

Approaches to Development: A Sociological Examination

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Development and its various synonyms and euphemisms have become a commonplace word which everybody uses and apparently understands. But in academic circles where popular terms are often defined differently and with greater measure of scepticism, the concept remains elusive. Development has been conceptualised as a process of economic growth fostered by industrial investment and a competitive culture of enterprise and profit maximisation. It can be also be defined as liberation from the strictures of colonial and imperial domination in which nations secure the right to self-determination and self-reliance, as a state of welfare in which ordinary people enjoy freedom from want, disease, ignorance, insecurity, exploitation and oppression. This paper seeks to develop three arguments. First, development thinking has not been the single paradigm for which it is often taken, but that all along it has been a heterogeneous set of approaches that has been not only variable over time but highly diverse at any given time. Second, it zeroes in on one particular unresolved dilemma in several forms of development thinking, the disparity and tension between endogenous and exogenous dynamics in development. This, too, may point towards a reconceptualisation of development as a transnational problem. Third, it explores the current tendency to rethink development as a process that is not reserved to 'developing countries' but that all societies are developing, as a part of the global process.

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Introduction

Development is the founding belief of the modern world. In development all the advances of sciences, technology, democracy, values, ethics, and social organisation fuse into the single humanitarian project of producing a far better world. 'It is the act of process of developing or growth within the framework of available resources' (Desai 1991:30). It must be emphasised that the usage of the term development is legitimate when we consider development as a change process that is multidimensional and interdependent.

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Development as a social phenomenon of decisions, actions and change should not be approached as a theoretical concept but because it impinges on many and diverse aspects of the social processes a proper understanding of it calls for an analysis of the nature and functioning of society which can only be obtained through theoretical enquiry. In the area of development, there is almost a complete lack of a well-articulated and by and large, acceptable theoretical perspective. However, a minimum understanding of development is that basically, it is a change process that has important consequences to the social structure. In search for a suitable theoretical framework of development, it is necessary to take account of some of the major theoretical perspectives relating to the broad sphere of societal change and transformation.

The most useful theoretical framework will be the one which is necessarily elaborate in view of the fact that several streams of West European thought have contributed in their own ways towards a theoretical understanding of development. The ensuing discussion will make an attempt to encompass the different theoretical foci and the seemingly diverse perceptions of development. The concept of development has different meanings, as different scholars have emphasised different dimensions. In Sociology, development has been used to convey the movement on the whole system towards an even and large measure of power to people for their conscious participation in building their own future, higher production, equal distribution and economically sound environment (Sharma and Malhotra 1977:34). It is important to note that by the time development began to make inroads into social science literature, there were certain other notions which were already in use to explain the transformations taking place in the European society (Bottomore 1986). One of those notions was social evolution which was directly taken from the theories of biological evolution. Herbert Spencer one of the greatest exponents of the idea of evolution drew an analogy between biological organism and societies (this led to draw an analogy between social evolution and biological evolution). He argued that our perceptive of social evolution would be much better if one first acquired an understanding of how biological evolution proceeded, though in his account of social evolution, he himself paid less interest to the more specific features of the biological evolution. The notion of evolution had its serious challenge which slowly undermined its utility as a category of the analysis of social transformations taking place. It would be misleading to draw an analogy between social evolution and biological evolution because man's social and cultural behavior is essentially learned whereas the behavior of an organism is inborn. Moreover, changes in culture and tradition are regulated by the social actors but not in the biological organisms.

Evolutionary approach to development

The idea of development was believed to be eminently suitable to describe the changes taking place in the societies. Nevertheless, it has had an interesting trajectory which has not been free from complications. In fact, there is considerable amount of disagreement over what constitutes development. It would be indeed an interesting exercise to engage ourselves with its multiple understandings.

For an understanding of the concept of development theories in Sociology it would be best if we begin our discussion with the writings of evolutionary thinkers such as

Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and Emile Durkhiem. They essentially looked at societies as moving from simple, homogeneous, undifferentiated state to complex, heterogeneous and differentiated social existence.

Comte explains social change as the outcome of man's intellectual development which is formulated in the "law of three stages" (Bottomore 1986), he looked at the development of societies from the theological, through metaphysical and finally to the positive stage and the intellectual progress which is the third stage for Comte is accompanied by moral development, especially the growing predominance of altruism over egoism and by changes in social institutions. For Comte progress was possible through order, he holds that both material and moral progress are two essential types of progress and both are connected. To Comte social change is a product of forces internal in society and driving from human nature, which is continuous, normal, uniform in time and space and the differences among people is the differences of degree of development and this process of social differentiation was an integral part of the general societal development.

Durkheim rejected Comte's evolutionary approach but his own outline of a classification of societies is conceived in terms of an evolutionary scheme. For Durkhiem social differentiation resulted from the appearance of new roles arising from division of labour, emergence of institutions performing specialized functions, and the resulting specialization of roles. In his work on the Division of Labour (1893), he related men to each other and to their social tasks which according to Durkhiem became the most important basis of social solidarity and morality in society. It was in this network of reciprocal, co-operative, independent relationships that men encountered their most urgent obligations and duties, and in relation to the most urgent needs. The movement of societies from the mechanical stage characterized by an undifferentiated structure of values, norms and positions to the organic stage characterized by a growing differentiation of the same constituted for Durkhiem the very core of developmental process. He argued that 'the emergence of individualism would not disintegrate the society, but when industrialization comes there is specialization, that is elaborate division of labour' (Doshi 2003:68). It must be noted that growth in the division of labour (and the Organic solidarity that arises) does not destroy the common collective conscience but it simply reduces its importance in the detailed regulation of everyday life. Hence leaving room for more individual autonomy and social heterogeneity, but which does not necessarily result in individuals becoming completely detached from the social bonds that are based on moral consensus. For Durkhiem the gradual increase in the functional interdependence between the various specialised and heterogeneous parts of society provides an alternative to the common collective conscience as a basis of social solidarity (Johnson1981:180). The entire emphasis of Durkhiem was on the division of labour in society which for him was the most basic and all pervading moral fact of society and that it was the rapidly changing nature of the Division of labour which was leading to the disruption of social solidarity in the modern industrial world. Emphasising the fact that man is a moral being only because he live in a society, and that, as society advanced in size, growth, and complexity of specialization, the Division of labour itself became the foundation for the moral order.

Spencer's account on evolutionary concept of development is based on three fun-

damental assumptions. Firstly, individuals are fundamentally unequal with respect to the genetic endowments, experiences, the environmental conditions in which they live, the opportunities and deprivations they experience. This leads to an increasing differentiation of roles, functions, power, prestige and wealth.

Secondly, unequal access to power and wealth gets multiplied and aggravated resulting in greater and cumulative strengthening of initial differentiation.

Thirdly, as people of similar positions tend to cohere, the society increasingly becomes differentiated into factions, classes and groups and it becomes impossible for a return to take place in homogeneity. This mechanism leads to movement of societies from simple stage through complex stage, then doubly complex societies up to civilizations (the most developed states of societies) (Kumar 2008:86).

Institutional approach to development

The term development in Sociology can also be looked in terms of its explication of certain values and attitudes. This approach would be explanatory in nature, and to trace the roots of this approach we can outline Max Weber's historical theory of stages through which modern rationalism emerged and western culture achieved a rationalized development path. He used the idea of Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1905), to show that religion could bring about social change. Weber analysis in the Protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism can be seen in the context of his overall effort to demonstrate the independent influence that ideas play in historical change. His works ascertain that certain aspects of the protestant ethic provided a powerful stimulant in promoting the growth of the capitalist economic system in its formative stages. This stimulating effect was due to an "elective affinity" (logical consistency and mutually supportive motivational influence) between certain ethical demands derived from protestant beliefs and the economic motivational patterns necessary for the growth of the capitalist system (Peet & Hartwick 2009:110).

Both Protestantism and Capitalism involved a rational and systematic approach to life which is performing one's duties in all aspects of life, including especially one's occupational calling and economic activities generally. Similarly, the development of modern capitalism required limitation of consumption for purposes of reinvestment and capital growth, a willingness to submit to the discipline of systematic planning for future goals, regular employment in an occupation, and the like.

Although Weber emphasised the influence of Protestantism on capitalist development, he would not have denied that Protestantism was always influenced by the growth of capitalism. His overall approach emphasised that both ideal and material interests govern action and that the relationship between religious ideals and economic interests was actually one of actual interdependence. In other words, the relation was reciprocal, involving mutual interdependence of Protestantism and capitalism (Johnson 1981:231). Thus for Weber, Protestant ethic did not cause capitalism but it provided the necessary moral and economic climate in which capitalism could happen.

To elaborate the second approach we can also look into the internalisation of certain socio-psychological attributes, one of such contributions can be of David Mc Clelland and Alex Inkles. Mc Clelland in his book, 'The Achieving Society' (1961), emphasised

that for rapid socio-economic development, certain mental attributes, particularly the psychological need for achievement (n'ach), should be widely prevalent among the members of a society. N'ach is a psychological attribute which motivated one to do things better than they were done before more efficiently and quickly. Such an attitude through the intensification of human efforts, made a significant contribution to the increase in productivity and production and through them economic development.

He pointed out that even though 'capital accumulation was an important component of economic development, an economic development programme based solely on it might have serious limitations. He also stressed that in making investment decisions, their long term impact on the modernization of values need to be considered, at every point the operation of a chain of events depended on the values and motives of individuals' (Alexander 1994:54). He stressed that this motivational complex is an important factor in social change and the evolution of societies. Part of the push for economic development according to him came from n-ach,(the need for achievement), which made particular individuals suited to entrepreneurial, innovative roles- that is, entrepreneurs who, in turn, led rapid economic development. As a socio-psychological theorist of development, he looked at basic psychological factors for development to take place and called the psychological factor for development as 'achievement motivation'. Thus the higher a person's need for achieving something the greater possible way is paved for him to develop.

Inkles in his book 'Becoming Modern' (1974), defined the term modern as having many denotations and which carries a heavy weight of connotations. 'It is applied not only to men, but to nations, to political systems, to economies, to cities, to institutions such as schools and hospitals, to housing, to clothes, and to manners. Taken literally, the word refers to anything which has more or less recently replaced something which in the past was the accepted way of doing things' (Inkles and Smith 1974:15).

Inkles and Smith did a study on individual modernity in six developing countries (Argentina, Chile, India, Israel, Nigeria and Pakistan) and explained the distinctive character of the modern man in terms of certain qualities. According to them, the modern man is said to be "an informed participant citizen, he has a marked sense of personal efficacy; he is highly independent and autonomous in his relations to traditional sources of influence, especially when he is making basic decisions about how to conduct his personal affairs; and he is ready for new experiences and ideas, that is, he is relatively open minded and cognitively flexible" (ibid: 37-38). They also found that members of traditional society were not interested in what happened around them since they depended on traditional authority and the received wisdom of elders and customary leaders. They were preoccupied with personal (especially family) affairs to the exclusion of community concerns. Development according to Inkles and Smith involved the transformation of such characteristics of the people of a traditional society and their becoming modern men and women.

Such an understanding of development also needs some awareness since development as a concept and process is multilinear and can be looked at it in some different ways, so certain limitations are bound to be noticed even in this approach, as we can see by emphasising essentially individualistic and motivational tendency in orientation, it

tends to ignore the relevance of structural and cultural factors.

Marxian approach to development

The theory of development has found a different direction in the works of Marx. The genesis of Marx's evolutionary theory lies in the "mode of production". Through it he shows how change in the mode of production leads to changes in the nature of exploitation which is the cause of the emergence of class society. This class society goes through revolution because of conflicting interests of the two main classes, i.e., the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Tracing examples from history Marx tries to prove that how societies have been transformed from primitive communism to modern capitalism. The mode of production is the central point around which entire Marxian analysis revolves. For Marx the mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life (Marx 1970: 20).

Marx's theory of societal development is based on his theory of mode of production. His "historical materialism" method is well exemplified by his treatment of the concept of "alienation". In the formulation of his theory, Marx has denied the idealist side of Hegel's philosophy, i.e., the reality of what the senses perceive. Alienation according to Marx denotes an estrangement of individuals from themselves or from others. Alienation according to him appears not merely in the result but also in the process of production and within the productive activity itself. The more the worker spends himself, the less he has for himself, in other words the worker puts his life into the object he creates but the very object becomes an instrument of alien purpose and strengthens the hands of his exploiters. In this way alienation becomes one of the reason that serves as advanced stage of capitalism and is an essential concept in the theory of development. Marx has provided an evolutionary scheme which includes four stages, viz., primitive communism, feudalism, capitalism and socialism. In this scheme he has attempted to analyse the social structure through the class struggle. He observes that the history of all societies is the history of class struggles. The modern society according to Marx has the same characteristics, but the classes have been shaped under the influence of "new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. He points out that modern society has two classes- bourgeoisie and proletariat. By bourgeoisie it means that the classes of modern capitalist owners of the means of social production are employers of wage labour. By proletariat, he meant the class of modern wage labourers who, having no means of production of their own are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live. Marx further characterizes 'modern society as "the epoch of the bourgeoisie", where the bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production and with them the whole relations of society' (ibid.1970:46-49).

The Marxist approach is essentially evolutionary and linear involving a movement from primitive communism to the ultimate classless society. In this process capitalism is a necessary and even desirable stage, though the progress of humanity does not stop there. Relationships of production determine the nature of the social order and their inner contradictions force the movement of society to the next higher formation (Dube1988:39).

Dependency Theory

The growing disenchantment with the modernization theory, owing to its failure to explain growing inequalities, poverty, violence and military coups in the newly independent nations in Africa and Asia, forced development scholars like Frank (1969), Wallerstein (1974), and Amin (1976) to ask new questions and seek new answers using an alternative paradigm which came to be known as the dependency theory

The dependency theory and the conception of underdevelopment occupied an important position in development thought through the writings of Ander Gunder Frank, who developed his ideas mainly through his studies of development in Latin America. Frank explains the dialectic of development in the context of development- underdevelopment relationship. This relationship was one of exploitation, the dominant nations exploiting the underdeveloped nations. Under such circumstances, Frank believed, the experience of the underdeveloped nations in the sphere of development cannot be the same as that of the developed nations which consistently move from one stage of development to another. He believed that most of the underdeveloped nations had been under colonial rule until recent times and therefore, exploitation of these nations by the colonial powers is a historical fact (O'Brien 1975:11). Frank viewed underdevelopment as an outcome of the historical relationship between nations which are characterized by exploitation and expropriation of the resources of the nations under political subjugation.

A careful reading of the dependency theory would reveal certain difficulties with this approach. First, the dependency theory does not have space for class and class struggle which are crucial in bringing about social changes. Marxists have found it difficult to subscribe to what the dependency theorists argue. The whole Marxist argument is based on the revolutionary role that class struggle plays in bringing about basic structural changes in the society. Ignoring such an important explanatory category would not find favour with the Marxists. Secondly, some others who are not Marxists would argue that contrary to what dependency theorists say growth rates in some parts of the Third World have been higher than in the developed countries. An indigenous capitalist class is actively promoting innovation, accumulating capital and involving itself in manufacturing etc. The growth is also reflected in areas like education, nutrition, health, mortality rates and housing. Their argument is that the basic point put forward by the dependency theorists that the underdeveloped countries would continue to become poorer and poorer because of the structures of exploitation and subjugation over which the developed countries have complete control. Others arguing on the basis of empirical findings say that some countries have remained underdeveloped not because they have become part of the world capitalist system but because they have remained outside it. For example, Latin America did not develop not because it was incorporated into the world capitalist system but because it did not have proper trading links with Europe. Thirdly, still others would argue that the dependency theorists completely neglect the relevance of the local structures and cultural patterns in encouraging or discouraging the developmental process (Kumar 2008:89). The dependency theory is perhaps, an attempt to find a satisfactory explanation to the backwardness of the developing nations in spite of determined efforts on the part of some of them to achieve development along desired lines.

Summary and Conclusion

The above exercise on trying to understand the different facets of the term development in Sociology may be summarised as under. It can be seen that all the evolutionists either believe in stages of growth and development. It can also be noticed that this kind of view in development can have serious implications as they tend to be too abstract and that the theories are gradualist in their orientation and would therefore fail to account for sudden occurrences, discontinuities and reversals.

The second approach on development in Sociology can be said to have a profound impact in determining certain aspects on development. Weber's method was to focus on internal cultural factors as the key determinants of development or non-development. He refers to the psychological state whereby people removed everything from their life that interfered with their calling as a worldly asceticism, Weber described that Protestant ethic provided the psychological trigger which enabled the modern entrepreneurial spirit to be released. Mc Clellan's and Inkles's opinion on development can be said to have been too individualistic and motivational in orientation, they tend to ignore the relevance of structural and cultural factors which play an important role in the process of development.

Marx viewed human history as a 'giant spiral' tracing the development of the productivity of labour (the forces of production) in relation to the changing social structure within which production took place (the social relations of production). Like any other theory Marx's theory of development is also not free from any criticism. Marx talked about mainly two classes i.e., the ruling class and the ruled, dominant and dominated whereas scholars have argued that there are multi dimensional stratification in every society. He also spoke about the growing class radicalism where the working class will become more radical, aggressive and violent but critics have maintained that class conservatism is gaining ground in the modern society and class radicalism is becoming dented. A.G.Frank's analysis on development has expressed quite different opinion about the mode of production and the process through which feudalism is transformed into capitalism. He states that capitalism does not succeed feudalism in the underdeveloped periphery as it did in the European metropole. Frank talks about only one mode of production, i.e., capitalist mode of production. According to him, the roots of the capitalist evolution were to found in the rise of a world 'commercial networks' developing into a 'mercantile capitalist system', with the rise of this system a whole series of metropolis-satellite relationships were created and interlinked as in the surplus appropriation chain. Frank considers underdevelopment as not merely the lack of development but argues that before there was any development there was no underdevelopment. Development and underdevelopment both are related through the common historical process.

Development thinking is usually regarded as an offshoot of the family of notions of evolution and progress and as a part of western notions of change as growth. It may be noted that development theories are not created in a vacuum, they intend to reflect the experiences of certain countries, regions, and time periods that commanded attention when the theories were being elaborated. The Theories discussed above has its own strengths and limitations, and it can be assume that the essential feature of the concept of development of a nation or region is basically dependent on its own internal resources

without much of an intervention from external sources. Thus developmental process can be said to be viewed increasingly in terms of recognized social needs pulsating through the entire social composition. It is in this light that development as a change process seems to be meaningful to most of the people in the developing world.

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