plan released in December, 1979, marked a new beginning as it included a separate Unit on women. Till this time, women's concerns were always subsumed under sectoral approaches in health, education, rural development, agriculture, etc. This Unit was a first attempt at a holistic planning for women. It stated that the objective of population control could not be achieved without bringing about major changes in the status of women. This Plan suggested the need for "administrative innovation" and the "collection of sex-wise distribution data on development assistance, thereby urging for better information, together with mechanisms to ensure women receiving their "due share" of government's attention and support and "equal opportunity for growth and distributive justice".

These principles of women's involvement in the planning process also sought to extend support for organisation of rural women similar to organisations of the rural poor in the effort to improve their "bargaining power and access to development assistance". However, the new Planning Commission set up in 1980, reverted women back to the social services and put on hold the outward looking strategies, approaches and perspectives developed for women. However the intervention at this stage, by the national women's organisation, made a definite impact upon the planning process. A period of partnership began between the few cells on women that had been set up within the Ministries of Labour and Employment, Social Welfare and Rural Development, and the growing women's movement and women studies scholars. Seven women's organisations got together to submit a joint memorandum in 1980, gathered support from women members of the Parliament and thereby persuaded the Planning Commission to incorporate a Unit on Women and Development in the Sixth Plan. This was a landmark achievement in India's Planning history.

11.8 The Sixth Plan Unit on Women and Development

The Unit on Women and Development acknowledged women's lesser status in society and traced it to the inadequate opportunities of "independent employment and income", and demographic trends (higher mortality, lower economic participation, literacy, sex-ratio, etc.). It defined a multipronged but inter-dependent strategy for women's development which would be dependent on the total development process. Regarding "cases of transferred assets, such as agricultural and homestead land", the redistribution policies of the government promised that "government shall endeavour to provide joint title to husband and wife". It also advocated strengthening of the grassroots women's voluntary organisations, which were envisioned "as channels for women to participate effectively in decisions that affect their lives and for promoting adequate development efforts for women at different levels". For education, special support services were to expand women's access to all types of education. The institution of a women's quota and magic figure of one-third made its first ever appearance within the TRYSEM programme. The Sixth Plan also proposed "corrective measures" in sectors where women's employment is low or on the decline.

11.9 The Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90)

The Seventh Five-Year Plan emphasized provision of gainful employment to women and youth. It reiterated strategies of organising women around socio-economic activities in order to succeed in the twin objectives of making their projects economically viable and also of adding social strength to enhance their overall status. For the first time there was use of “feminist language”, as against the predominantly patriarchal preference to confine women to an oppressive environment, in Unit 14 of the actual plan document. This period that coincided with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s gruesome assassination, was a period of change within the government. It was however, a period of optimism for women’s cause both inside and outside the government. The Government of India hosted the 2nd NAM Conference on Women and Development to offer inputs to the end of Decade UN Conference which was to be held at Nairobi. India’s approaches, both official and unofficial, at the ILO sponsored Afro-Asian Conference on Rural Women’s Organisations and Development, earned encouraging appreciation. The Department of Rural Development announced a 30% quota for women in anti-poverty programmes for rural areas. Steps were taken to initiate gender sensitisation as a mandatory part of training of rural development officials.

The new government at the centre formed a full Department of Women and Child Development, under the Ministry of Human Resources. It included the development of education, culture, sports and youth affairs among women. Pressures from the women’s movement and internal struggle within government led to the incorporation of two paragraphs on Education for Women’s Equality with the National Policy on Education. For the first time, a message appeared that together with expanding women’s access to all kinds of education, the system with all its institutions, had to shoulder a major responsibility for genuine empowerment of women, through change in the social construction of gender.

Yet another breakthrough in this Plan period was the issue of effective representation of women in Panchayati Raj institutions. Initially the CSWI’s recommendations in this regard had been shelved. Efforts were made to begin a debate on them by the Secretary, Social Welfare from January, 1985. The results took shape in two years time. Preparations for a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for Women were started under the aegis of the Department of Women and Child Development. The National Commission for Self Employed Women (NCSEW) was set up to articulate the problems, needs and aspirations of working women in this poverty sector. The NPP (1988) wanted an increase in women’s participation and presence at decision-making levels – in local self-government bodies, State Assemblies and Parliament and suggested 30% reservations at all these levels.

The NPP was heavily critiqued by the women’s movements. Finally the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments came about in 1992. They conferred constitutional status on these bodies, mandated regular elections, wider powers/resources and reserved one-third of seats for women at various levels of the local bodies. On the issue of reservation for women, the women’s movement organisations rejected suggestions of nomination to build up a critical mass as undemocratic and subversive of the constitution. They also rejected reservation in State Assemblies and Parliament. However in the case of the Panchayats and Municipalities, demand was made for achievement of a critical mass, which could throw up new leadership and new concerns from the more marginalised sections.

11.10 Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)

Part I of the Plan document mentions women only in the context of the need for population control. In Part I of the Sectoral units, mention is made of

women only in contest of women-specific programmes. The principles of a women's quota or a ear-marked share of allocations are not mentioned.

The new features in the section of women's development include a paragraph on violence against women and a two-page "Situational Analysis", which highlights the problems of higher mortality, lower education and increasing unemployment of women", the conceptual, methodological and perception biases regarding value of women's work, compounded by women's concentration in the informal sector resulting in casualisation, non-protection of labour laws and inaccessibility to credit, technology and other types of development assistance. The girl child got a paragraph for the first time, with the promise of "special programmes".

The National Commission for Women Act was passed in 1990 whereby the autonomous national commission for women was set up through an enactment act to act as a statutory ombudsperson for women, reviewing laws and policies and intervening selectively in individual cases of violation and denial of women's rights. In 1991, the National Plan of action for the Girl child set up time-bound recommendations for the survival, protection, development and participation of girl-children, with emphasis on non-discrimination and the universality and indivisibility of rights. The draft National Policy for Empowerment of Women (1996) put together policy directives for securing gender justice and gender equality and for the mainstreaming of gender considerations.

11.11 The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2000)

The Ninth Plan had important objectives for women. The approach paper of the Ninth Plan focused on the issues of empowerment of women, decentralisation and people's participation in planning and implementing strategies. For the first time in the history of planned development in India, the empowerment of women was adopted as one of the objectives in the Ninth Plan. The approach paper also declared a strategy of drawing up a women's component plan for every sector which would identify the inflow of benefit to women and carryout a gender appraisal of past performance in the sector. In the field of development, for the first time, the need for reservation of seats for women in Parliament and the state legislative assemblies were discussed. The Plan proposed to ensure 30 per cent representation of women in the public sector and provides for a larger entry for women, in the premier civil services. In the field of health, the emphasis would as usual be on reproductive health. In education, besides gender equality, plans would be initiated for free education of girls upto the college level and greater vocational training for them. To increase women's participation in the industrial development of the country, the Plan proposes to set up a "Development Bank for Women Entrepreneurs" for assisting them in the small and tiny sector. In agriculture, a greater assistance and share was called upon through rural development employment schemes. The most important resolve of the Plan was to have a special women's component in the Plan to ensure 30 per cent flow of funds to women development sectors.

Reflection and Action 11.3

- 1) How are governmental policies and plans different from civil society initiatives, like NGOs, with regards to women's issue of development?
- 2) List five government initiated efforts that have helped women's cause in India.

11.12 Policy and Planning for Women

A review of policy formulation and planning for women's development in India reflects the lack of effort in planning and policy formation for women in the

states. There is very little conceptualisation regarding women's needs and the necessary formulations required to give them a larger share of development. Only a few states of India have policies for women's development. The efforts are inadequate and do not meet the requirements. Initiatives have come mostly from the central government.

For a federal state that India is, the success of any development process is a far cry unless the state governments fully realise their responsibility to raise the status of women. Greater involvement of grassroots organisations through the political process would be one of the mechanisms for the achievement of women's empowerment. Further, for gender equality to be fully achieved, it has to be integrated in all development programmes of the country.

11.13 Conclusion

Through the various sections in this unit we learned the concept of gender and the place of women in development perspective both in a general as well as Indian context. We have seen how the gender empowerment approach identifies women's participation in decision-making as the key to success. Its goal is to increase self-reliance and self-confidence so that women become active players in society. Incorporation of gender into the development process acknowledges that women and men experience development differently according to their social position, race, class, colonial history, etc. Structures and situations are required to be addressed at multiple levels so as to ensure that women gain increased access and control over critical material and non-material resources. Further, the focus of gender based development is on gender relationship that determine the existing inequities. Measures include credit, training, skills and resources needed for productive decision-making processes and community power structure. Development of women implies their access in overcoming the underlying structural inequalities. Gender in development is the approach that seeks to redress women's status through affirmative action in improving the qualities of women's lives.

11.14 Further reading

Tim Allen and Alan Thomas (eds.) 1990. *Poverty and Development*. Oxford University Press: Oxford

Seth, Mira 2001. *Women and Development: Indian Experience*. Sage Publication: New Delhi