UNIT 10: CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS IN DEVELOPMENT

UNIT STRUCTURE

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10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand the various contemporary concerns that development evokes
- know the issues and challenges involving development projects
- analyze the agenda of development and its impact on poverty
- examine the interrelationship between development and social capital
- comprehead development and its impact on gender issues.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit seeks to provide an understanding of the idea of 'development', and examine its positive and negative effects. It traces the genesis of contemporary concerns and would do so by explaining various concepts underlying poverty, social capital and gender. In our understanding, development goes beyond poverty reduction, conflict prevention, and the sustainable use of natural resources. Next to these goals, development

also implies social change, the transformation of norms and values and the introduction of new social, economic, and political structures. These are the key concerns of sociological research into development processes. Since its inception as an academic discipline, Sociology was committed to elucidating questions regarding the nature, conditions and possibilities of social change.

10.3 CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS OF DEVELOPMENT - ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

For social scientists, development entails the systematic use of scientific and technical knowledge to meet specific objectives or requirements for the benefit of the society. This process of economic and social transformation that is based on complex cultural and environmental factors and their interactions should benefit the society. The study of development has been one of the fundamental aspects of Sociology since the beginnings of the discipline. The competing visions of Weber's *'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism'* (1904-5) and Marx's *Das Kapital* (1867) have made debates concerning the rise and evolution of capitalism central to the core theoretical debates of Sociology. Development is at the center of the sociological debates. In this sense the Sociology of Development addresses pressing intellectual challenges. Some of these challenges are namely- internal and international migration, transformation of political regimes, changes in household and family formations, technological change, sustainable (and unsustainable) population and economic growth, and the production and reproduction of social and economic inequality. Development is not purely an economic phenomenon but rather a multi-dimensional process involving reorganization and reorientation of entire economic and social system. Development is a process of improving the quality of all human lives with three equally important aspects. These are:

i. Raising peoples' living standards, i.e. incomes and consumption, quality of food, medical services, education through relevant growth processes

ii. Creating conditions conducive to the growth of peoples' self-esteem through the establishment of social, political and economic systems and institutions which promote human dignity and respect

iii. Increasing peoples' freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their choice variables, e.g. varieties of goods and services



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1. Define 'development'.

10.4 CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS OF DEVELOPMENT - POVERTY

It must be clear that development and globalisation are closely intertwined. The contemporary understanding of poverty can be only situated against the backdrop of Globalisation. While discussing the various issues in next few paragraphs the term globalisation and development would be closely interlinked. Globalisation and poverty are important issues in every country's agenda whether it be developed or developing. Poverty is a multifaceted concept, which includes social, economic political elements. According to United Nations ‘‘poverty is the inability of getting choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, and not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation." (UN, 1998).

Poverty is generally of two types: absolute poverty, which is the same as destitution and occurs when people cannot get hold of sufficient resources (measured in terms of calories or nutrition) to maintain a minimum level of physical health. Absolute poverty means the same almost everywhere, and can be eliminated as proven by some countries. Relative poverty occurs when people do not enjoy a certain minimum level of living standards as determined by the state and enjoyed by the majority of the population. These standards may vary from country to country and sometimes within the same country. Relative poverty occurs everywhere, is said to be increasing, and may never be eradicated. Once economic development has progressed beyond a certain minimum level, the issue of the poverty problem - from the point of view of both the poor individual and of the societies in which they live - is not so much the effects of poverty in any absolute form but the effects of the contrast, daily perceived, between the lives of the poor and the lives of those around them. For practical purposes, the problem of poverty in the industrialised nations today is a problem of relative poverty. In this context, it is important to understand the phenomenon of globalisation and it's impacts on the larger economic scenario and not only poverty. In terms of the repercussions on the economic front, globalisation can be understood both by it's positive and negative effects. Following are some of its positive impacts.

i. Higher export generated income promotes investment in productive capacity with a potentially positive local development impact depending on inter firm linkages, the ability to maintain competitiveness etc.

ii. Employment growth is relatively labour intensive and causes an increase in overall employment or reduction of employment in lower wage sectors. Either of these outcomes tends to increase wages.

iii. Exposure to new technology leads to improvement in skills and labour productivity which facilitate the upgrading of industry into more value added output, while either enabling further wage growth or relaxing the downward pressure.

iv. The considerable increase in employment and thus in wages leads to reduced social inequality, if the social structure, political institutions and social policies play a vital role.

Some of the negative impacts of globalizing processes according to Stiglitz are:

i. The rules governing globalization favour developed countries, while the developing countries sink even lower.

ii. Globalization only regards monetary value of items, rather than other factors involved, one being the environment.

iii. Developing countries are controlled by globalisation and it has negative effect on their democracies. Developing countries borrow a large amount of funds from other countries and the World Bank which essentially causes them to give up the benefits of their democracy because of the strings attached to the loan repayment.

iv. There is a prevailing notion that it does not live up to its original expectations. Globalisation was advertised to boost countries economically; however, it has not shown improvement in developed nor developing countries.

v. The new system of globalisation has basically forced a new economic system on developing countries. This new economic system is seen as the "Americanisation" of their policies as well as culture. This has caused quite a bit of resentment and financial damage.

Many other negative aspects are as follows:

i. The increase in employment and wages is in contradiction to the supposed positive effects and is unlikely to be sufficient to reduce inequality. In most of the developing countries, inequality is likely to grow because of unequal control.

ii. Pressure to create local employment and international competition in bidding for it often puts international firms in a powerful position to impose or negotiate labour standards and labour management practices that are inferior to those of industrialised countries.

iii. Relocation of relatively mobile, labour intensive manufacturing from industrialised to developing countries in some conditions, can have disruptive social effects. If there is an absence of effective planning and negotiations between international companies and the government or companies of the host country, the relocated activity promotes urban bound migration and it will stay for a shorter period.

iv. Recent decades have witnessed the feminization of poverty, or the significant increase in the numbers of single women in poverty alone, primarily as single mothers. In the last three decades the proportion of poor families headed by women has grown to more than 50 percent.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2. What are the two types of poverty?

10.5 CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS OF DEVELOPMENT- SOCIAL CAPITAL

The concept of social capital became fashionable only relatively recently, but the term has been in use for almost a century while the ideas behind it go back further still. "Social capital" may first have appeared in a book published in 1916 in the United States that discussed how neighbours could work together to oversee schools. Author Lyda Hanifan referred to social capital as "those tangible assets [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely goodwill, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit". That gives

some sense of what's meant by social capital, although today it would be hard to come up with a single definition that satisfied everyone. For the sake of simplicity, however, we can think of social capital as the links, shared values and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and so work together. Social capital may be defined as those resources inherent in social relations which facilitate collective action. Social capital resources include trust, norms, and networks of association representing any group which gathers consistently for a common purpose .In recent years, the term entered the popular imagination with the publication in 2000 of Robert Putnam's bestseller, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community.* Putnam argued that while Americans have become wealthier their sense of community has withered. Cities and traditional suburbs have given way to "edge cities" and "exurbs" - vast, anonymous places where people sleep and work and do little else. As people spend more and more time in the office, commuting to work and watching TV alone, there's less time for joining community groups and voluntary organizations, and socializing with neighbors, friends and even family.

Varieties of social capital - There's much debate over the various forms that social capital takes, but one fairly straightforward approach divides it into three main categories:

i. **Bonds:** Links to people based on a sense of common identity ("people like us") - such as family, close friends and people who share our culture or ethnicity.

ii. **Bridges:** Links that stretch beyond a shared sense of identity, for example to distant friends, colleagues and associates.

iii. **Linkages:** Links to people or groups further up or lower down the social ladder.

The potential benefits of social capital can be seen by looking at social bonds. Friends and families can help us in lots of ways - emotionally,

socially and economically. Such support can be even more important in countries where the rule of lavis weak or where the state offers few social services: clans can fund the education of relatives and find them work, and look after orphans and the elderly. Bourdieu extended the notion of capital, defined as sums of money or assets put to productive use. Bourdieu habitually refers to several principal forms of capital: economic, symbolic, cultural and social. John Locke (1632-1704) was probably the first who introduced the term "civic society". Although each individual in the state of nature has the right to enforce the natural law in defense of property interests, the formation of a civil society requires that all individuals voluntarily surrender this right to the community at large. Civil society, and more recently "social capital", refer to the growing space between the individual and the government or state. This subsequently implies the restructuring of governance or governmentality (Foucault, 1991). Since the beginning of the 1980s and even more during the 1990s plenty of surveys have been conducted on social capital and an increasing number of studies and articles have been published (Bourdieu, 1986 and 1993; Putnam, 1993 and 2000; Coleman, 1988, Woolcock, 1998; Fukuyama, 1999; Burt, 2000; Norris, 2003; Tillberg Mattsson et al., 2004, Árnason et al., 2004). Bourdieu and Coleman, from whose work the idea originated emphasized the importance of social ties and shared norms to societal well-being and economic efficiency, and their concept has widely been used in the study of social inequality and hierarchical social structures. Putnam above all linked the ideas of social capital to the importance of civic associations and voluntary organisations, and emphasised positive aspects of social control.

According to Bourdieu`s, there are different forms of capital. Economic capital is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights. Bourdieu's cultural capital, which may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications, includes what economists consider as human capital, but it is a wider

concept. His concept of social capital encompasses the resources derived from one's belonging to a group. Relations of social capital may exist on the basis of material and/or symbolic relations of exchange, and they may also be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility. Social capital can be defined as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. The membership in a group provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital, a credential which entitles them to credit. According to Bourdieu, the amount of social capital held by an individual depends on the extent he or she is able to mobilize a social network and from the capital (including the economic, cultural or symbolic capital) held by the members of that network. Social capital, like other types, of capital, is unevenly distributed, mobilized, utilized, transformed and exchanged in society.

In *Making Democracy Work* Putnam explored the conditions for creating responsive and effective democratic institutions that lead to economic growth. Putnam points out that features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks of civic engagement (associations) can substantially improve a society's efficiency in overcoming dilemmas of collective action. Putnam uses social capital as an attribute of the social structure in which a person is embedded, and emphasizes that social capital is "not the private property of any of the persons who benefit from it" (Putnam, 1993, 170). Networks of civic engagement like neighborhood associations, choral societies, cooperatives, sports clubs, and mass-based parties represent intense horizontal interaction which essentially promote trust, reciprocity and co-operation within the society. In contrast, vertical networks such as patron-client relationships can, according to Putnam, do not sustain social trust and co-operation, and rather tend to undermine solidarity, especially among clients. The radius of trust is the circle of people among whom cooperative norms are operative. Social capital promotes access to resources and social capital is also assumed to be produced by networks, defined as social actors, or nodes and flows of information and resources.

A territorial approach to social capital was brought into discussion by Rifkin. He states that all real culture exists in Geography because that is where intimacy takes place, and without intimacy it is not possible to create bonds of social trust and engender true feelings of empathy. Our more ancient nature is embedded as much in Geography as in temporality. Simultaneously, according to Giddens, there is a process of disembodying between space and time and consequently a loss of special intimacy. Local societies are traditional historical communities .There is a continuous process of transformation going on in rural areas, and the means of living, the population structure and social cohesion are in a state of flux. Yet, territory is more than just a social convention, and rootedness to geographical place is still valued. Some feel a deep empathy with a certain place or territory, others with the local social community, some both of them. New communication means have made location less of a constant in fashioning of social relationships. However, there is a close relationship amongst people and long-term individual experience with a territory also enhances social capital.

Critics also argue that the term "social capital" is vague, hard to measure, poorly defined and perhaps not even a form of capital at all. (Economists often argue that capital involves making some form of sacrifice in the present - like studying in school to raise your human capital when you could be playing outside - to produce gains in the future.) Despite the debate, social capital is a concept that's attracting interest among politicians and policy makers. One reason for this is the increasing concern over marginalization in our societies.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q3. Define ‘Social Capital’.

10.6. CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS OF DEVELOPMENT- GENDER

To understand the gendered nature of the development process, one has to locate men and women within the complex history of policy interventions. Scholars from feminist perspectives, and women's organisations argue that development planning and practice has not taken into account unequal gendered power relations. Women, in particular, have been seen as the more disadvantaged group. This account emphasizes on the consequences that an inadequate attention to gender equation has resulted in. In the context of India, several studies point out that the crimes against women show an upward trend, in particular brutal crimes such as rapes, dowry deaths, and honour killings. These trends are disturbing as a natural prediction would be that with growth come education and prosperity, and a possible decline in adherence to traditional institutions and socially prescribed gender roles that hold women back. Thus women's position remains unchanged and has in many situations worsened. The development discourse has perceived women as submissive recipients of state's largesse. Connel (1987) says women are the major consumers of welfare services, because of the ways in which state support is designed to substitute for 'husbands'(breadwinner) wages, presupposing women's exclusion from the labour market. The literature on women and development in India have focused on how in the course of economic development, the dependence on market conditions, technological options and socio-legal institutions has consistently had devastating effects on Indian women's work and employment according to several scholars. Discrimination against women and girls is a pervasive and long-running phenomenon that characterizes Indian society at every level. India's progress towards gender equality, measured by its position on rankings such as the Gender Development Index has been disappointing, despite fairly rapid rates of economic growth.

Initially the Planning Commission defined three areas of special focus for Indian women's development- education, social welfare and health, emphasising the nurturing role of women rather than her productive role. Till the Sixth Five Year Plans the approach to women's issues was mainly welfare oriented, celebrating the image of 'nurturing and caring mother'. For example under health programmes the focus was maternal and child health services, supplementary feeding for children, and for nursing and expectant mothers. Women continued to be seen as beneficiaries of programmes of social welfare, mainly through voluntary organisations, with the help of the Central Social Welfare Board, according to Kalpagam.

The image of women as passive recipients was continued even within the various poverty alleviation programmes implemented by the government in the early 1970s. These programmes were initiated at a time when 'poverty had become a political issue'.. Such development strategies support the status quo they do not benefit women. These reinforce patriarchal norms of behaviour.

Gendered analysis of the schemes in the first few years' post-independence India reveal two major shortcomings: first there was no special effort to integrate specific needs of women, and second it focused on the household and was not sensitive to unequal power relations operating within it. The major assumption was that the household is a unit of congruent interests, among whose members the benefits of available resources are shared equitably, irrespective of gender. This gender critique was the result of the debates in the seventies regarding 'women and development'.

These debates were the result of three interrelated factors discussed below:

First, it refers to organisation of gender specific empirical evidence and analysis by the Committee on the Status of Women in India in form of the *'Towards Equality Report'* in 1974. The Report stated that the secondary and subordinate position of women was the result of 'patriarchal' nature of mainstream development process. The Report stated that women and in

particular poor women fared worse in social, economic, and political indicators of development. Additionally, the Government was not acknowledging the role of women in development. It pressurised the state to take cognizance of the fact that a 'top-down and additive' approach to Indian women's development concerns does not address the needs of women. The Committee recommended on conducting research to gather data on gender discrimination in employment, education, land redistribution inheritance, nutrition and health began to be collected and theorised on.

Secondly, the mushrooming of women's organisations loosely constituted a women's movement since the late 1970's. The new women's movement, in late seventies and early eighties through campaigns on rape and dowry conceptualised women's concerns within a gendered framework. Through the campaigns a gendered critique of the patriarchal structures of the state and its policies were made. The upsurge of mass movements, in late sixties and early seventies which articulated the discontent of Indian citizens with the development model also emphasised the need to rethink the development model.

The Third was in the international context. Kabeer and Saunders argue that two interconnecting factors led to the recognition of women as a constituency in development process. The first was the efforts by academics such as Boserup who showed how women played a critical role in agricultural production in sustaining local and national economies. The Second was the growing realisation that the processes of colonialism and modernisation has had a negative impact on the economies of sub-Saharan Africa and Third World countries and that in the Third World countries one could see women's increased marginalisation. Therefore there was a growing demand that women must be integrated into the development process as active economic agents if countries are to prosper. The next influence was the social movements by women in the sixties and seventies against male domination and oppression. It also involved a process of theorising on

patriarchy on lines of three theoretical perspectives- liberal, radical and Marxist/socialist feminisms.

Feminist economists recognised the failure of the trickle-down theory, which argued that benefits of economic growth and development would trickle down to women and called for a need to design a development model that would focus on poverty alleviation measures and redistribution of resources for women. “This 'equity' argument was bolstered with an 'efficiency argument' that highlighted the fact that 'women's issues have development policy implications’’ (Buvinic 1983:23). This recognition changed the focus of development polices from welfare to economic efficiency and pressurised the United Nations to take cognizance of women's concerns into the development process, as 'productive citizens'. The declaration of 1975-85 by United Nations as the United Nations Decade for Women was important. The impact of this was seen in terms of research funding and dissemination, media coverage and pressure on countries to generate gender-specific data and status of women reports (Agarwal 1994:3). This gendered critique of its developmental model made the Indian state structure its programmes in the eighties within the new perspective called 'Women in Development' (WID). It recognised the adverse impact of inappropriate economic development programmes and its data gathering efforts which did not recognise women's work and treated them as mothers. The polices of the state were critiqued by Indian feminists arguing that they focussed merely on women's issues' and not on gendered relations of power and inequality. Krishnaraj and Banerjee argued that women's contribution to the economy remains 'hidden' because their work, especially in agriculture remains un-enumerated. Women's work is categorised within 'unproductive work' for which payment is not made. This unpaid work includes activities inside and outside homes and in agriculture which are not classified under conventional categories of work. To a great extent women's work remains uncounted and un-reflected in the census. This lacuna has an adverse impact on government development polices for women.



10.7 LET US SUM UP

- Development is characterised by both positive and negative aspects.
- Development is posed with several challenges in contemporary times.
- Some of the prominent challenges to development are-poverty, gender inquality, etc.
- Development in order to be truely effective, must take into concideration the adverce aspects and its impacts on the larger society.



10.8 FURTHER READING

Agarwal, B. (1985) 'Women, Poverty and Agricultural Growth in India', The Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol. 13, No 4, pp 165-220.

_____ (1989) 'Rural Women, Poverty and natural resources: Sustenance, Sustainability and Struggle for Change', Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 24, No 3, WS 46-WS112.

_____ (1994) 'Gender and Command Over Property: A Critical Gap In Economic Analysis and Policy in South Asia', World Development, Vol. 22, No 10, pp 1455-1478.

_____ (1995) A field of One's Own: Gender and Land rights in South Asia, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Agnihotri, I. and Mazumdar, V. (2005) 'Changing Terms of Political Discourse: Women's Movement in India 1970s -1990s' in Khullar, M. (ed.) (2005):



10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Development is a process of improving the quality of all human lives with three equally important aspects.

Ans to Q No 2: Absolute Poverty, Relative Poverty.

Ans to Q No 3: Social capital refers to the links, values and understanding among people that help them to live and work together.

10.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

1. What is development planning?
2. Which are the factors that lead to poverty due to globalisation?
3. What are the positive and negative effects of globalising process on developing countries?

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

1. Why is it important to take gender concerns into development process? Discuss.
2. Why is it important to make planning gender sensitive?
3. Does the Indian state address the development concerns of the marginalised? Examine.

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