

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: CONCEPT AND PRACTICE

R. R. Singh

Abstract

Social development is a term widely used by social scientists, social activists and government personnel involved in policy formulation. Its widespread use, particularly in contrast to the concept of human development, has created lack of clarity in the scope of its application. The concept of social development encompasses, among others, welfare, community development and socio-ecological development. Its core elements are equity, social justice, equality, participation, sustainability and peace. As a goal, condition and process, it calls for renewal, restructuring, enhanced responsiveness and functioning of institutions of society based on humanistic values.

Introduction

Social philosophers have articulated their utopian visions of a good or new society for centuries. Social scientists of different persuasions have tried to study and understand social structures, cultures, functions and processes which lead to development, deprivation, conflict, peace, solidarity, marginalisation or alienation. The concern of these scientists has also focused particularly on action to foster development based on humanistic values which affect individuals, groups, areas and societies at large. On account of gradual disillusionment with economic development and consequent paradigm shift in development thought incorporating people-centric concerns as priorities for global attention and action, efforts are underway to make development integrated, inclusive, equitable, sustainable and socially just.

R. R. Singh, former Professor and Head, Department of Social Work, Delhi University and former Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai; Flat No.2, Plot 5, Uttaranchal Cooperative Group Housing Society, Patparganj, Delhi - 110 092.

The current phase of globalisation with widening inequalities and persisting exploitation has exposed societies and people to "new" realities which are far removed from the vision of a global society enshrined in the United Nations (UN) Charter of 1945. Sequel to decolonisation worldwide, struggles for liberation and human rights have sought to restore and enhance dignity and peace; promote equity, social justice and participation, and secure redistribution of power and resources for the welfare and well-being of people. Sustainability and human security have emerged as major concerns for "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" envisioned in the UN Charter.

Historically, during the 1920s, the twin objectives of personal and social development (or individual and social functioning) were stressed generally in social work. Subsequently, community development projects in the British colonies of Africa were launched for the welfare of local communities. Around 1950s, in the literature on social welfare, the term community development began to be replaced by social development which subsumed both social welfare and community development. The decade beginning 1970s marked the period of further expansion and clarity in its conceptualisation. This paradigmatic shift from the unified approach to basic needs approach and then to holistic approach, and conceptual shift from "social welfare geared to social development" to "social welfare in a developmental context" and then to "developmental social welfare" (Pathak 1981) have sharpened focus and content as a goal, condition, and process. The concept of social development thus includes, among others, structural change, socio-economic integration, institutional development, institutional renewal (Paiva 1977), and also sustainability as its important components.

The global consensus at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, its Review in 2000 by the member states of the UN, the Declaration of the Millennium Development Goals and of the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2000, and the Resolution of the 48th UN General Assembly in 2003 called for national and international cooperation (Rao 1998).² The stress upon coherence of policies to promote social development with participation and partnership as its objectives and means, and special reference to gender, integration of social and economic policies, national and international

cooperation and development policies, and issues of unemployment were conspicuous in 2000. The two sets of recommendations of the UN Commission for Social Development in this regard are particularly worthy of note: (i) equity, social cohesion and adequate accumulation of human capital and (ii) employment creation and progress in working conditions as indispensable elements of poverty reduction, social integration and overall development. These recommendations correspond to the three interrelated sub-themes of the World Summit (1995) which specify poverty eradication, full employment and social integration as priorities. The Declaration of the Tenth Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development (2005) reiterated earlier commitments, and recognised the "need for further attention and action" in these areas. The vision of social development has thus expanded overtime and its operationalisation (as well as realisation) has become more challenging.

Further, in the present context of accelerated globalisation which is affecting developed and developing countries and those in transition differentially, there is growing demand for peace, global security, correction of democratic and governance deficits (ILO 2004), and empowerment of local and global communities through responsive institutions and sustainable development. These however vary in terms of societal contexts, social priorities, resources, institutions and competencies as reflected in the country-specific policies and programmes. During the past five decades, although the concept of social development has etched "social" as central to the local, national and global development processes through the efforts of the UN, member states and civil society organisations, views differ as to whether it is complementary or corrective to economic development, is an alternative thereto, or is subsumptive of economic and sustainable development. If the sub-title of the official journal of the Inter-University Consortium on International Social Development (IUCISD) - *Social Development Issues: Alternative Approaches to Global Human Needs* - is accepted tentatively, it is an *alternative approach*.

Expansive Reach

Disillusionment with the earlier paradigm of economic growth which created prosperity for a few and poverty for the vast multitude led to search for correctives and alternatives, and the launch of the

First Development Decade in 1960 by the United Nations. The Great Depression of the late 1920s and later years, inequitable distribution of income and wealth, spurts in economic growth with periods of recession, inflation and stagflation, and recent shocks experienced by some of the developed economies have exposed the vulnerability of the present economic system. Beginning with the economic and educational development of local communities during the second quarter of the twentieth century in the British colonies of Africa, concern about the welfare of people began to assume greater importance globally. From a residual and minimalist approach then, the concept of welfare broadened to include institutional and developmental goals. This resulted in the formal acceptance of social development as an approach and a global programme of action under the aegis of the United Nations.

A review of literature in social and human sciences and public documents brings out several formulations of the concept of social development. For example, Gandhi laid stress on soul force, sacrifice of the self, self-control and *sarvodaya* - meaning welfare or rise of all (Ganguli 1977; Pathak 1987). *Antyodaya* (rise of the last), *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (entire earth as family), and *sangham* (collective or association) are other expressions in the Indian tradition, which reflect the ideal of social development. Other ancient traditions also share similar visions and aspirations. Explicating the view of Gandhi on social development Ganguli (1977) stated that the true measure of development in any society was the situation of the "lowliest individual". Therefore, willing submission to social restraint for the well-being of the whole society, development towards a higher state, observance of not only rights but also the duties in order to prevent or curb violence, and freedom from fear constitute pre-conditions for social development. The concept of self-change in the Gandhian tradition finds its echo in Roy Bhaskar (2000: 68-69) who is a philosopher and the proponent of critical realism. He proposes the following theorem: "[A]ll change begins with and consists in work at, though not necessarily in work on, the self... [A]ll change or at least all radical change, that is all creative change begins with self-change, that is with a prior (analytically and/or chronologically) transformation in one's transformative praxis. Moreover all change also in a certain sense consists in (or involves) self-expansion. Thus one changes society by first (and also) by changing oneself.... Inner peace may therefore be

the key to outer peace and the salvation of the planet." This may be regarded as self-change and spirituo-transformative perspective. Gandhi's approach however is spirituo-radical due to its direct action component. In Eriksonian sense, it is an oceanic world-view.

Bogardus (1964) has drawn attention to the "knowledge of societary process essential to sound thinking about present day evils". The principles of the societary process are love, social service, social justice, peace and universal brotherhood. Hobhouse (1966) uses the term social development as the "development of men and women in their mutual relations" in terms of "scale, efficiency, freedom and mutuality". Ethical development and social development are the "same" for him. Scale, in his formulation, refers to the number of population; efficiency as adequate apportionment and coordination of functions in the service of an end; freedom as scope of thought, character and initiative; and mutuality as service of an end in which each who serves participates. Put together, these may be regarded as service, relational or ethico-social perspective.

Societal development is a term used by Chodak (1973) signifying developments that "occur in the social interactions and change the character of social living..., [it] is simultaneously a process of differentiation of new societal roles and specialisations which produces more options and choices for mobility and a process of imposing interdependencies that subordinates people with diverse frameworks of growing systemness". One can see a contrast here between Gandhian approach of "willing restraint" and that of Chodak which provides space for "imposing interdependencies". This characterisation of development can be considered as socio-interactionist perspective.

During the seventies a spurt is seen in the literature on conceptualisation of social development. Gore (1973) emphasises the development of totality of society in its economic, political, social and cultural aspects; and interrelationships between different sectors, and values. Nieuwenhuijze (1979) is guided by welfare approach. He regards "social as corrective or alternative to economic but not merely residual or problematic". His concept of "social action" encompasses "alleviation, remedy, prevention, and planning" and its reach is "from individual to society as whole." Paiva's (1977) emphasis on structural change, socio-economic integration, institutional development and

institutional renewal combines welfare of people by people themselves with people's values and behaviours, quality of human relationship and also relationships between people and societal institutions. Further, one of the two sets of definitions that emerged from the workshop of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) on social development for social work educators stressed upon eco-friendly environment (IASSW 1979).

For Omar (1979), social development is "both a goal and a process that aims to achieve an integrated, balanced, unified (social and economic) development of society... and creation of humanistic societies devoted to achieving peace in the world and progress of all its people." This view subsumes economic, physical, cultural, moral and interpersonal aspects. Kulkarni (1979) refers to the creation of "new set of values, attitudes and practices...structures and organisations." Social development, according to him, is a conscious and deliberate intervention with the instrument of policy and planning. In most of the contributions of 1970s the emphasis is on structural change and developmental perspective except that of Nieuwenhuijze which predominantly falls in the area of welfare.

Further expansion of the concept of social development is seen in the eighties. Jones and Pandey (1981) lay emphasis on planned institutional change, distribution and participation; and strategies of human development and social integration as part of social development. Hardiman and Midgley (1982) give an account of the re-appraisal of the UN's social development programme and its broader conception, including the unified approach. Gil's (1981) description of different aspects of social development is the broadest of all which encompasses "philosophical, biological, ecological, psychological, social, economic and political dimensions." According to him, social development is a "...balanced progress of entire population... towards enhanced, collective, segmental and individual well-being... (It) is a specific configuration of social policies chosen consciously by population in accordance with egalitarian, co-operative and collectivity oriented value premises aimed at enhancing systematically the overall quality of life, or the existential milieu of the entire society..." Spergel's (1978; 1982) conceptualisation of social development conforms to the social treatment model in social work with a specific focus on institutions. Pathak (1987) stresses upon deliberate action to transform

society and also notes the gap between the ideological and operational level. These contributions have created new thought spaces for a social developmental perspective.

Burkey (1996: 39) refers to the perception of social development by the indigenous workers from Uganda as follows: "Social development is a process of gradual change in that people increase their awareness of their own capabilities and common interest and use this knowledge to analyse their needs; decide on solutions; organise themselves for cooperative efforts; and mobilise their own human, financial and natural resources... within the context of their own cultures and their own political systems." This formulation may be characterised as people's perspective. However, the expression "within" leaves out the possibility for any cultural change, for a culture may be regressive and social development process may seek to effect change therein. In fact, social development is more transformative than conformative in action and out-come. Secondly, whatever the dimension of social development - psychological, political, economic, ecological, socio-cultural or spiritual - progress will remain uneven, non-linear, and spiral. Certain domains may lag behind (social developmental lag) or overtake others. Such a progress, if measured on specified variables, may be low, average, high, or stagnant. For example, high economic growth may leave people's mindset relatively unchanged; or political development may be unstable. Elections for choosing representatives may be either violent or rigged. They may lack fairness and credibility. Their formal results may not be acceptable to people, and even may cause alienation. There may also be deadlock in the formation of a representative government and a situation may arise for re-election, the impact of which will be felt in all the domains. The articles under the caption "Money's Hold over Morality" in *The New York Times* (selected for the *Asian Age*, August 6, 2005) has vividly portrayed the threat of graft in Latin America, and its crippling effect on Africa's growth. Its sub-captions say: "The burgeoning democracies of Latin America, the poorest nations in Africa, and the world's largest industries all struggle with a common foe: corruption among the powerful and not-so-powerful. Somali refugees fear backlash from actions of own countrymen and Europe is dealing with a new breed of terror". These global trends clearly show regressions in social integration. There is a need therefore to revisit the various aspects of

social integration as co-existence, peaceful co-existence, co-operation, social harmony, social solidarity, diversity, and social participation or engagement in order to compare progress.

During the 1990s the work of Lowe (1995) in the *Encyclopaedia of Social Work* has brought together the contributions of several scholars on social development. Bhaskar Rao (1998) has also published a volume on this theme. Dual focus of social development is an underlying current in the works of all of them. Billups (1990) uses the expression "advancing individual human development and broadscale societal development", and subsequently "personal social development." He impresses upon new socially responsible experiences by individuals in their interpersonal relationships as one aspect, the other being socio-political, cultural and structural development within and among communities, social institutions and societies. He further adds self-realisation ethic and ecological ethic to his description. While Bhaskar Rao (1998) re-iterates the Copenhagen Declaration, Meinert (1991) places emphasis upon social justice, peace, control of development efforts by those affected, and efforts towards human betterment. Midgley (1994) draws attention to the conceptual confusion and ambiguity in the field, and the neologism of "human development" adopted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In his earlier work Midgley (1992) had classified social development strategies as individualist, collectivist and communitarian. The joint work of Billups, Meinert and Midgley (1994) presents social development as an approach to human betterment as well as a goal, process and a methodological approach. Malcolm Payne (2005) deals with social and community development together and considers them related but separate. He emphasises participatory approaches to all kinds of social concern which require skills in interpersonal and group communication, and are also related to social work and empowerment practice. His stress on the importance of sustainable development is noteworthy in this regard. Incorporating in their fold popular culture- and region-specific perceptions in them, these contributions may be grouped under socio-ecological perspective.

The works of these scholars thus continue with and expand the perspectives and ethos of the 1980s. In the above review, except Gandhi, none is a social practitioner on mass scale in a radical experimental mould. Surprisingly, the academics belonging to professional social

work have not highlighted the role of social reform although one of the strategies in Midgley's classification - social movements - may come close to it. Another notable omission is that of the pioneering work done through social settlement movement in the west, Gandhian reconstruction work in India, and its offshoot- the *Bhoodan* (land gift) movement initiated by Vinoba Bhave. The latter evolved to encompass *Sharmdan* (gift of labour), *Sampatidan* (gift of wealth), *Jeevandan* (gift of life/ lifelong service) and so on. *Ashrams* (institutions or centres) were established to train workers and inspire people to experiment with austere living, and work through consensus rather than courts.

On account of such diverse perspectives, the question of their further exploration for knowledge development and action still needs to be addressed. This can be done at three levels: unit, space (area) and strategy. Unit in this context refers to individuals, groups, communities, institutions, and societies. Space or area includes localities, districts or administrative units, infrastructure, cultural regions, and regions with severe deprivations requiring priority attention. Strategies could be identified as individual behavioural change, institutional change, planned social change, structural change (including social reform), and environmental change at local, national and global level. These are however non-linear. They may be treated as universals in the universe of social development (or any development for that matter) which are in dynamic interaction between themselves as a process leading towards a goal. Their interplay may be signified with four Ps: people \longleftrightarrow place \longleftrightarrow process \longleftrightarrow "practice-perspective". This classification recognises that the last strategy (social development) will require a higher level of social evolution and development to make it operational due to differential motivational, spatial, socio-cultural and material factors across societies. Its wider focus and concerns however will reflect upon, inform and strengthen all other developmental initiatives in the units, areas and the remaining strategies. It is for this reason that it has been included under strategies. Different perspectives identified thus may be grouped under any one of these categories, with some overlap.

The above-mentioned perspectives on social development have been shaped by ideological, situational, temporal, regional, ecological and epistemological factors as well as social experiments in realising a larger vision of society. These pioneering social experiments

attempted hitherto are both of historical and contemporary importance for the building of new communities.

Salient Features of Survey Reports

Drucker (1972), while exploring the curricula of 65 Schools of Social Work in Pakistan, Thailand, Philippines, Hong-Kong and Korea, listed five aspects of social development identified by social work educators. These were "social policy and social planning, social justice, participation of people, institution-building and social work helping methods... as social welfare roles". He concluded that "participation was considered most important and social justice as least important". One may raise a question as to whether these perceptions or priorities were (or are) shaped by a given political system at a given point of time. Since Drucker's survey, justice has assumed greater importance in the literature on social development as well as in the social programmes of the democratic governments along with participation. The developmental aspect of social welfare - both residual and rights-focused, among others, on "social justice, equality, empowerment" - "anticipates problems,... multi-system services, facilitation of self-help, universal benefits" etc.

In an International Survey (Mienert and Kohn 1987), wide variation in "concepts in use" was reported. Ten concepts constituted the conceptual field in the first round of the Delphi method. These included participation, conscientisation, liberation, non-exploitative rationality, appropriate technology, institution-building, indigenisation, collectivism, social planning and cooperation. Views were sought from experts on their being "absolutely essential and necessary", "useful and helpful", and "not relevant" based on the criteria of being "comprehensive, proactive, inter-temporal, multi-stratification levels and inter-sectoral implications." Regional variations in the views of experts were also found: in the US, the focus was on "what" and "how" of redistribution; and in other countries, on "who". Out of the 65 concepts given by experts, participation, social planning, conscientisation, social change and institution building received wider support. If one compares the two survey results (Drucker 1972) regional context emerges as a major factor in conceptualisation. The conceptual update (Mienert and Kohn 1987) also draws attention to worldwide inequalities. The scope of social development thus is

seen as empowerment of both individual and group, and development at the local, regional, national and global levels. Some of the variables/attributes mentioned earlier are also reflected in the beliefs and values described by the researchers. Beliefs are characterised by them as interdisciplinarity, inter-sectoralism, integration (holistic integration of efforts and outcome), qualitiveness and participation; whereas values include conscientisation, detribalisation, and cooperation. But both contain certain components which are similar. From the stage of problem identification to evaluation, the social development process consists of several foci and steps.

These however should not be regarded as sequential, because the process may be concurrent and spiral. These steps or phases include "problem identification, analysis and re-identification; resource analysis, cultural focus (a dialectic to focus on cultural similarities), infrastructure development, identification of goals and objectives, design of intervention strategies (form of technology to be employed... that are appropriate)..., design of intervention tactics..., initial implementation of the plan, formative evaluation and modification, activity continuance and renewal; activity completion and summative evaluation...." The relationship between social development, social justice and peace has also been stressed in the discussion of the conceptual update.

It can be thus seen that literature on the history of social development, its contextuality, cultural specificity and variance in its conceptualisation - spatial, temporal and perceptual - has been produced both nationally and globally. Social development projects (sometimes understood as social welfare, social programmes or by other names) have also been evaluated. But after the World Summit for Social Development and its three sets of priorities, namely, poverty eradication, full employment, and social integration, the question yet remains as to how one should compare progress within a country and between countries. If one looks at the issues and recommendations of the 1997 Copenhagen Seminar on Social Progress as a follow-up of the World Summit of 1995, one may say that they add to the conceptual enrichment but much less to the operationalisation and comparison. According to this Report, "markets are social constructs.... They are elements of social fabric strongly influenced by moral and cultural patterns of behaviour...[and] are instruments to serve human needs."

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The Report adds, and rightly so, that “a world community is not yet possible; more than an addition of countries, this community has so far not been constructed.” It also articulates the “concern for the welfare of future generations, particularly with regard to the protection of environment and the “sustainability” of current patterns of production and consumption.” It further identifies the criteria for assessing the quality of human markets as follows: economic participation of the maximum number of people (including availability of jobs and possibilities for entrepreneurship), economic justice (fair reward for the economic activity of people, non-exploitation, and non-excessively skewed income and wealth distribution); economic morality (rule by ethical principles, integrity as a shared value, and deference to natural environment), and economic moderation (markets restricted to economic transactions without involving all spheres of life and society). The Report draws attention to the growth of informal sector economy, reflecting problems of economic participation, possible breakdown of social structures, and threat to social cohesion; stark income disparities in society characterised by overpaid executives and under-paid workers; growth of criminal activity, especially narco traffic; centrality of economic rationality; control of state by market forces; monetisation of science and intellectual property; problems (sometimes) in promoting human rights and cultural diversity; reconciliation of various forms of universalism; tensions between internationalism cum globalisation and localisation cum marginalisation; need for tolerance and respect, and need to address poverty: material, affective or spiritual. It further adds that societies are humane when individualism merges into community spirit; economic efficiency, social equity and social cohesion combine in a culture of human decency and solidarity; division of responsibility between the state, the citizen, and the private sector is made; and different paths are pursued for social progress towards a compassionate state, humane markets, a decent world order, and compatibility of politics and ethics. It warns that a global social Darwinism at the service of a global market society would lead to global social fragmentation and therefore there is a need to restore values and goals of social justice, solidarity and human dignity. The picture of contemporary global social progress that emerges from the Report is quite depressing indeed.

Interchangeable Usage

A review of literature particularly since 1950 brings out that the term social development has been used interchangeably with allied terms by several scholars. The evidence of such usage is seen even in the official position of the IUCISD. While the journal *Social Development Issues* bears a sub-title *Alternative Approaches to Global Human Needs*, the members of the IUCISD are expected to use "a social development approach..." to "(a) promote world peace and social justice; (b) fight economic and political oppression; (c) improve access to adequate health care and education; (d) overcome discrimination against women and minorities; and (e) create sustainable income and economic structure." With such diverse views on the concept of social development, the expression "a social development approach" makes it definitive. Although five areas have been identified, they fall short of the expanded conceptualisations. As an alternative to development or economic development, placing people at the centre is one thing; and an alternative approach or a social development approach to development is quite another. It is not just a matter of semantics; for, an approach is only a corrective or supplement to the reigning paradigm of development.

Midgley (1994) has stated that the UNDP used the neologism "human development" in order to placate the right who denigrate the word "social". If that were so, the World Summit for Social Development was organised in 1995 and the commitments made then are being re-affirmed or renewed now. In the light of this global consensus, an appropriate correction can be made by an organ of the United Nations to avoid persisting confusion, although perusal of agenda papers preparatory to the World Summit shows frequent usage of the term "human development."

Kondrat and Julia (1997) have used human development and social development interchangeably. And they have coined a new phrase "human social development" with "social and economic improvement for society as its goal; collective transformation of social reality as its purpose; and planned integrated approach as means or method". Pandey has articulated "human development strategy" as part of social development, its other strategy being "social integration" (Jones and Pandey 1981: 39-43). Recounting the early days of the IUCISD from

an idea to an institution, Paiva has referred to the Action Committee Report of 1975 which recognised “the task of human development... as both a national and international goal”, and called upon associations of educational institutions “to foster a continuous process of discovering and refining the knowledge required for social development and of clarifying the role of the human service profession in the development process” (Paiva 1997: 116-117). Again, mixed usage of terms social development, human development and human face of economic development is seen in Jayasuria’s (1997:173) work. The publications of the UNDP however have not followed this pattern. They are consistent with the conceptualisation of 1990, when the first Human Development Report (HDR) was brought out, and have further expanded its scope. With the assistance of the UNDP two optional courses have now been introduced in economics at the postgraduate level by Assam University in India as reported by its vice-chancellor. Courses on social development are already being taught in social work institutions in India and elsewhere. Thus interchangeable usage is bound to create confusion in the academia.

Since social development is interdisciplinary, a rigorous delineation of this concept is required for academics, researchers, practitioners, planners and administrators to facilitate clear understanding of its nature and scope. For example, in psychology, human development refers to the life cycle of an individual, and social development is one of its components. The current usage of both the terms in the literature on development however is very different from that in psychology. Although scholars have described or conceptualised the term social development since 1970s, its incorrigible inclusivity (Khinduka 1987) persists, which needs to be made corrigible at some point of time so that views of scholars accord with those of the UN system and perceptions of nation-societies. If one goes by history, the term “human development” was first used in the formative years of the IUCISD in 1975. In professional social work, it must have been used umpteen times over the past century. But the long history of usage of a phrase or term does not entitle it a place or legitimise its inclusion in social theory or professional practice.

Human Development : A Part or Parallel?

Beginning with 1990, and with the annual publication of the HDRs since then by the UNDP, a new trend has emerged in the growing literature on social development. Use of terms "human", "social", "human social", "human face" and so on as adjectives (or prefixes) to development has occurred with greater frequency in the titles or texts.³ Some titles are even misleading, for, their contents are not in accord with the title or consensus among academics. In some countries, human development reports are also being prepared at the state and local levels, and they are being referred to by social planners, administrators, research practitioners, and the academics in their work. Each year they are either amplifying or adding newer dimensions, and are ranking countries based on selected variables.

If one looks at the forewords and overviews of these reports (1990-2004) one finds that concepts or ideas articulated in the literature on social development are similar to human development except for their indices and refined methodology. For example, the first HDR (1990) sets out the baseline by stating that "human development is the process of enlarging people's choices for leading creative and productive lives and collectively to develop full potential". Three variables chosen to measure it are longevity, knowledge (or education) and access to income. There is also reference to political freedom, personal security, community participation, guaranteed human rights, link between economic growth and *human progress* and sustainable development in production and distribution. The new features of the second report are: sensible re-allocation of resources, restructuring of national budgets in order to serve humanity better, empowerment of people, peace dividend, gender equality, and concern for human distress and weakening social fabric.

The third report almost adopts the well known definition of democracy by stating that human development is "of people, for people and by people". It also refers to environmental concerns, widening income disparity, social safety net and a proposal for a Development Security Council. However, the mention in this report that "competitive markets as a means are best guarantee for human development" is rather controversial. The HDR (1993) makes a new addition by including advocacy. Noting the silent crisis of underdevelopment and

thoughtless degradation of environment, the HDR of 1994 pleads for sustainable human development which is pro-poor, pro-nature, pro-job and pro-women. Equity within and among generations appears in the HDR of 1995. People-centred equitable distribution of resources and environmentally and socially sustainable development are the special features of the sixth HDR (1996). The next HDR (1997) introduces the concept of human poverty, stresses upon the widening of people's choices and argues that poverty eradication is an ethical, social, political and moral imperative. Conspicuous consumption, social exclusion and protection of consumer rights are the highlights of the HDR of 1988. Globalisation with human face and connectivity (or connectedness) of people find mention in the HDR of 1999; and linkages between human development and human rights, transparent and fair governance, and seven freedoms feature in the HDR of 2000. Commenting particularly on this report, Elliot and Mayadas (2000: i-ii) point out that values, philosophy and interventions of social development subsume freedoms from discrimination, want, fear and injustice, freedom of thought, freedom for decent work, and freedom to develop. In other words, social development subsumes these freedoms. Further in this series, concepts of new technology and collective responsibility (HDR 2000); deepening democracy in a fragmented world (HDR 2001) and reproductive health and global climate change (HDR 2003) are the highlights of the first three reports of the new millennium. Cultural liberty and inclusive society, with a warning that "when state fails, coercive movements step in," constitute the essence of the HDR 2004. As the situation obtains, malfunctioning, ineffective functioning and failures of states are being reported from different parts of the world, and "hot spots" seem intractable of amicable solutions. Peace remains elusive or recedes after a while.

One can see from the above summary that within a time span of fifteen years, the concept of human development has so widened as to be co-equal to social development or even global development. It covers, within its scope, the enlargement of people's choices, linkage of economic and human development with human rights, collective participation, empowerment of people, restructuring of budgets, advocacy, sustainable and pro-people development, gender equality, poverty eradication, regulation of conspicuous consumption, connectivity, human rights, deepening of democracy, cultural liberty and inclusive society. Beginning with aggregation of average scores on

selected indicators of individual well-being, the reach of this concept has become far too inclusive. But not even once the expression "social development" has been used! This aspect merits serious consideration during the current phase of re-organisation within the UN system in terms of whether this is an omission, or conceptual differences are so sharp as to warrant promotion of human development as a distinct area. If enlargement of people's choices is the main thrust of human development, social treatment, social administration, social planning, community development and social work do - incidentally or deliberately - enlarge people's choices, and enhance their functioning" as well as capabilities by helping them or working with them in different ways. Their set of data is primary: both at a point of time and over time, with valuable qualitative information on the process and outcome of intervention. Therefore pending such clarification and its formal status in social theory, human development may be accepted as a perspective in social development.

World Summit 1995 and After

As reported by the UN, during the past one decade, official development assistance which was committed by the member states in 1995 has declined. This has had unfavourable impact on social development programmes globally. Before the Review in 2000, only eighteen countries had submitted their national reports by June 30, 1999 which was the deadline. This shows a wide gap between declaration (commitment) and follow up action (commission), and also the present level of preparedness of the global community to respond to the challenge of social development in all its acknowledged dimensions incorporated in the Copenhagen document. Whether this is a reflection of paternalistic donor mindset, ad-hoc developmentalism, social developmental recession/regression or feeble global altruism, can only be surmised. Intractable and divisive problems demand comprehensive action strategy, and incremental approach is not at all commensurate with them. The latter only weakens the will of society and concerned people.

The Report of the Secretary General to the Twenty-fourth Special Session of the UN General Assembly in 2000 points to "greater awareness of and commitment to social development ..., incremental movement towards equality between men and women..., increased

allocation of domestic resources for social development..., decline in relative poverty and growth in the absolute number of poor..., informalisation of employment..., decline in allocated resources for social development..., curtailment in various forms of social security..., reduced government resources..., and programmes to promote social integration". This report notes that "much has not been delivered" and calls for renewed commitment. The report on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (2003) pleads for coherence of policies vertically and horizontally to promote social development, participation and partnership. The political declaration and plan of implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development held at Johannesburg in 2000 draws attention to collective responsibility "to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development, namely, economic development, social development and environmental protection..., refers to millennium development goals, and determination of members to draw a visible plan for poverty eradication and human development". Here the term "human development" has been used along with "economic and social development and environmental protection." It is not clear from this document whether its use is in the sense of general human/ social progress or otherwise. The ILO (2004) has drawn attention to the "present global distribution of economic security which does not correspond with the global distribution of income". It advocates "economic level as a determinant of national happiness" rather than only income security. This concept is closer to those of Walzer (1983) who visualises a society, which celebrates pluralism and equality, and where "no social good serves or can serve as a means of domination". He conceives "social justice" as "social process" where conception and creation precede control and distribution. This formulation has obvious implications for social development.

The report of the tenth anniversary of World Summit for Social Development (2005) re-iterates the inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development; regards social integration as a pre-requisite to social development... and calls for "further attention and action". According to this report, "social integration component of social development appears to have lost ground... and principle of solidarity among peoples, societies and

nations has eroded." Taken together, these reports present a global situation analysis of social development in the first ten years. Here, a few comments particularly on social integration and sustainability will be in order. In view of growing assertion of ethnic identities, is social integration losing ground because the term integration itself is being misunderstood widely by people, which the representatives of member nations did not foresee? Or, is the global response to "social" far too inadequate? In the national contexts, there is evidence that indigenous groups and "excluded" sections of the population do not seem to support strategies which are designed to mainstream and integrate them. This aspect deserves serious consideration at the ideological, conceptual as well as operational levels. To take the example of sustainability, the progress on the ratification of Kyoto Protocol is halting, and not yet complete due to differences among member states. This shows deficit in global solidarity and action for saving the planet, its threatened species and natural resources. While sustainability is yet to gain ground, social integration is "loosing ground"!

Operationalising Social Development

The account given in the preceding sections has shown the vastness of the field of social development in its different dimensions. In order to understand the concept, one has to grapple with the term "social" which has got axiological, ideological, relational, existential, experiential and functional dimensions. Its conceptualisations are diverse and they need to be consensualised so that a comprehensive framework for action is evolved. It also needs to be debated whether social development is a trinomial (consisting of social, economic and sustainable development in their mutual inter-dependence) or overarching concept, or a vision or new synthesis of diverse approaches to development being attempted across global societies. This (re-)examination is imperative because member states are expected to incorporate social development in their national plans and budgets. Persisting ambiguities and conceptual expansiveness will make such incorporation *notional* rather than national or global. The document of the UN (1962: 11) in the First Development Decade uses the expression social advancement and intensification of action in the field of economic and social development. The contents of this document include education, community development, sectoral development, and

so on. In the UN document, Five Year Perspective 1960-1964 "social development" as sector includes population, housing, building and physical planning, health, nutrition, education, general conditions of work and employment, social security, social services, and issues of social defence, narcotics and refugees (UN 1960). However, in most of the materials/documents of the UN, the term "economic" generally precedes "social", which needs to be reversed wherever the context so demands. A model guideline can facilitate proper classification and operationalisation at different levels.

In view of the continuing interchangeable usage of the concept of social development and human development, official documents of the governments are also reflecting the same pattern. For example, in the Ninth and the Tenth Five Year Plans of the Government of India, under the contents (chapters) the two terms, "human and social development," have been used together as a sector of development (Government of India 1997; 2002). In this usage too "human" precedes "social". When the author enquired from an institution established to promote social development, and a group of social work educators and others from India and abroad about the difference between the two, they were hard put to bring them out. Some did not respond at all in spite of promises and reminders. Some academics in social science and social work held the view that social development subsumed human development. But a social work academic expressed categorically that human development (in the sense of humanity) was broader than social development. His view may find support from those who advocate human rights. But a distinction between the term universality and humanity will show that the latter (humanity) cannot be used as a synonym of the former. For, in certain circumstances, human rights are selectively conferred or even curtailed. The Indian planners thus seem to have struck a right pragmatic balance. Without entering into this debate further, if one sees the outcome of this pragmatic and balancing act, it is an agglomeration of a large social sector consisting of twelve areas (with sub-areas) under this head in the Ninth Five Year Plan, and seventeen areas with (sub-areas) in the Tenth Five Year Plan, if the separate head created on the Social Net is also taken into account. It may further be noted that the Ninth Plan commenced two years after the Copenhagen Declaration. Besides, programmes of other ministries/ government departments have got

certain allied components as well. But the comparison of the earlier plans with these two, and analyses of their allocations along with the budgets to find out whether after the World Summit on Social Development there is increase or decrease in allocations or re-allocations involve a major exercise. This is so due to changing heads/entries in the plan(s) and other public documents. Such changes in classification of heads/subjects are done scientifically as well as politically. An entry may be made in the plan and budget document to gain political mileage with only a token provision. Moreover, plan documents in India consistently use poverty alleviation rather than eradication which is an important difference maintained since 1970s (Some of the UN documents, of late, use the expression "poverty reduction"). It is for this reason that a perspective has to be articulated in a conceptual/definitional form in order to operationalise it for action by the concerned stakeholders through policy, plan and budget instruments. This is also necessary for making international comparisons. Incidentally, social integration does not find mention as either a head or a sub-head in the Indian plan document unless it is stretched to be part of the head, "Arts and Culture."

From the review of literature, and particularly the two international surveys (1972 and 1984) on conditions of social progress, and the conceptual update (1987), it is quite clear that intra-country, inter-country and global assessment of progress of social development is indeed difficult, for its perspectives are encompassing and scope is wide. But since these concerns are being reflected in the national development plans, a beginning on comparative assessment needs to be made in the case of those countries which have incorporated the concept in their development plans or policies after the World Summit. Three approaches suggest themselves to undertake this task. The first is the selection of a few indicators to assess progress in selected countries in the area of poverty elimination, full employment and social integration in terms of their financial allocations, programmes, policies and their impact. The second is the selection of a few identified priorities from the international surveys and generation of comparative data which are country-specific and also specific to operationalised concept. The third is the combination of selected indicators from both the sources, and generation of information which should be annually shared with citizens through a mandatory *Social Report*. Once this

process begins, refinements in further operationalisation of the concept as well as indicators will follow. However, despite refinements, social development as a belief, value, culture and a perspective will ever remain a guidepost and a challenge for developing precise instruments for any assessment, for, social development practice is both seen and felt more in the behaviours of the states and citizens.

In the author's view, social development is a process of planned structural change by collectively engaging groups and communities to mobilise their resources, and share, renew, and enrich their social and environmental capital – both locally and globally – in the furtherance of the goals of democratic participation, equity, human rights, peace, social justice, empowerment and sustainability. The outcome of this process is reflected in greater harmony in inter-group relations and collective good; in the critical review of the pattern of uneven development, prevention of social regression or diminishment, resolution of conflict(s), and re-alignment of various interests as well as political and material resources through responsive policies, institutional mechanisms and strategic action. Social development is an ethical, non-violent, relational, redistributive, re-directive, re-formative and transformative process that requires change in cognition, affect, behaviour and patterns of group interaction. It fosters a sense of pride in plurality and goes beyond the mere quantification and aggregation of achievements or lags on the developmental ladder. While its practice may begin in any of the above sub-areas, its perspective remains holistic, interdisciplinary and interprofessional, for, one set of micro-action only prepares the ground for further collateral and convergent actions by the concerned groups based upon their social priorities. Thus it goes beyond the development of welfare services, social services and social sectors.

Need for a Critical Gaze

The foregoing review on social development has brought out diverse conceptualisations which are substantive, agglomerative, metaphoric and even chaotic. Scholars have expressed their views on theoretical under-development (Beverly and Sherradon 1997) of social development and need for further work. Popular perceptions are also documented in the growing literature. But it is a matter of concern that social development which is vital to social well-being, advancement

and sustaining development is seen to have also been used as an "add-on" by various disciplines, departments, or stake-holders, whereas it needs to be taken seriously by scientists and professionals, and practised accordingly. The concept has also been variously viewed as ideal, goal, political philosophy, perspective, paradigm, concept, method, approach and an alternative. It is all these and much more in the sense of its being a new culture and spirit. It ranges from an existential to a spiritual vision with a wide global reach and calls for a change in mindset, relationships and societal organisations. Concerns expressed about structural change, socio-economic integration, institutional development, institutional renewal etc. as essential components of social development require action at the cognitive, affective, attitudinal and ground (social practice) levels. And such action needs to begin at home. Therefore the IUCISD, the World Social Forum and/or other national and international professional associations need to constitute a working group to examine its various dimensions and present a well-reasoned advocacy document for dialogue. They should also impress upon the UN system to re-examine the objectives of the Economic and Social Council and re-designate it as Social and Economic Council whose function it will be to adopt the social development perspective in its work within the UN system and facilitate member states to evolve their own course of action. It will essentially mean "walk the talk". Since it is widely accepted that complex problems confronting global society cannot be adequately addressed by the residual and meliorative strategies, social development needs to be promoted and inculcated widely from the school level itself to create a global society informed by austerity for peace, posterity and the planet. The potential of even syncretic shrines as points of convergence for different communities should be explored in this regard. However, any task of conceptualisation should be undertaken with interdisciplinary rigour in order to contain or prevent proliferation of terms which lack consensual validity. Titles of journals on social development, social work and so on published from different parts of the world and analyses of their contents will provide empirical support to social development philosophy for action. The Editors' Note with the sub-title of "Toward a Definition of Social Development" in one of the issues of the journal, *Social Development Issues* (Sherradon and McBride 2004) raises important questions on the terms "social" and "investment". It also indicates that "in subsequent comments and future issues [editors]

will explore in greater depth what social development means as well as implications for such definitions for research, policy and practice". The editors further mention that "social development has been broad label that sometimes has lacked theoretical specificity and empirical verification". These observations point to the need for action both in the theoretical and practice domains.

Conclusion

In summary, the multiple perspectives on social development range from remedial, welfarist, consensual, conflictual, collectivist and reformist to social developmental and movemental in their permutations and combinations. Multiplicity of perspectives is seen due to varying perceptions of social need, problems and societal responses to address them. With rising aspirations and demands for a better quality of life and well-being across the world, a framework which combines the collectivist with the communitarian and ecological strategy will need to be evolved for social development practice. The advocacy of "competitive markets (market perspective) as means and best guarantee of human development" (UNDP 1992) merits critical appraisal in the context of widening global inequalities (ILO 2004). The following questions arise in this regard: Can there be competitive markets without a level playing field for all? Can there be a common or cooperative market? Can the concept of institutional renewal and restructuring be extended, practised or demonstrated in developing social markets, notwithstanding their imperfections? These questions are linked, in turn, to still larger ones: how can political and economic institutions (or instruments) serve social good as well as the environment? And can deep(ening) democracy and competitive markets work together? The sooner it is realised that economy can only serve society, and it cannot direct, lead or guide it, the better it will be for all. While different sectors of development can be reorganised and even integrated, people and societies may only be connected or associated. The concept of integration has not been fully realised so far even in the domain of polity; it may prove counter-productive in the domain of society unless the process is collectively owned. The result of the French referendum on the constitution of the European Union (EU) is a case in point. It has raised questions about the future of political as well as economic configuration of the EU,

despite common currency, let alone integration. The inherent limitations of polity therefore need to be widely recognised especially by the political leadership and due support should be extended to processes which promote and sustain social development. A global (political) society, for example, cannot develop or evolve into a higher stage if there is provision of veto for a few representatives and vote for others in the exercise of power. The former is anachronistic and negates the very spirit of equality, collectivity and solidarity.

Values of diversity, liberty, equality, inclusivity, and reciprocity, and shared vision for a common future play a unique role in any societal arrangement. They hold society together, empower and inspire it, sustain it, and take it forward on the path of social development despite regressions, competing or conflictual worldviews and perspectives. The latter are inherent problems in any democratic process, and they are mediated, shelved or resolved in due course - deliberately or autopoietically. Social development, viewed as culture, can be experienced and even experimented but not entirely indexed or measured. It is an intra-active and interactive process. Another dimension to social development which is seemingly paradoxical is that it is a context and condition for *itself* in furthering societal development characterised by universality, collectivity, equality, equity, social justice, participation, spirituality and peace. These therefore must inform as guiding principles and guideposts in any exercise on conceptualisation and operationalisation of framework for action or practice. Appropriation of social development by different disciplines, professions, departments and organisations as a catch phrase is unethical: it should be eschewed and replaced by commitment, reasoned and sustained action. Social development as practice is not homogeneous, for, while a programme may be universal in coverage, its impact will always be differential and uneven. Therefore continuous monitoring is needed by adopting a *developmental approach within the domain of social development* to neutralise or counter such unintended consequences. The concept of social development is 2500 years old (Pathak 1987) and its formulations can be traced back to the ideals propounded by social philosophers for centuries before social scientists and practitioners came on the scene and began to explore its various dimensions in the twentieth century. Therefore a synthesis of the past with the present for a sustainable future will strengthen the cause of social development with the UN taking the lead in the matter.

Notes

¹ This is an enlarged version of the paper, "Emerging Perspectives in Social Development", submitted to the 14th International Symposium of the IUCISD on Social Needs, Global Solutions: Creative Approaches to Social Development, held at Recife, Brazil during July 25-29, 2005.

² Relevant documents of the UN have been referred for the information related to the World Summit for Social Development (1995), World Summit on Sustainable Development (2000), Commission for Social Development (2005), and resolutions of the General Assembly (2000 and 2003).

³ The annual HDRs from 1990 to 2004, brought out by the UNDP, have been referred for the discussion on human development and social development in this paper.

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