

THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

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THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

There is a general misconception that the concept of 'Development' is a recent one, and that this phenomenon was initiated only after the end of the second world-war. True, the first most renowned advocate of the idea of 'progress', which was synonymous with development' was one French Philosopher Condorcet (1743-94). But, in fact the idea of development is as old as the process of human thinking. What Darwin traced through his theory was the process of development right from the beginning of life on this planet.

Take the case of European history. What were Socrates, Plato and Aristotle aiming at, during the earliest period of Greek city states? Efforts for development were never discontinued through out the historical period, though the nature of efforts differed from time to time and country to country, according to the differing demands of the situations. Have a cursory glance at the entire canvass, from ancient Greece through ancient Rome, the middle ages, Italian Renaissance, German reformation, geographical discoveries and overseas expansion, rise of nation states in Western Europe, Scientific revolution and enlightenment, age of democratic revolutions and post revolutionary Europe, to the post 1945 Europe. During every period we come across great humanitarian thinkers whose sole object of life was "Development" - though this specific term was not in vogue. Then what inspired the founders of various religions and "Ism's"? Cheguevara and Friar have spelt out the motivation behind all revolutions-right from the Roman Revolution of 509 BC to modern coups. Original motivation of the revolutionaries was the same. With the same object in view, the advocates of democracy launched constitutional struggles in the different European countries. A surprising fact is that though monarchs in general were self-centred and anti-people, some of them took great pains to ensure that their subjects benefited by the process which we now term as 'Development'. These enlightened despots were Peter the Great, Frederick the Great and Charles the Great (Charlesmagne).

In Brief, the term development might have gained or given currency after June 1945, but the under lying idea is as old as life itself.

The difficulty with western thinking is that it is always compartmentalized, fragmentary. Ours is always integrated, holistic. They feel that solutions to economic problems can be found through the study of economics, to political problems through the study of political science and so on. This is lopsided thinking. Without taking simultaneously into consideration the various non-economic factors, it is impossible to have correct diagnoses of any economic malady and to think of the appropriate remedial measures. This holds good about all other fields- whether political or social or cultural. The importance of non-economic factors in the consideration of economic problems cannot be minimized. For example, L.T. Hobhouse has the following remark about. "Social factor".

Take away the whole social factor and we have got Robinson Crusoe, with his salvage from wreck and his acquired knowledge, but the naked salvage living on roots, berries and vermin'. While considering human welfare, the non-economic materialistic factors cannot be ignored. For example geographical position of this country, it's climate, rivers, mountains, natural harbours, peace and security, or natural resources of the country such as land, water, forests, mineral resources, agricultural potentialities, (general development in other countries), etc.,

Thus non-economic materialistic factors not amenable to money measurement have also a role to play in this respect.

But that is not all. In his 'open secret of economic growth' (1957) David Macrod Wright observed:

"The fundamental factors making for economic growth are

non-economic and non materialistic in character. It is the spirit itself that builds the body".

It is necessary to take into consideration the drastic differences between the two approaches, the Western and the Hindu.

WESTERN

compartmentalized thinking

Man - a mere material being

Subservience to Artha-Kama

Society , a club if self-centred individuals

Happiness for oneself

Acquisitiveness

Profit-motive

Consumerism

Exploitation

Rights-Oriented consciousness of others duties

Contrived scarcities

HINDU

Integrated thinking

Man-a physical, mental, intellectual-spiritual being

Drive towards
Purushartha
chathushtayam

Society , a body with all individuals therein as its limbs.

Happiness for all

'Aparigraha'
(Non-possession)

Service motive

Restrained consumption

'Antyodaya'

Duty-oriented
consciousness of
others rights

Abundance of production

* Monopoly capitalism through various device

Economic theories centred round wage-employment

An ever-increasing army of the proletariat

Ever widening disparities

The rape of Nature

Constant conflict between individual, the society and the Nature

Free competition without manipulated markets

Economic theories centred round self-employment

The ever increasing sector of Vishva karma
(Self-employment)

Movement towards equitability and equality with quality

The milking of Mother Nature

The complete harmony between an individual, society and nature.

*For example, agents, brands, copyrights, trade names, licences, quotas, protective tariff, cartels, pools, trusts, holding companies, or intercorporate boards of directors, intercorporate investments, etc.,

These are entirely different paradigms. Every society is free to choose its own mode on 'Take all, or Leave all' basis.

The United nations took cognisance of this problem first in its 1951 report dealing with the problems of development of the under-developed countries. It was a major landmark in this respect. Dr.D.R.Gadgil was associated with the preparation of that UN Report.

Dr. Gadgil had correct perception of the problem, Unfortunately, the Western thinking on the subject became wayward, and Pandit Nehru, as usual, came under the influence of the West. Dr.Gadgil

could not persuade Pt.Nehru to his line of thinking which was of the earth, earthly.

Development Economics has appropriated many concepts from "Growth Theories" Unfortunately, our economists are blindly following the western patterns. They are capable of working out growth theories suited to our conditions. But they stubbornly refuse to conduct self-thinking. They are so enamoured of western theorists that if they get disillusioned by one theory, they will, instead of using their own intellect, rush in search of some other western theory which they can catch hold of. They may accept that Marx as well as Adam Smith, J.S.Mill, Richards and Marthus have become outdated. They may be sceptic about the relevance of Alfred Marshall, Wicksell, Gunnar Myrdal and Keynes, to the present day conditions. But they will refuse to conduct their own independent thinking. Instead they will feel homely with the five stages of Economic Growth enumerated by Prof.Rastow and get busy in discussing whether we have reached his third, take off stage' so as to pass over to his fourth 'Drive to Maturity', leading to the stage of high mass consumption.

We are following Western models of growth, while Westerners themselves are progressively realising their futility. For example the last year's UN. Report on Human Development frankly states that what they have achieved so far was jobless growth', 'ruthless growth, violent (peaceless) growth' and 'futureless growth'.

But immediately after the Report was published, the chairman of the U.N.D.P under whose guidance the Report was prepared, was asked to quit his post, and the Report published this year does not touch this subject with a pair of ton.

But this ostrich-like attitude has only highlighted the failure of their growth models. What particular factors have been responsible for their failure?

Their object is material prosperity of a few, not happiness for



all Profit-maximization of fewer and fewer persons. Naturally, their parameters are purely materialistic G.D.P., G.N.P, national wealth, national income, per capita income, balance of payment position etc. They are least concerned about the problems like inflation or unemployment.

Is this purely materialistic concept adequate? Can it ensure happiness for even the few who are its clients ? Happiness of an individual includes happiness at all levels, physical, mental ,intellectual and spiritual. Material Prosperity may lead to physical happiness- though this is also doubtful. The mental, the intellectual, the spiritual are beyond its jurisdiction. So ,”development “for what material prosperity of a few at the cost of 80% people in the world . Even from purely materialistic pint of view, this term has become fraudulent after the arrangement of GATT negotiations, like hegemonism parading under the banner of globalisation.

In the first phase, why this lopsided concept has been accepted as “development”? The excuse given is the non physical aspects of human happiness are not amenable to measurement by monetary standards. This is putting the cart before the house. The indices that are being used in the context of material prosperity may not be useful in this context. But there can be different methodology, and it was developed, scientifically in our country by thinkers led by Patanjali. We had a balanced and comprehensive view of human development leading to perfect human happiness.

Material prosperity (samutkarasha)coupled with spiritual elevation (nisreyas), both being the two facets of the same coin, together were termed as prabhav by Maharshi Vyasa who declared,

***Prabhavarthahi bhootanam Dharma pravachanam kritam
Yat syat prabhav samyukthah sa dharma ithi nischayaha***

‘for the material and spiritual progress of the beings, dharma was narrated. What is accompanied by the material and spiritual

progress, that indeed is Dharma.

This subject has been dealt with at length by different thinkers at different forums. Here suffice it to say that our methodology has been tried and tested and found to be perfect after the experience of centuries. Therefore, the lame excuse that whatever is not amenable to money measurement should not be included in the definition of 'development' is not tenable.

Coming to brass tacks, the term 'development' is being today used by global conspirators to promote their nefarious designs. This fraud has been conclusively exposed from the forum of Swadeshi jagaran manch. Therefore, without going into the details, let us find out what type of impact 'development' can have on the concerned countries.

Every culture has its own model. The model of development brought over from another cultural setting, or imposed by alien vested interests, can be disastrous. Ivan Illich, the famous author of 'Towards a history of needs', 'Medical nemeses', 'Tools for conviviality' and 'De-schooling Society', narrates his Mexican experience of "the development myth". He looks at what development has meant to Mexico, not from the summit where plans of development are prepared, and where implementation is reviewed, not from the statistics and theoretical indices that the bureaucracy and the technicians offer as evidence of "development" but the impact it has had on the life of the poor in the rural areas and slums erosion of means of subsistence and traditional skills, loss of self-reliance and dignity and solidarity of communities, spoliation of nature, displacement from traditional environments, unemployment, bull-dozing of nature, displacement from traditional self-reliant communities into the cash economy, cultural rootlessness, and corruption in politics. He asks whether this is development. This is the price that is being paid for a blue print of development that has no relation to the condition and goals of the communities that are described as the beneficiaries of development.

Sarcastically, he observes:

"Development is an oozy term that is currently used for housing project, for the logical sequence of thought, for the awakening of child's mind or the building of a teenager's breasts. But 'development' always connotes at least one thing; a person's ability to escape from a vague, unspeakable, undignified condition called 'sub-desarollo' or under development, invented by Harry Truman on 10 January, 1949.

Seldom has a term been accepted all around the world, like this word, on the day it was coined. It became a term to spawn irrepressible bureaucracies".

And, again,

"Development means to have started on a road that others know better, to be on the way towards a goal that others have reached, to race up a one-way street. Development means the sacrifice of environments, solidarities, traditional interpretations and customs, to ever changing expert-advice. Development promises enrichment; and for the overwhelming majority, has always meant the progressive modernization of their poverty".

In conclusion Ivan Illich says, "The time has come to recognize development itself as the malignant myth whose pursuit threatens those among whom I live in Mexico. The "crisis" in Mexico enables us to dismantle development as a goal."

That his remarks were prophetic has been proved by subsequent events.

The challenge to the South' document prepared under the guidance of Dr. Manmohan Singh, who suffered from amnesia immediately afterwards, the report of the committee appointed by European community on the impact of latest technology on the unemployment problem, the rebuff given by China and Japan to certain U.S. moves, agitation of German workers against the 'Social clause', revolt of the

French peasants demanding that their government should withdraw its signature from the agreement with USA, resentment of North American countries against NAFTA, armed rising of Mexican peasants against it, the rout in Canadian elections of a ruling party that has signed the agreement, and a letter by the newly elected prime minister to president Clinton that Canada demands renegotiation on the same agreement, the warnings Mr. Nadir, the head of the U.S consumer movement and the U.S labour leaders; the resolution of 'The other Economic Summit', Conference held at Denver on June 20-21, and the resolution passed by the G15 Conference held at Kuala Lumpur on Nov. 3-4, 1997, under the able guidance of Malaysian Prime minister Mehathir Mohammed, all these vindicate the stand taken by Illich on the concept of development.

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