

Fundamentals of Human Geography

Chapter-4 Human Development

Growth and development

- Growth is quantitative and value neutral. It may have a positive or a negative sign. This means that the change may be either positive (showing an increase) or negative (indicating a decrease)
- Development means a qualitative change which is always value positive
- This means that development cannot take place unless there is an increment or addition to the existing conditions
- Development occurs when positive growth takes place
- Development occurs when there is a positive change in quality
- A country's level of development was measured only in terms of its economic growth
- Important aspects of development are the idea that the quality of life people enjoy in a country, the opportunities they have and freedoms they enjoy
- These ideas were clearly spelt out for the first time in the late 80's and early 90's
- The works of two South Asian economists, Mahbub-ul-Haq and Amartya Sen are important in this regard
- The concept of human development was introduced by Dr Mahbub-ul-Haq
- Dr Haq has described human development as development that enlarges people's choices and improves their lives
- People are central to all development under this concept. These choices are not fixed but keep on changing
- The basic goal of development is to create conditions where people can live meaningful lives
- The most important aspects of human development are leading a long and healthy life, being able to gain knowledge and having enough means to be able to live a decent life
- The key areas in human development are access to resources, health and education

THE FOUR PILLARS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

1. **Equity** refers to making equal access to opportunities available to everybody. The opportunities available to people must be equal irrespective of their gender, race, income and the Indian case, caste. For example, in any country, it is interesting to see which group the most of the school dropouts belong to. In India, a large number of women and persons belonging to socially and economically backward groups drop out of school. This shows how the choices of these groups get limited by not having access to knowledge.
2. **Sustainability** means continuity in the availability of opportunities. All environmental, financial and human resources must be used keeping in mind the future. Misuse of any of these resources will lead to fewer opportunities for future generations. For example the importance of sending girls to school. If a community does not stress the importance of sending its girl children to school, many opportunities will be lost to these young women when they grow up. Their career choices will be severely curtailed and this would affect other aspects of their lives. So each generation must ensure the availability of choices and opportunities to its future generations.
3. **Productivity** here means human labour productivity or productivity in terms of human work. It is people who are the real wealth of nations. Therefore, efforts to increase their knowledge, or provide better health facilities ultimately leads to better work efficiency.
4. **Empowerment** means to have the power to make choices. Such power comes from increasing freedom and capability. Good governance and people-oriented policies are required to empower people.

APPROACHES OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Some of the important approaches are:

- a. **The income approach**- This is one of the oldest approaches to human development. The level of income reflects the level of freedom an individual enjoys. Higher the level of income, the higher is the level of human development.
- b. **The welfare approach**- This approach looks at human beings as beneficiaries or targets of all development activities. The approach argues for higher government expenditure on education, health, social secondary and amenities. The government is responsible for increasing levels of human development by maximising expenditure on welfare.
- c. **Minimum needs approach**- This approach was initially proposed by the International

Labour Organisation (ILO). Six basic needs i.e.: health, education, food, water supply, sanitation, and housing were identified

- d. **Capabilities approach**- This approach is associated with Prof. Amartya Sen. Building human capabilities in the areas of health, education and access to resources is the key to increasing human development.

MEASURING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

- The human development index (HDI) ranks the countries based on their performance in the key areas of health, education and access to resources
- These rankings are based on a score between 0 to 1 that a country earns from its record in the key areas of human development

Indicators of human development index-

- Areas of health**- The indicator chosen to assess health is the life expectancy at birth. A higher life expectancy means that people have a greater chance of living longer and healthier lives.
 - Areas of education**- The adult literacy rate and the gross enrolment ratio represent access to knowledge. The number of adults who are able to read and write and the number of children enrolled in schools show how easy or difficult it is to access knowledge in a particular country.
 - Access to resources**- Access to resources is measured in terms of purchasing power (in U.S. dollars).
- Each of these dimensions is given a weightage of $\frac{1}{3}$
 - The human development index is a sum total of the weights assigned to all these dimensions
 - The closer a score is to one, the greater is the level of human development. Therefore, a score of 0.983 would be considered very high while 0.268 would mean a very low level of human development
 - The human development index measures attainments in human development. It reflects what has been achieved in the key areas of human development
 - The human poverty index is related to the human development index. This index measures the shortfall in human development

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- Signs of shortfall in human development in any region are the probability of not surviving till the age of 40, the adult illiteracy rate, the number of people who do not have access to clean water, and the number of small children who are underweight

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

- Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago have a higher rank than India in the human development index
- Within India, Kerala performs much better than Punjab and Gujarat in human development
- Countries can be classified into four groups on the basis of the human development scores earned by them -
 - Very High(above 0.808)- 49 countries
 - High(between 0.700 up to 0.807)- 53 countries
 - Medium (between 0.556 up to 0.699)-42 countries
 - Low (below 0.555)- 43 countries
- Countries with very high human development index are those which have a score of over 0.793. This indicates a lot of investment in the social sector and good governance
- Many of the countries with a high human development score are located in Europe and represent the industrialised western world
- There are 42 countries in the medium level of human development. Most of these are countries which have emerged in the period after the Second World War
- Many of these countries have been rapidly improving their human development score by adopting more people-oriented policies and reducing social discrimination
- 43 countries record low levels of human development. It indicates a large proportion of these are small countries which have been going through political turmoil and social instability in the form of civil war, famine or a high incidence of diseases
- Countries with high levels of human development invest more in the social sectors and are generally free from political turmoil and instability
- Countries with low levels of human development tend to spend more on defence rather than social sectors. This shows that these countries tend to be located in areas of political instability and have not been able to initiate accelerated economic development