

Unit 10

Social and Human Development

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Learning Objectives

In this unit you will learn about the need for criticizing 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 Auguste 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