

Development for What and Whom and at Whose Cost? Some Sociological Reflections on Development of Tribes in India

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Abstract

Here, at first, an attempt is made to demystify development which has several myths attached with it. Second, we will discuss about the conception and categorisation of tribes. Third, we will discuss about development for what and for whom and at whose cost? Finally, we would suggest real social development for the people living at the margins of society.

Keywords

Social Development, tribe, sustainability

Whenever two or more persons, groups or organisations start discussing about socio-economic problems, the word ‘development’ immediately creeps in for their fire-fighting solution. During elections, usually the voters, political parties and intellectuals start a discussion on development or under-development. Those in power, realising their poor performance, often argue that development is not an issue, while the opposition parties harp on development as *the* issue. The general public by and large remains almost silent and expresses its opinion in the form of casting of votes. But there are several myths about development and therefore it seems imperative to clarify what development is not, that is, to demystify development. The first myth is that development means economic growth, that is, increase in gross domestic product (GDP) and in per capita income. The GDP is the total output of goods and services by both residents and non-residents but it does not include deductions for the depreciation of physical capital or the depletion of natural resources. When GDP is divided by the total population of a country, we get the per capita GDP. This per capita GDP is considered a yardstick of the level of economic growth. But actually, it only window-dresses the gaps between different individuals and classes in a particular society. Table 1 provides a glimpse of per capita GDP in selected countries in 2001.

Table 1. Per Capita GDP in Selected Countries (2001)

Sl. No.	Country	Per capita GDP (in US \$)
1.	Nepal	1310
2.	India	2840
3.	China	4020
4.	South Africa	11290
5.	Saudi Arabia	13330
6.	Japan	25130
7.	Australia	25370
8.	USA	34320

Source: UNDP, Human Development Report 2003.

Table 1 provides a rough idea that Nepal, India and China are at the bottom of growth, South Africa and Saudi Arabia are in the middle, while Japan, Australia and US are at the top of the growth ladder. But this hides the fact that the upper class in India, Nepal and China has a higher income than lower classes. Similarly the lower classes in Japan, Australia and US have much lower income than the upper classes there. In addition, the status of lower classes in Japan, Australia and US is far better than those in India, Nepal and China. Further, from the viewpoint of the environment four objections are raised (Kandula, 2004: 265) and from the viewpoint of gender a fifth objection is raised below against such yardstick of development:

- (a) GDP includes only marketable goods and services, excluding unmarketable, unmarketed and non-marketable goods and services that contribute to human well-being; for example, medicinal plants grown for medicine or fuel wood and fodder collected for own use, peace, freedom and low crime rate, though non-marketed/marketable, contribute to human well-being;
- (b) GDP does not take into account the nature of the goods and services produced, for example, any investment made in cleaning polluted water shows increase in GDP whereas fresh and clean water is not accounted in it because it is considered as a free gift of nature;
- (c) GDP does not consider traditional methods of conservation of nature (sacred groves of tribals) as these do not involve economic transactions;
- (d) GDP may take into account the exploitation of natural resources if it yields money; for example, having 50 per cent of land under forests may not feature in the GDP of a country but cutting down these forests for marketing will show an increase in its GDP;
- (e) GDP does not take into account the household works performed by the women because it is not paid, not quantifiable and not marketable. Mother's milk and daily nurturing has no alternative and these contribute to the growth of persons as human resource for development.

That is why Anil Agrawal talked of Gross Nature Product (instead of Gross National Product) as a better measure of human and environmental well-being. Further,

economists like W.W. Rostow talked of five stages of growth in a vertical way and equated the final stage of 'take off' as the growth stage. However, development involves much more than economic growth.

The second myth is that development means 'catching up' with the western model of capitalist industrialisation which is presumed to be universal, transcending time and place. That is to say, the developing countries which are primarily agricultural economies would have to follow the path of industrialisation. This structural functionalist modernisation paradigm conceptualised development as a transition from tradition to modernity 'to be brought about at the economic level by the operations of the market and foreign investment, at the social level by the adoption, of appropriate western institutions, values and behaviour, and at the political level by the implementation of parliamentary democracy' (Marshall, 1998: 155). In India, Jawaharlal Nehru adopted a mixed model of capitalism and socialism but his 'socialistic pattern' was more oriented towards modernisation through capitalist industrialisation. He had called industries as 'modern temples'! This myth is also not true because industry is only one of the three sectors of an economy and developing countries have sufficient agricultural resources (land, water, seeds, manures) but do not have adequate technology, capital and technical manpower required for industrialisation; second, this theoretical myth suffers from over-simplification, over-optimism and Euroethnocentrism.

The third myth is that development is based on purely scientific rationality, quantifiability and measurability. That is, if something is not testable in a lab, it cannot be included in development. But various values of humanity like freedom, happiness, sacrifice, justice, equity, etc., are not quantifiable. Further, various religious rituals performed may not be rational but contribute in the well-being of the people of a society, especially in communal harmony and peace.

The fourth myth is that development means a high level of consumerism: the more the consumption, the more the development. In western countries the expenditure on consumer items is increasing day-by-day and the principle in vogue is: 'I exist because I buy'. Hence those who buy more and more, and costlier items are considered of high status. But spending on drinks or narcotics or luxuries does not lead to development.

The fifth myth is that development means big structures or things, where 'size matters', propagating 'big is the best', or 'big is beautiful', involving mass production (high quantity) and sophisticated technology. Thus big farm, big dam, big factory (with various shifts of production) are considered as signs of development. It is a kind of Nehruvian model of development. But it is not true because a small earthen dam may be more useful and cheaper to the villages, micro hydro plants more useful to the local people (without causing displacement) and small land holdings more equitable to local farmers.

The sixth myth is that more and faster development is the result of globalisation, hence the latter is inevitable. It is assumed by scholars like Thomas Friedman (*World is Flat*) and Jagdish Bhagawati that not only at the economic level but also at the level of culture, ideology and politics there has been interdependence, uniformity and integration among nations. The very concept of 'Third world development', argues Serge

Latouche in his book, *The Westernization of the World* (1998), is rooted in western ideas of technical progress and the accumulation of capital and this leads to development policies that destroy the cultures of non-western peoples. Hence Latouche maintains that the drive towards global uniformity in cultures, life styles and 'mentalities' has been responsible for endemic civil wars, ecological disasters and the national debt throughout the Third World (cited in Marshall, 1998: 156). Thus, this myth is limited to the one-sided globalisation of capital and communication, not touching the required globalisation of labour.

The seventh myth is that development is changing the upper echelons of the society who are relatively economically better off, educationally aware of written knowledge, socially superior in the hierarchy and politically conscious of their rights. Once they are more developed, the fruits of development would automatically 'trickle down' to the lower rungs of the society. In fact, neoclassical economists of the west (and several policy makers in the developing countries, including Jawaharlal Nehru) presumed that this very process would not require the intervention of State to eliminate the poverty among the lowest strata of a society. But actually this did not materialise in developing countries (including India) despite various kinds of 'trial & error' experimentation.

The eighth myth is that development means visible concrete structures like roads, buildings, electricity supply, water supply, etc. Hence, many persons (including intellectuals) identify development with 'concrete jungles' in cities. But real development does not require sky-scraping buildings, several over-bridges and eight lane national highways; and further, their mere existence in itself does not guarantee that all the people residing in cities are developed. Moreover, such highly costly schemes are not necessary for common people's development.

The ninth myth is that development is and can be done only by the government or semi governmental machinery and from the government/semi-governmental fund or international development agencies, or foreign-based multinational corporations (MNCs) or national corporate capitalists. This myth reflects a dependency syndrome. Actually, at the local level a small amount of capital generated by some individuals, groups or communities, or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or community based organisations (CBOs) or Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) may be utilised in a better way by them. Any foreign aid may appear as a soft loan at one glance but in the long run its conditionalities often prove to be the last straw on the camel's back.

The tenth myth is that the language of development needs to be 'external', usually English (a foreign language). Further, it presumes that the agency of preparation of a plan, programme, project or scheme is to be an expert (as only he can envisage it), usually from outside the place of work, who prepares an estimate in English, just as an advocate drafts a petition in English for a Hindi speaking petitioner, so that the community concerned may not understand the contents, quantity, quality and forms of the estimate. Thus it ignores and de-recognises the indigenous knowledge system and oral traditions of local communities. This idea is a stumbling block because it excludes the local people from active participation at various stages, starting from identifying the

problem, to formulation, execution, monitoring and evaluation. Actually, it often happens that the local people are not consulted (not to say anything of establishing an active dialogue with them) for the type of work, location, linkages and agency of the development schemes resulting into non utilisation of such check dams, culverts, houses, ponds, schools, and so on, by the local people for whom it was meant.

The eleventh myth is that development is immediate, that is, 'here and now', as phenomenologists like Peter L. Berger and others say. It presumes a short period and short cut way, but in reality, development is a long-term process (involving scattered ideas, systematic shape, sharing, planning, formulation, gestation, execution, adaptation, monitoring, evaluation and reshaping), which is usually defined and redefined in a particular context of time and place. Actually, there is no short cut to progress.

The twelfth myth is that for development the optimum utilisation and exploitation of natural resources is necessary and inevitable. That is, it is presumed at first that the stock of natural resources is abundant and infinite, and second, its maximum exploitation would bring maximum development. But this is not true because the stock of natural resources is not infinite, but rather is depleting and second, the over-exploitation of natural resources is leading to various negative consequences like high level of pollution of water, air, soil, climatic change, acid rain, hole in ozone layer as well as various diseases to humans, animals and plants—even the extinction of many animal and plant species.

From this discussion it is amply clear that development carries several myths generated by the western world, especially Europe and America (hence Eurocentrism), the capitalist corporate world, lobby of development aids and financing agencies and the culture of consumerism. Further, it depends to a large extent on the market forces wherein the competition between individuals, groups or organisations through the demand and supply by rational choice for maximum utility would decide the prices of commodities, the amount and quality of wages and services, through the process of monetary exchange. These myths do not take into account the non-economic factors like social and moral values, gender aspects, environmental aspects, quality of life aspects, socio-cultural aspects, time and place contexts, attitudes, perceptions and aspirations of the local community. Further, unfortunately they ignore and de-recognise the indigenous knowledge system of technology, medicine and education as well as the rich oral tradition of the local people whose contribution in the history and civilisation has been tremendous.

Tribes and Tribals: Conception and Categorisation

An important nineteenth century anthropologist Sir Henry Maine, in his classic book, *Ancient Law* identified tribalism with a pre-civilised stage of human society, and gave the term derogatory connotations to denote emotional, pre-scientific and irrational behaviour (Marshall, 1998: 674). Actually various scholars, activists and organisations have given different nomenclatures to the tribes in India, a glimpse of which is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Different Nomenclatures of Tribes in India.

Nomenclatures	Scholars/activists/organisations
Aborigines/Aboriginals	Risley, V. Elvln, Grigson, Lacey Sedewick, Martin, A.V. Thakkar, Shoobert, Tallents
Primitive Tribes	Hutton
'So-called aborigines, 'Backward Hindus'	G.S.Ghurye
'Submerged humanity'	Dr. Das
'Vanvasi'	Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS), Right wing Hindu political parties
Scheduled Tribes 'Anusuchit Janjati'	Indian constitution (Articles 342, 366) 'Govt. of India (all departments/Ministries, autonomous bodies like planning commission)
Subaltern	Subaltern historians (Ranjit Guha and others)
Adivasi or indigenous people	Political and non-political activists, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha

If we analyse the nomenclatures given in Table 2, we may put them in the following categories:

- (a) The first category of 'aborigines', 'aboriginals' or 'primitive tribes' denotes a 'sympathetic identity for differentiation', wherein the scholars (especially the western ones) point out their distinct features and want to categorise them 'from above' for a separate identity, different from the dominant majority Hindus. It is an imposition from above by others.
- (b) The second category of 'so-called aborigines', 'backward Hindus', 'submerged humanity' and 'Vanvasi' denotes a 'sympathetic identity for acculturation' or 'assimilation', pointing out the features of tribals similar to the majority of Hindus. It too, is an imposition from above by others.
- (c) The third category of 'scheduled tribes' or 'Anusuchit Janjati' denotes a 'sympathetic identity for nationalism', to modernise or mainstream them as 'others' with measures of protective discrimination like reservation of seats for legislature for tribals' political representation, reservation in jobs, economic upliftment through land re-distribution, welfare through scholarships and hostels, residential schools, books and stationary, cycles, as well as other incentives for contingencies like legal aid and medical aid, removing all kinds of discrimination at public places, and so on. This too is an imposition from above by others.
- (d) The fourth category of 'subaltern' puts them along with lowest castes, women and minorities denoting an 'empathic identity of sub-nationalism', carving out a separate autonomous space for them in the civil society without any kind of imposition from above. It is not imposed but 'relatively shared identity' by some sections of tribals and non-tribals together.

- (e) Fifth category of 'adivasi' or indigenous people correctly and comprehensively denotes a fully autonomous self-determined and historically contextualised, hence a 'self-experienced identity of sub-nationalism'. This very term signifies their originality in terms of indigeneity, historicity of tradition, relatively richer and more experiences, creativity, permanent point of reference (comparing others with them, not vice versa) and cultural diversity. Therefore, to my mind the term 'adivasi' should be accepted by one and all, including government and NGOs alike.

The Indian Constitution Order of 1950 declared 212 tribes residing in 14 States of India as scheduled tribes. But N.K. Bose assessed more than 400 tribes in the 1970s.

The next important issue related to tribals is that they are not in the same category and stage of development all over India. While tribals in the North-eastern region of India are quite well off, highly educated (higher literacy rate above 80 per cent) those in Bihar, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, MP, Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal and Andhra Pradesh lag far behind them. That is why V. Elvin categorises tribals in four categories on the basis of their development. This may be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Indian Tribes at various Stages of Development

Stage/Class	Main Features
Class-I	Purest of the pure tribal groups—they really live, their religion is alive unimpaired communal organisation, no contacts with plains and other people, old practices of axe cultivation, hunting and gathering
Class-II	Contacts with plains, individualist life, not sharing thing with fellow tribals, advanced ploughing, more complex life
Class-III	Largest population (4/5 th of total tribals), tribals in name but actually backward Hindus or Christians, adversely affected by British economic and political policies, uprooted from tribal mode of production, reduced to bonded labourers or semi-slaves, a section of them branded as 'criminal tribes' (as they could survive only by methods officially described as crimes because of loss of land/occupation and no accessibility to alternative occupation)
Class-IV	A very small number consisting of 'old aristocracy'—great Bhils and Naga chieftains, Gond Rajas, a few Binghamwar and Bhura landlords Korki noblemen, wealthy Santhal and Oraon leaders and some Mundas—they retain tribal names, clans, totems and preserve elements of tribal religion though usually adopt Hindu faith and live in modern life style. They have won the battle of cultural contacts; they have acquired 'aristocratic traditions, economic stability, affluence, outside encouragement, a certain arrogance and self-confidence', securing benefits of civilisation without cultural injury

Sources: Prepared by the author based on V. Elvin as quoted in A.R. Desai (1978).

After this classification Elvin is of the view: 'The whole aboriginal problem is how to enable the tribesmen of the first and second classes to advance direct into the fourth class without having to suffer the despair and degradation of the third' (cited in Desai, 1978: 226). On the other hand, famous sociologist G.S. Ghurye, in his book, *The Scheduled Tribes*, has divided the so-called aboriginal tribes into three classes (cited in Desai, 1978: 226):

- (a) those (like Raj Gonds and others) who have succeeded in the social struggle and are recognised as members of fairly high status within Hindu society;
- (b) the large mass that has been partially Hinduised and has come in closer contact with Hindus; and
- (c) those living on the hills with the greatest power of resistance to the alien cultures that have pressed upon their border.

Similarly, anthropologist N. K. Bose, too, remarks perceptively:

Altogether three or four different modes of production are current in India and practically all tribes, except the Jarwa and North Sentineles of the Andaman Islands, have adapted themselves in one way or another to one of these productive systems. Some have given up hunting and gathering and settled down as peasants using the plough or as lowly artisans. Others continue to rely on their ancient system of shifting cultivation and gathering in marginal areas where this is possible. A third section has been practically transformed into labourers working in plantations, mines and factories where they are usually employed in unskilled jobs. (Bose, 1982: v)

When we look at the Tharus of Champaran (north Bihar), we find them well settled in agriculture, though they have lost most of their original lands to the landlords or moneylenders. Second, they are now Hinduised to a large extent in terms of worship, social rituals at birth, marriage and death, life-styles (women using Vermilion in the parting of their hair and wearing sarees), or naming, etc. But their social status is at the bottom of the social hierarchy of Hindus, though in certain ways better than scheduled castes (dalits). Their literacy rate is one third only. Though, Tharus are the largest tribe in terms of number in Bihar (estimated to be about 1.75 to 2 lakhs. The District administration of West Champaran estimates it about 1.56 lakhs in West Champaran alone), since Tharus were notified as a scheduled tribe only in 2003, hence they could not be enumerated separately in 2001 census. Yet their socio-economic position is not up to the mark. As far as socio-economic stratification of the Tharus is concerned, it seems to me that it would not be just and viable to classify them into rich and poor, since a very insignificant number could be said to be living comfortably. Rather it would be useful to stratify them into three strata on the basis of the 'level of poverty':

- (a) Ultra-poor or poorest of the poor (landless labourers).
- (b) *The poor* (marginal farmers).
- (c) *Not-so-poor* (rising stratum of the small farmers, petty shopkeepers, government or private servicemen).

How these three strata of Tharus inter-relate with ‘others’ (especially Hindus) and in what contexts, may be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Stratification of Tharus and Their Relationship with Others in Various Contexts

Strata	Relationship with others	Contexts (Arena)
Ultra-poor	Absolute dependence	Social, economic and political arena
The poor	Partial dependence	Economic and political arena
Not-so-poor	Interdependence	Economic arena

Source: Prepared by the author.

From the Table 4, it is crystal clear that the position of the poorest of the poor (who are usually landless labourers) is pathetic because they are dependent on others in almost all arenas of life, hence they suffer from ‘absolute dependence’.

Second, the ‘poor’ Tharus (marginal farmers), who also work under others, are dependent only in economic and political arenas on others, while in the socio-cultural arena they are relatively free.

Third, the ‘not-so-poor’ Tharus are usually small farmers who have saved their lands, worked hard as shopkeepers, got education and jobs. The small size of their families has the positive effect of less fragmentation of family holdings, while restrained expenditure on social occasions, restrained drinking habits and better jobs outside the village (in private or public offices) are the major causes of their relatively better position. However, even they cannot be called rich, as they do not own sufficient means of production. Among them, those in government service enjoy a special status due to their better pay and allowances, better contacts with the outside world (especially government machinery) facilitating them to get loans in the name of family members or co-villagers or getting priority from political parties as local representatives of the masses of illiterate and poor Tharus.

Development for What and Whom and at Whose Cost?

The fundamental questions which arise are: development for what, development for whom and development at whose cost? While defining development, various scholars have included and emphasised one or other elements/aspects of human flourishing. At first, we need to discuss about sociological theories of development, then the conceptions of international agencies. In sociology, two major theories of development are the modernisation theory and dependency theory. Let us examine these in brief. The notion of modernisation denotes change in the pre-modern or traditional society to become ‘advanced’ technologically, prosperous economically, and a liberal–democratic politically. Neil Smelser (1963) advocates that a developed economy and society is characterised as a highly differentiated structure whereas a traditional undeveloped society lacks such differentiation. His conception of differentiation (different

from V.I. Lenin's concept of differentiation of peasantry in terms of classes) refers to a process by which more specialised and autonomous social units are established in economy, family, polity and religious institutions. To him, economic development (meaning growth of output per head of population) takes place through four processes, occurring simultaneously or separately;

- (a) modernisation of agriculture: from simple techniques to application of scientific knowledge;
- (b) commercialisation of agriculture: from subsistence to cash-crop production through use of wage labour;
- (c) Industrialisation: from the use of human and animal power to machine power; and
- (d) urbanisation (change in ecology): moving from farm and village to urban centres.

Because of these processes, most economic activities become separated from family both physically and socially. Further, cash cropping leads to the separation of consumption and production activities, while wage labour is used in place of family labour. Here, authority of the elders declines and joint family gives way to the nuclear family. Due to economic independence of women, personal choice is the main consideration in marriage. Further, in recruitment ascription gives way to achievement variable.

However, along with this process of differentiation, a second process of integration also takes place. For instance, a traditional society based on political integration bound by strong kinship, tribalism, control of economic resources and mystic sanctions gives way to modern society integrated by political parties, pressure groups and bureaucracy. Similarly, in the economic arena, modern cooperative type enterprises, trade Unions and recruitment agencies and in the religious arena churches, sects and religious bureaucracy are integrating institutions. According to Smelser, the third aspect is the occurrence of movements and violence that reflects an uneven rate of change—discontinuities occurring because of integration not keeping pace with the differentiation, which may lead to disorder. Thus, Smelser characterised the process of changing the old as 'differentiation' and new as 'integration'.

Similarly, Hoselitz, applying Talcott Parsons' pattern variables, argues that developed countries are characterised by universalism, achievement-orientation and functional specificity while developing countries have particularism, ascription and functional diffuseness (Hoselitz, 1960). Likewise Eisenstadt, Dalton and Redfield refined modernisation theory in their own ways. For instance, Robert Redfield called rural societies as 'part societies' that become increasingly dependent upon the wider system as modernisation is stepped up. However, the modernisation theory suffers from the following lacunae:

- (a) it is Eurocentric, its development model is based on the historical social economic and political experiences of the Western Europe whereas the realities in developing countries are markedly different;
- (b) it does not give due weight to the production relations in a society;

- (c) it focuses more on the macro processes at the level of a nation but ignores the micro processes at the local level which are experienced in day to day life, thus it remains more an ideal type construct (Long, 1982),

On the other hand, the dependency theory was developed by Stavenhagen, Frank, Griffin, Samir Amin, Ranjit Sau, Cardoso and Feletto. As A. G. Frank wrote about the underdevelopment of Chile, arguing that the structure of dependence:

...extends from the micro metropolitan centre of the world capitalist system “down” to the most supposedly isolated agricultural workers who, through this chain of interlinked metropolitan-satellite, relationships, are tied to the central world metropolis and thereby incorporated into the world capitalist system as a whole. The nature and degree of these ties differ in time and place and these differences produce important differences in the economic and political consequences to which they give rise to rest on the exploitation of the satellite by the metropolis or on the tendency of the metropolis to expropriate and appropriate the economic surplus of the satellite (Frank, 1969: 116–17).

From this argument the following points are notable: first, the world capitalist system has the two poles of ‘metropolis’ (developed countries) and ‘Satellite’ (developing countries) interlinked.

Second, this interlinking is very vast and complex and extends up to the agricultural workers in developing countries.

Third, the relationship is not of interdependence but that of dependency of the satellites, that is, the capitalist developed countries dominate over the satellites due to unequal exchange.

Fourth, the nature and degree of the dependency may differ in time and place but the essence remains the same.

Fifth, the metropolis expropriates and appropriates the economic surplus of the satellite; hence the latter is not able to accumulate its capital.

Sixth, there is a tendency of centralisation in the capitalist system. Hence the national metropolises, being satellites of the industrial countries, cannot achieve self-sustenance and autonomous development. However, the bourgeoisie of the two poles develop a mutual interest in maintaining the system, hence some kind of interdependence between them takes place. But Frank also points out that when a weakening of relations of dependence occurs, the development takes an ‘involutioned’ form—either ‘passive capitalist involution’ (as in north and north-east Brazil in late 17th century, when the sugar industry collapsed due to opening of plantations in the West Indies) or ‘active capitalist involution’ allowing some degree of autonomous development but of a limited kind (as industrialisation in Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and India during the Great Depression and second world war when terms of trade for developing countries improved substantially but this was short lived till the end of the war only). Thus, to him, development of the satellites can never be long-term and independent.

But Frank’s theory of dependency, too, suffers from certain lacunae which are as follows: First, it is very simplistic and assumes that the inroad of capitalism leads to

dissolution of non-capitalist production mode; he rejects dual modes (feudal or other non capitalist mode) along with capitalist mode. But in many developing countries like India, Peru and others, capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production co-exist, as empirically proved by economists like Amit Bhaduri (who talks of 'semi-feudalism') or Pradhan H. Prasad.

Second, Frank uses in the context of 16th century, two terms, capital and capitalism interchangeably, and deals with the problem from the viewpoint to commodity exchange rather than relations of production. As Laclau (1971) observed on the point of whether structural conditions of capitalism existed in 16th century Europe: 'Could we consider free labour to be the rule then? By no means. Feudal dependence and urban handicrafts remained the basic forms of productive activity' (cited in Long, 1982: 86).

Third, his concept of dependence is problematic. As Dos Santos has pointed out, 'Dominant countries are endowed with technological, commercial, capital and socio-political dominance over dependent countries and can, therefore, exploit them, and extract part of the locally produced surplus. Dependence, then, is based upon an international division of labour.' (in Long, 1982: 88).

Finally, in Frank's theory, the global dimension of trade and exchange overlooks the mode of production at the micro level in developing countries. As Meillassoux has argued rightly, exchange elements must be examined in relation to the part they play in reproducing the material conditions of existence (Long, 1982: 93). In certain contexts, a capitalist mode of production can indirectly contribute to the persistence of non-capitalist modes. For instance, in South Africa, the non-capitalist mode of agricultural production is a consequence of the requirement of the 'dominant' capitalist sector that needs low wage labour for its mining, manufacturing and agro-industries. This is also true of India where dual modes co-exist: capitalist mode in the industrial sector and feudal/semi-feudal mode in the agricultural sector.

However, the dependency theory does provide an insight into the dialectics of development and it could be enriched by the mode of production approach on the one hand and ecological sustainability approach on the other.

The World Bank's World Development Report usually emphasises on economic growth, quantifiable and measurable in terms of increase in Gross Domestic Product and per capita income. Here the economic growth is to be achieved through an open competition in the free market and the state is not to intervene. At the most it would be a facilitator. But United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), basing its paradigm primarily on the works of Pakistani economist Mahbub-ul-Haq and Indian economist Amartya Sen, talk of 'human development', wherein three elements are included (UNDP, 1990):

- (a) Standard of living, measured by per capita income (through some kind of productive work) adjusted to purchasing power parity (PPP);
- (b) Physical well-being measured by life expectancy (signifying nutrition and health), And
- (c) Education measured by adult literacy rate and mean years of schooling.

Thus it has prepared a human development index (HDI) on the basis of these three parameters and it has also come out with concepts of 'human poverty index' (HPI) and 'gender development index' (GDI) in order to measure poverty and gender sensitivity respectively. Thus, the proponents of human development broaden and give a human face to the neoclassic conception of socio-economic development. Thus they add two aspects of health and education to the World Bank's paradigm of economic growth. However, they do not focus on the 'relations of production' prevailing in an economy and society at a particular time and place. This is why the human development approach is found lacking, in encompassing the entire gamut of economic production, cultural pursuit, social processes of daily life and political participation. Hence there is a need to look at 'social development', that is, 'real development', so that it may be called 'real social development'. The salient features of real social development are listed in the following paragraphs.

First, the indigenous knowledge system (IKS) of the local tribals (or other subalterns) should be properly studied from their oral traditions (folk songs, plays, dances, proverbs, sayings, visuals, social and religious festivals, puzzles, folk tales, technology, agricultural practices, etc.) and be used in different activities to different degrees and extents, range and depth contextually, even though it may require certain modifications and refinement. It will actually enrich and sharpen the 'written tradition' of packaged knowledge systems (PKS). D. R. Gadgil rightly suggests three ways towards using indigenous knowledge system (cited in Sharma, 2001: 251).

- (a) improvement of traditional technology, (not copying and adopting as given);
- (b) adjustment and adaptation-adapting advanced technology to suit local conditions depending on raw materials;
- (c) Innovative experiential research, going beyond the adaptation and adjustment.

In Rajasthan, local people have been using the engine of a pumping set machine and a trolley as a carrier of passengers and/or goods like a mini tractor. It is named as 'jugar' (managing). Similarly, in Gujarat, 'Chhakra' with the engine of motorcycle attached to a trolley is in vogue. In Bihar the boatmen use a pumping set engine on their boats. Undoubtedly, such uses of indigenous technology are cheaper, simpler, easily repairable, team-oriented and confidence-building, though the negative consequence of adding to air and noise pollution are notable in some cases. This also erodes the hegemony of the so-called 'expert-driven', specialised, external-directed scientism on the one hand and creates a larger and creative space for the commoners in the civil society, essential for the true functioning of democracy on the other. Therefore, the technology should be need-based, indigenous, self-reliant, transformative, cheap, cost-effective, simple-in-handling and ecologically sustainable.

Second, real social development also requires local initiative, access to and use of local resources. That means that the new ideas for change should be backed by new initiatives, actions for change just like the conception should lead to safe delivery/birth, not to miscarriage or abortion! However, the local initiative may begin from within the local community or be inspired by an outsider individual or group as a

catalyst agent. The issue of leadership in a process of social change is very crucial and it may have one or more of the following forms:

- (a) Symbolic leader (as a patron of a group);
- (b) Front leader or 'the' leader;
- (c) Co-leader or associate leader (second line leadership);
- (d) Leaders in making or activists (grass roots workers).

It needs to be emphasised here that a true leader does not create followers, rather creates 'leaders for the future'. Hence it is the duty of the civil society organisations (CSOs) to create future leaders amongst tribals in remote and sleepy villages. Unfortunately, some rightist Hindu organisations in the name of bringing tribals in the mainstream or the Christian missionaries in the name of liberation and religious freedom, indulge in selfish activities which make their activities against real social development.

Third, real social development is a collective empowerment, that is, development with the people, not for the people. This participation requires not merely delegation of power to the local community but actual decentralisation and devolution of power also. Actual decentralisation and devolution of power stimulates local initiative and people's genuine participation. Every individual or group should feel that he/she is a part of the decision making process. Here I am tempted to quote James Y.C. Yen (from China) who rightly observed in the 1920s (Cited in Sharma, 2001: 257):

Go to the people
Live among the people
Learn from the people
Plan with the people
Work with the people.

Here two caveats are necessary: first the term 'people' should mean the marginalised commoners; and second, all views of the people should not be accepted uncritically because due to various historical, social, economic and political reasons they have followed and are still following certain social evils and obnoxious practices like sati, dowry, female foeticide, casteism, witchcraft, communalism, regionalism, etc., in various parts of India. Further, unfortunately, a substantial population has been socialised in corrupt ways of life, hence their views are to be critically verified.

Fourth, real social development also encompasses the principle of 'think globally, act locally'. That is, at the level of ideas, theories, hypotheses and experience-sharing, one should be open and curious in order to learn, but these should not be copied and adopted, rather these should be tested critically against the social facts given in a context of time and place. A few years back during a massive cyclone in Hyderabad, various philanthropists and donor groups sent blankets to the victims but these were of no use because Hyderabad has a comparatively hot climate, hence blankets are not needed.

Fifth, real social development in a developing agrarian country like India (where two-thirds of the population is dependent on agriculture) means a comprehensive agricultural sustainability, not a superficial and neo-liberal type of 'sustainable development'. In a neoclassical manner, the Brundlandt Commission in its report 'Our

Common Future' (1987) defined sustainable development as one 'that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. In the concept of sustainable development, sustainability (that is, compatible with ecology) in itself is not the goal, rather the development (implying industrialisation of mass production and consumerism) is the goal. On the other hand, agricultural sustainability presupposes the sustainability of an eco-system, integrated pest management, animal and bio-manures (instead of chemical fertilisers), bio insecticides (instead of chemical insecticides), bio diversity of seeds, conservation and prudent use of water, soil and forests, nourishing of soil through eco-friendly indigenous methods, etc.

Sixth, real social development stands for inclusion, not exclusion. In India various social forces like caste, class, religion, language and gender have been traditional forces of exclusion. But of late, new forces of exclusion are marketism, globalisation, industrialisation and urbanisation. As Prof. Amitabh Kundu rightly remarks, 'Undoubtedly, the institution of market, be it that for goods or for services, happens to be the most effective factor which excludes people based on affordability. In case of labour market, too, it is productivity against wages demanded which determines who should be in and who should be out' (Kundu, 2006: 13). Therefore, real social development includes all social strata, especially the downtrodden subalterns, so that a holistic development with equity and distributive justice is ensured in letter and spirit.

Seventh, real social development ultimately lies in collective self-reliance. It would be two-fold: first, collective cooperation at all levels of the economy (production, exchange, consumption and distribution) and, second, the elimination of 'dependency syndrome' (too much dependence on others, outsiders and government machinery). This self-reliance has to be operative from local to global levels and therefore, the very notion of development aid is to be questioned. Rather, the unequal exchange in the world system should be changed to equal and fair terms of the world trade between developed and developing countries as well as between different developing countries or even sub-regions (like south Asia), because the processes and problems of development in developing countries can not be comprehended without contextualising them in the wider socioeconomic, political and historical context of west European imperialism and industrial capitalism. To quote Griffin: 'Underdeveloped countries as we observe *them* today are a product of historical forces, especially those released by European expansion and world ascendancy—Europe did not "discover" the underdeveloped countries; on the contrary, she created them' (Griffin, 1968: 38). The existing adverse terms of world trade have been further tilted in favour of the developed countries and against the developing countries in the present era of globalisation, especially after the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture. This very fact of 'unfair rules help rich countries grow' was aptly revealed by the Oxfam (an international NGO) at the World Social Forum at Mumbai on 17th January 2004: 'Farmers from poor countries pay 400% higher tariffs when exporting to rich countries than the farmers from rich countries need to pay when they export!'

Eighth, real social development requires a change in the culture of consumerism and wasteful life style of the upper classes who 'afford to waste' as a result of mass production for profit, as well as the widespread growth of market everywhere from the kitchen to the drawing room, from the garden to the office or fields. Actually the market has crept in even in our bedrooms as a 'hidden persuader' and it has snatched our happiness and privacy at every moment of our life. Thus the market and mass media promise us a 'consumer paradise'. Therefore we need to curb our desires and wants that are often created by the market, but are not need-based. Over-consumption is also leading to various crimes against women and children. Here the words of Mahatma Gandhi are quite relevant: 'Our civilization, our culture, our Swaraj depend not upon multiplying our wants, self-indulgence but upon restricting our wants, self-denial' (Cited in Sharma, 2001: 255).

Ninth, real social development aspires for providing gainful employment (growth with jobs, not jobless growth which is the offshoot of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation), a decent livelihood with adequate nutrition for physical and mental health of the people at large so that a healthy human resource is created. Hence the underprivileged should be assured quality food grains through fair price shops without any hitch and unfair dealings.

Tenth, real social development aims at the education of all the people, not merely literacy coverage with the ability of simply being able to sign their names. To properly plan for education means to plan for a long period, for new generations and for the future citizens with required skills. Such education will develop creative, critical and conducive skills among the youth so that they can start productive self-employment enterprises on their own; thus, the goal of employment and self-reliance would be achieved simultaneously.

Fortunately, the Council for Social Development (New Delhi) has come out with a holistic report entitled 'India: Social Development Report' wherein it has developed a comprehensive Social Development Index (SDI) comprising of the following 21 indicators in six categories (CSD, 2006):

- (a) demographic indicators—contraceptive prevalence rate, total fertility rate, infant mortality rate;
- (b) health indicators—percentage of institutional delivery (in both private and public sectors), percentage of undernourished children;
- (c) basic amenities indicators—percentage of households living in pucca house, percentage of households with access to safe drinking water, percentage of households with toilet facility, percentage of households with electricity.
- (d) educational attainment indicators—literacy rate, pupil teacher ratio, school attendance rate;
- (e) unemployment and poverty-related indicators—unemployment rate (current-daily status), percentage below poverty line, Gini ratio for per capita consumption expenditure,
- (f) Social deprivation related indicators—ratio between literacy of scheduled caste population and average literacy of the population, ratio between the literacy of the scheduled tribe population and average literacy of the

population, ratio between literacy of the female population and average literacy of the total population, ratio between female unemployment rates to total unemployment rates, child sex ratio.

Its following findings are noteworthy from the viewpoint of real social development.

- (i) In India 26 per cent of the total population (26 crores) is living below the poverty line, 19.3 crores in rural areas and 6.7 crores in urban areas. Further 43.8 per cent of scheduled tribe population, 36.2 per cent of scheduled caste population and 21 per cent of the other backward classes (OBC) live below the poverty line.
- (ii) During 1999–2000 the three poorest States were Orissa (47.15 per cent poor), Bihar (42.6 per cent poor) and Assam (36.09 per cent poor) while three least poverty–stricken States were Punjab (6.16 per cent), Haryana (8.74 per cent) and Kerala (12.72 per cent).
- (iii) Three highest infant mortality rate States were Orissa (83 per 1000), MP (82 per 1000) and UP (76 per 1000) whereas the lowest infant mortality rate States were Kerala (11), Mizoram (16) and Goa (16). Bihar, UP, MP and Rajasthan account for only 45 per cent of India's total population but for 67 per cent of total infant mortality in India (UP's share is 26 per cent of the total). Infant mortality rate among the SCs is 83, among the STs is 85.2, among other deprived classes it is 76 and among the rest 61.8 per thousand.
- (iv) In maternal mortality rate, Bihar, UP, MP and Rajasthan account for 67 per cent of total maternal mortality in India;
- (v) Children's immunisation in Bihar, UP, MP and Rajasthan is less than 25 per cent.
- (vi) In terms of social indicators, for rural areas, the five best States are Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana while the five worst States are Bihar, Jharkhand, UP, MP and Orissa. In urban areas the five best States are Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Kerala, Karnataka and Assam while the five worst States are Bihar, UP, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa.
- (vii) In terms of the least gender gap in literacy, Mizoram (4.56 percentage points), Meghalaya (5.73 percentage points) and Kerala (6.34 percentage points) stand first, second and third, respectively. On the other hand, in highest gender gaps in literacy are seen in Rajasthan (32.12 percentage points), Jharkhand (28.56 percentage points) and UP (27.25 percentage points) stand first, second and third, respectively;
- (viii) Three best child sex ratio States are Chhattisgarh (975 girls per 1000 boys), Meghalaya (973) and Tripura (966) while the three states with lowest child sex ratio are Punjab (798 girls per 1000 boys), Haryana (819) and Gujarat (883).

Thus it is crystal clear that the social development index has proved to be closer to socio-economic reality in most of developing countries and more comprehensive than

the human development index. Various States in India should come out with their own Social Development Reports so that a comprehensive picture of development emerges for different strata and communities at micro and meso levels. Then it would positively help the policymakers and executing agencies.

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