

Challenges of a Developmental Idea towards Sustainability

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Developmental Idea: From intervention to laissez faire

“The idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape. Delusion and disappointment, failures and crime have been steady companions of development and they tell us a common story: it did not work. Moreover, the historical conditions which catapulted the idea into prominence have vanished: development has become outdated” (Sachs 1992:1)

There are different conceptions of development and underdevelopment. We have come a long way in transcending the differences of what constitutes development or underdevelopment, despite genuine disagreements in the lexicons of developmental rhetoric. We need to consider how far it is viable to emphasise the dissimilarities between the developed and the developing world? While in the globalised world of today it is ‘not cool’ to harp on the dissimilarities, yet acknowledgement of the ethnic, religious and socio-cultural codes of differences will help us take the concept of development beyond the confines of the academia. Again development, which ignores the global interconnections and interdependencies, will always succeed to fail. An understanding of the multilateral and transnational linkages and their deep embeddedness within the local economy has major implications for the future sustainability of the economy in the developing world. Strategic and critical engagement with issues of environmental limits and of sustainability has significant import for the course of development. Indeed without recourse to people-centred developmental dialogues there is little scope

for democratically engaging with the desire and demand for development to be globally integrated and locally embedded to the changing needs of the society. In this respect issues of state versus market, of human centred development, of expanding choices both for the rural and urban communities, of democracy, political accountability and right to information, of human security and sustainable policies have emerged as critical points for intervention in the name of development in the present century.

From Mercator to Friedman

In the rapidly changing days of the twenty-first century visions of development have moved beyond the images of deprivation to the expectations of plenty. Today the term 'development' has become a far more seductive, politically sought after, positive influence and a panacea for all the deprivations that plague the developing world. Globalisation in such a scenario can only mean more for those how have more and perceptibly less for those living on the edge. The image of the developing world has transformed from the days of Gerardus Mercator's cylindrical projection (1569) of deprivations in the poor South to the more optimistically flattened landscapes of Bangalore and China of Friedman (2006). The persistent harping about obstacles to change is no longer cool and the semantics of the discourse has shifted to all that is bright and beautiful amidst the contradictions of plenty. Such is the remarkable confluence of development discourse. Every person who engages in questions of development, of the developing world seeks authenticity and deadly seriousness of purpose and intent. The ethics of commenting about the poor and the downtrodden cannot be expressed lightly and one constantly hopes to leave ajar the door of political correctness and hope amidst increasing disparity and inequities across spaces of plenty. How far has the economic playing field been flattened? Increased obsession with notional ranking in the league tables has detracted us from the urgency of survival in the developing world of Africa, India or Bangladesh. What matters is that rhetoric of spaces of development are constantly challenged and reformulated. However the existing, incrementally added concepts of development have not disappeared from the lexicons of change.

Development therefore implies progress in a most schizophrenic manner, whereby on one hand there is an implicit adherence to the maintenance of a distinct identity of the developing world. At the same time there is a compulsive obsession of ensuring that those in the southern hemisphere become 'flatter' and accessible to the North. The social signification that is attributed to a given region or space determines its valuation in terms of its usefulness to the global agenda. The scarce resources of the Middle East has fostered a scramble much the same way that was witnessed in India, Africa and China during the early seventeenth through the twentieth century. Development to an extent is as much an economic process as it is a creator and organiser of social space. Here spatial competition inevitably leads to areal differentiation in the spaces of development. Development therefore presents a pragmatic, moral agenda of transformation, which is social, economic, political and technological in nature. It aligns itself with notions of both qualitative and quantitative aspects of change and reiterates the importance of action in the local as much as at the global scale. Over time global uncertainties punctuated by the rising inflation largely fuelled by crude oil crisis have only tended to push countries to align themselves to multilateral institutions.

Can there be development with dignity? The obsession with buzzwords or catch phrases associated with development have resulted in the proliferation of terms such as "efficiency, growth rate, and market efficiency" (Patnaik, 2006) or "participation, empowerment, poverty reduction, voices of the poor, and the civil society" (Cornwall and Brock, 2005). These have only helped to displace basic social goals from the imperatives of development.

Indeed development needs to focus on not just growth rate per se but also on income transfers to the poor and the downtrodden. In fact the way forward is for greater integration of growth with re-distribution. Engaging with structural inequalities in any region provides one with the instruments for ensuring the possibility of mapping and integrating growth and distributional elements of the economy. Much as we agree that a liberalised market is dishonest we have to balance it with the fact that even democratic institutions have their pitfalls. Rather than professing the extremes of pro and anti-market sentiments it is crucial to

help bring a synergy based on established regulatory instrumentalities in place, i.e. regulating the pace and quantum of development. The more that development discourse asserts the need for ‘cutting costs’ it will only ensure greater hardship for the common person faced with the prospects of job cuts and lack of livelihoods for survival. A vibrant domestic market supported with a viable purchasing power is far more important than focusing largely on the international market at the cost of the domestic.

Meaning of Development over time

The core of meaning of development has been one of catching up with the developed North. According to Cowen and Shenton, in the nineteenth century it referred to remedies for the maladies of progress. These related to issues of population growth, and lack of full employment. Hegel considered progress to be a linear process whereas development was seen as being curvilinear in trajectory (Cowen and Shenton 1996: 130). This nineteenth century assessment was an outcome of policy failures of colonial misrule and dislocation of social relations. Trusteeship as a form of resource management under colonial order reinforced exploitation and oppression in the name of development. Here industrialisation was not part of colonial economics and instead lead to the destruction of indigenous forms of production in India, Egypt, Persia and Turkey. Modern forms of development in the post World War II period were largely focused on economic growth and included modernisation as a basis for social, economic and political change. This also paved the way for political modernisation and nation building activities. The focus on community and social sector development promoted alternative forms of development informed by ideas of entitlements and capabilities (Sen, 1999). Development came to viewed as being all that is enabling, a facilitator for improvement and transformation. This related well with Human Development Report of the UNDP whereby the language of development focused on the “enlargement of people’s choices” (Human Development Report, 1997).

The advent of a new transformed perspective on globalisation in the twenty-first century saw a resurgence of a repackaged concept(s) of neoliberalism. Here getting the prices right through the invisible hand of market was the mantra for development. The critical point being that

there is no space for a special case and this is all the more so in case of the developing world. The way forward for development to occur is to roll back state intervention and remove all barriers to free play of the market. Thus the earlier notions of development which was based on the guided hand of the state was an anathema for progress and change. The central priorities for essential development were structural reform, financial deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation. Once again the core meaning of development reemerged as economic growth and the agency of development shifted from the state to the market. The fundamental point to recognise is that means and goals of development determine what constitutes anti-development when we consider neoliberal and post-development approaches to development. This in a way identifies the shifting meanings of development over time.

Timeline and bandwidth of development as a concept

The nineteenth century was associated with ideas of progress and evolutionism in development thinking. This was also the period of hegemonic stranglehold of imperialism and colonialism in the Third World. The period 1830–1930 saw the progression of classical development thinking and of classical political economy as the basis for engaging with peripheral economies. Post-war ideas of growth were suffused with imperatives of modernisation and the steady polarisation of USA and Soviet Union's hegemonic ambitions. There was an emphasis on the inevitability of growth and structural-functionalist explanations for development. Decolonisation of the developing world reinforced the dependency status and structural causes of the development of underdevelopment. The rise of non-aligned states, of nascent nationalism and of G77 as a group for the newly liberated states, reinforced their rightful share of the world's wealth. By the 1980s neoliberalism forced the focus on globalisation and financial liberalisation of the economy. Neoclassical monetary economics provided a radical break from the interventionist state. This was also the period, which saw the reassertion of human freedom and development, thereby contrasting the activities of 'soft and hard states' (Myrdal). The rise of East Asian states set the terms of debate regarding developmental and non-developmental state as an ideal and the role of democracy as a necessary and sufficient condition for

development. Development thinking has become far more spatialised, community orientated and stakeholder focused. Here sustainable development is as important as pro-poor focus. Such an emphasis on agency and diversity in the field of development in actuality led to promoting intrinsic linkages between global and local. It is not growth per se but what kind of growth is at stake here.

Post-developmentalists state the myths of development as being an illusion, a hegemonic narrative of being highly Eurocentric in content. Development has become a contested terrain for engaging with diverse actors, institutions and structures for bringing about radical transformation. There is now a general scaling down of the idea and practice of development, from wide swings across the totem poles of state-led initiatives to market-led neoliberal alternatives to society-led or alternative developments to appreciation for the need to have a more realistic synergy of state, market and society in the pursuit of transformation of the economy.

Monochromatic visions in the language of development

The language of development has undergone many twists and turns over the past sixty years since World War II. Today the emergent buzzwords have come to challenge some of the established tropes of development thinking. There appears to have emerged some consensus seeking a common wellbeing for all in the developing world. The constant reiteration of developmental goals in a 'rugby scrum-like' keeps pushing the frontiers of this agenda. Rights have suddenly emerged with a sublime, mythical quality capable of ameliorating the pains and deprivation suffered by the majority in the developing world. There is greater legitimacy than ever before to intervene and suggest radical changes to the way we live and work. Such paternal forms of capitalism have reinvented even the role of the paternal state and thereby developmental outcomes.

An ascending euphemism in currency today is that of poverty reduction, which conveniently forgets that poverty has as long a history as the idea of development. The role of technical jargons such as structural adjustments, conditionality of development, fiscal management and macroeconomic stabilising principles are prescriptions for sustainable

levels of economic growth. Today 'self-help' has become the basis for 'doing development' in the poor countries. The convenient language of development is imbued with words relating to strategic and practical needs of the poor, of women and children. The proliferation of development manuals is suggestive of the fact that development as a 'discourse' and as a 'strategy' is not only stylised but also normalised across cultures and societies. These are then perpetuated by development agencies across the length and breadth of nation-state and even institutionalised in the name of progress and change. Development is therefore invested with a range of meaning and values all normalised by the inputs of neoliberal doctrines enforced by multilateral donor agencies. Thus who gets or does not get included in this discourse is what determines the convergence of inequality and disparity across geographical regions. Development therefore generates a monochromatic series of meanings such as transparency, social capital, stakeholders, governance, accountability and ownership of development goals. These concepts of development would have different relational meanings in varying social and cultural contexts. What is true of a particular watershed or upland would not be true of a semi-arid region. Thus deploying new meanings of development constantly ensures a sense of neutrality, away from a conflictual context.

Goals of Development

The goal of international development is largely associated with measurable moral goals that seek full international commitment from G8 to the G17 summits. The success of any development agenda is the ability to translate these diverse buzzwords and catch phrases to targets and instruments for action. Today we are obsessed with monitoring change every quarter and indeed every day. We live in an obsessive world of measuring change in motion and don't care for the causes of poverty or underdevelopment. In fact we are more concerned with shortfalls and what needs to be done to meet the targets. This corporatisation of daily life, work life extends to homes, workplace, health centres, schools, universities and indeed the slums and shantytowns. Any form of incoherence in developmental ideas is shunned as lack of clarity of measurable targets. The reward for coherence is increased aid and

limited conditions for achieving progress. Perhaps this explains that while world wealth has increased and continue to expand, yet 18,000 children go to bed every day without food in the developing world.

Participation transforms actions into being told what to do. Increased participation of NGOs in the development process helped to create new active modes of citizenship and reduce dependency on the state. There is in evidence key regulationist characterisation of neoliberal ideals of development in the developing world. A passive citizenship only helps to reinforce dependency on the state. This relates to the lack of an active civil society to act as speed breakers against the steamrolling of neoliberal agendas. As a result of globalisation there is a constant erasure of spaces of development, which somehow does not feel engaged with these discourses of development, thereby perpetuating poverty, and ill being. Development therefore emerges as a distinctly ideological and a deeply political concept. Its ability to foster multiple meanings assures currency and thereby makes it politically expedient. This helps to dispense with the radical content in the usage of the term development. In a sense development becomes a hegemonic discourse beyond contestation. Thus language has much to do with how development is organised and implemented in space. Development has come to embody a stylised concept shorn off any specificities or contextuality and is made to appear as 'one size fits all' be it Human Development Index or the Millennium Development Goals for the global South.

Discourse and dissonance of developmental idea

Most of the theories of development have been formulated by scholars from the highly industrialised countries and it is only recently that voices from the developing South has been incorporated into development studies. In fact it is commonplace to associate development as a concept with the amelioration of the conditions in the developing world. Problems are compounded when multilateral aid agencies attempt to endorse successful developmental projects without modification to the developing world. Thus according to Martinussen (1999: 4) "the subject area of development studies is the societal reproduction and transformation processes of the developing countries, in conjunction with the international factors that influence these processes". This definition

reinforces the idea that we need to be aware of the geographic and cultural parameters that trigger or hinder the process of development. At the same time this definition does not make a special case for the developing world and reiterates that the laws and conditions governing development and change apply uniformly to both the developing and developed world. The point is what are the political and cultural factors, which influence developmental activities in the world at large. A strong economic analysis, which ignores political and cultural context of development rarely succeeds.

Policies devoid of any appreciation for the non-economic factors have resulted in strategies, which were largely lopsided and ineffective. The general rendition of the developed countries is that the developing world was poor in an economic sense. Therefore provision of basic necessities was critical for overcoming such economic poverty. In the course of time the life styles of the developed world became the norm for emulation, resulting in unsustainable production and consumption. All development theory attempts to seek ways by which specified development objectives may be achieved. Strategies of development on the other hand relate largely to policies for intervention and actions for achieving development targets. A chosen development goal set by the nation-state and constantly moderated by the imperatives of the international global economy results in downscaling of the targets and indeed the achievements of development as a practice. Therefore emphasis on economic progress, of economic growth came to occupy the centre stage of development since the Second World War. Here economic growth as a mythically imbibed concept became a proxy for development and economists maintained the primacy of growth of per capita income as a standard index for development. Increased production and consumption were seen as twin processes to achieve the goals of development. Indeed distribution of wealth and assets were rarely considered appropriate in a growth-obsessed society. Economic growth remained at variance with developmental goals for any given society. It is observed that despite increases in economic growth there is increasing inequality and disparity across regions of the world.

Development Ideas in the Post-war Context

Development as a concept emerged in the post-war era when it was believed that poverty was not the inevitable destiny of human kind. This awareness was spurred by the emergent affluence witnessed in the developed North. The other major influence for the emergence of development as an 'ideal' was the Cold War, whereby both United States and erstwhile Soviet Union were competing to attract newly independent Third World countries to join their respective camps- capitalist or communist/socialist. The third reason was the explosive population growth witnessed in the post-war period. The spectacular developments in science and technology lead to a reduction of mortality rates and increased longevity resulted in high levels of population growth. The fourth reason was the increased de-colonisation of the developing world leading to the development plans being underwritten by the new governments in order to catch up with developed west. Indeed Paul Baran (1957) argued that despite all the optimism of development there were structural constraints, which the developing world faced. The political power structure in the Third World prevented optimal and adequate utilisation of scarce resources and international aid only helped to reinforce social and political status quo within institutions, which were hostile to development and change.

A variety of terms associated with development have emerged since the end of World War II. Of these there are two distinct strands namely that which relates to the politics of development. The second addresses the investor's detailed analysis of economic conditions, which hinder or promote global economic growth. Over time the latter has displaced the former, thereby emerging as the main rhetoric in the discussions about the failure of development (see Escobar, 1995; Sachs, 1992; McVety, 2008). Development was inevitably defined as a by-product of technological intervention. Development inevitably acquired the embedded notion of a 'Project' with a capital 'P' located in specific spaces or geographies. Identities, aspirations and grievances were marshalled under this programme to articulate positional- ideological platforms for intervention (Prashad, 2007). The post-Cold War perspectives and the associated globalised discourses have framed the aspirations of the emerging economies. Here the notions of neoliberalism has been

adopted and adapted to deploy corporate based notion of progress and growth in the erstwhile developing world category. The traditionalists believe that institutions dominate the exegesis of development in varied geographical spaces (Acemoglu, et al, 2002). Yet others believe that geography determines the nature of development (Faye et al, 2004; Nordhaus, 2006; Olsson and Hibbs, 2005; and Presbitero, 2006). Yet a third group refrains from taking extreme positions and endorses the role of endogeneity in determining development (Przeworski, 2004a and 2004b; Sheppard, 2011). In all there is a teleological versus the immanent view of development. The former believes a predictable trajectory of development (Rostowian model, 1960), however the latter subscribes to the idea of potential immanence of development fostered by environment. Development indeed has become the management of uncertainty.

While development ensured adequate dosage of capital into the economy, yet what was observed was the existence of uneven forms of development, totally independent of the role of capital investment. Choice of techniques was discussed both at the production and also at the distributional levels of the emergent economy. Dudley Seers (1979) noted that there was a distinct perceptual change in the idea of development until the 1970s such as the divide between North and South, Right and Left, First World and Third World. The elegant Rostowian schema of development was adjusted for by the realistic assessment by Myrdal, Prebisch and Singer. General equilibrium in development did not necessarily ensure the equitable distribution of the fruits of economic progress. At the same time, linearity of development was a misplaced notion and was severely challenged by the dependency theorists and structuralists from the Left. There were also many non-linear theorist of economic development such as Schumpeter, Rosenstein-Rodan and Nurkse who expounded the idea of unbalanced economic growth as distinct from balanced approach to economic growth. In response to this linear approach to development was the idea of an international system composed of rich and poor relationships, which tended to produce and maintain underdevelopment of poor regions of the world. Both the non-Marxists and the Marxists were united in their view that structural policies tended to maintain the level of underdevelopment in the developing world. In other words this was symptomatic of an

international system of exploitation and oppression of the Third World.

Developmentalism in a sense became a belief in the idea of economic progress. However this perception has been criticised as being Eurocentric in perception. At the same time while development may entail progress it also created victims such as displaced peasants, and communities in the peripheries. It is heartening to note that despite reservations by post-developmentalists, the concept of development has not faded away despite all the negative pronouncements. Development in a sense presents the best aspirations of humanity and at the same time can be scrupulously manipulated to achieve negative targets thereby bringing the worst in a given project. Conventional measures of development have used gross national product (GNP) as the standard across regions of the world. Recently alternative measures have been adopted such as the Human Development Index, which uses both quantitative and qualitative measures to assess the progress of nation-states in relation to their citizens.

Indeed post-war modernisation theories were largely guided by preoccupation with growth modernisation and structural change. Reconstruction and development was a bulwark against the spread of communism in the developed and developing world. The overall commitment was to ensure economic growth. There was an implicit adherence towards the Weberian perspective of development, which was both cultural and psychological. The cultural approach related to the traditional patterns of thoughts and belief system, which was targeted as being inimical to economic growth. This also related to the necessity of introducing a notion of scientific economic rationality. The only downside with this way of thinking was that this approach completely ignored the pernicious effects of imperialism and colonialism in the developing world. A rational understanding of the developing world endorsed by the European modernity project fell into disrepute in the twentieth century. Development as an idea and as a field of action was organised by the European intellectual tradition and was both a cultural and a political project for change. This provided the foundations for the capitalist project of economic growth. Modernisation came to be equated with industrialism and state planning in the post war period. Nationalist Developmentalism became the mainstay of ideology for the developing world.

Development as an idea was based on the concept of intervention necessary to bring about social change among the underdeveloped regions. In criticism one must state that such a growth-led paradigm has resulted in global ecological imbalances, increased socio-economic inequalities, displacement, marginalisation and cultural descaling of indigenous population, i.e. making them irrelevant.

Development has been associated with the following approaches, namely; a historical process related to the rise of capitalism. It can also be seen as one of exploitation of natural resources or it may be conceived as a rational, planned promotion of economic, social and political transformation. Development became a condition for progress as adduced by Rostow. This implied economic growth and structural change of the economy. As a process it meant industrialisation, institutional change, and removal of poverty, ignorance and superstition. It was related to the enlargement of choices and freedom of opportunities across gender, religious groups and ethnicity. Today development has been equated with free market and principles of neoliberalism. In order for development to be effective there has to be more state action to ensure equitable distributive justice across the rural and urban divide.

Development theory can be related to ideas of change such as rural development, industrialisation, employment and trade policies. Yet these are all sectoral in nature and largely related to the production processes. However it does not engage with issues of consumption and distribution directly, nor with alternative and indigenous modes of development. "Development [then] is an organised intervention in collective affairs to a standard of improvement (Pieterse, 2001:3). What constitutes improvement and what is appropriate intervention obviously vary according to class, culture, historical context and relations of power. Development theory therefore helps to negotiate these issues and the success or failure of development thinking and its delivery is largely dependent on the strength or weakness of its policy-orientated character. Development therefore has traditionally been problem-driven rather than solution engineered.

Role of culture in development

A recognition of the cultural capacity across social groups called

for addressing the capabilities inherent in these groups. A cultural approach to development meant equality of agency, which builds upon equal opportunities availability to all. Development therefore could no longer ignore the role of the stakeholder. A people centred approach to development always helped to improve the effectiveness of plan or policies.

One can effectively recognise the seven deadly sins of development, which have been ignored by planners. Thus we find that the concept of development was overly obsessed with the content and nature of the gross national product. There was little recognition of the need to ensure a sense of distributive justice with economic growth. A perverse fascination with things measurable meant that development idea was built on a notion of illusion and a monumental neglect of the qualitative aspects of life. There was misplaced sense of priority towards growth at the expense of development. Development therefore varied socially and spatially. The main paradigms of development are that it is spontaneous and irreversible. There are distinct stages associated with development and is generally stimulated with exogenous factors such as external competition or a impending security threat. Development therefore implied structural differentiation and functional specialisation. Structural differentiation relates to the transition from agricultural to services sector and functional specialisation relates to the shift from basic to sophisticated technological adaptations.

Postcolonial interpretation of development is that it is largely Eurocentric product as an outsider's view from the developing world's perspective. Is it possible to have development, which did not reinforce or reflect the project of western developmental ethics? Thus development is embedded in culture. When development is associated with cultural change it meant modernisation. In other words, the removal of cultural barriers to change and this only helped to reinforce inequity among gender or race. Culture therefore influences what is valued in any given society and thereby shapes the ends of development, which is critical for the survival of the poor. It also influences the response of the communities and localities as well as institutions to the developmental efforts in Africa, Asia or Latin America. Thus development has to be concerned with the enhancement of life in terms of the forms of freedoms we can

enjoy.

Development implies security from famine, malnutrition, and unemployment as well as social, economic and political uncertainty. As Sen (1999) states, “expansion of freedom is both the primary end and the principal means of development.” Development implies removal of all forms of unfreedom faced by humanity. Development of freedom implied greater social and economic opportunities in terms of education, health care and political inclusivity. It meant removal of poverty, political tyranny, lack of economic opportunity, and social deprivation, and restoration of public facilities and the ability to live long and fruitful life. Here the role of the state and the market need to be considered together for achieving the stated goals of development. Rolling back the state in favour of the free hand of market without regulation is a cause for concern. Therefore realising the right to development is an inalienable right for each woman, man and child be it Africa or Asia, China or India. Development therefore implies tackling both the practical needs of the population such as sustained employment and income generation. However practical needs too have to be balanced with the strategic needs of development, which ensures equity, empowerment, justice and ethic. As Sen (1999) states that “development is best seen as a process of expanding the substantive freedoms that citizens can enjoy.” Indeed one cannot plan for development, which ignores the environment. Sustainable development states that development has to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland 1987:43). There needs to be a green counterpoint to blue (market, liberal, capitalist) and red (socialist) development strategies (Friberg and Hettne, 1985).

Conclusion

There is no agreement as to what perspective best facilitates developmental activities, whether one should take recourse to a macro-theoretical or a micro-analytical perspective. There is a debate whether a consensus conception is more useful for meeting national developmental goals rather than a conflict-conception between diverse interest groups. The need for robust outcomes are polarised between highly formalised quantitative models and qualitative methods. The focus has shuttled

between individual actors and the outcomes related to the structures and institutions. The general discourse is one of linear process versus non-linear process of development. This idea links naturally with colonial impacts on the developing world, of underdevelopment and maldevelopment. Whether integration with the global economy augurs well for the poor developing world or whether this will lead to greater polarisation among the haves and have-nots? How much autonomy should there be for the nation-state? How far is a highly interventionist state conducive to development? Can we draw the line between either industrial, agricultural or services sector as the engine for growth and development? Is technology the main trigger for fostering development? How far is democracy a necessary or sufficient condition for achieving developmental goal? Is there a space for the civil society for regulating the nature of runaway and unsustainable development? Where do we draw the line between market and the state in deciding the targets and goals for development affecting communities, global and local at large? Lastly how far is an outward orientated strategy necessary for economic growth and thereby development?

In conclusion one can state that current normative premise for the conception of development is that all cultures are equal and no one is entitled to define and impose developmental goals on behalf of others. Development has to be culturally grounded and contextualised to respect the dignity of life, where it is about sustaining communities rather than making them subservient to the dictates of global economic imperatives. What does development mean is a question, which has to be left to the individual communities? This is the only way we can assure development to become self-development (Martinussen, 1999: 45) and thereby reinforces the idea of development-by-people approach. This is despite the notion of end of development, where everything about development sparks off crisis of immense magnitude. Can we think of anything beyond development? The various attempts by post-developmentalists such as Escobar, Rahnema and others have suggested critiques without a necessary alternative, which is realistic in this globalised world. As Pietrese states, "development then is a field in flux" (2001:1). Development despite its feel good factor therefore implies struggle and conflict to acquire resources and freedom of choice for the betterment of life for

the majority. Thus rather than subscribing to a teleological assessment of developmental demands, there is a need to embed development as assemblages of possibilities across geographically and spatially differentiated identities.

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Challenges of a Developmental Idea towards Sustainability

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This paper attempts to situate and deconstruct the meanings associated with the term development in the context of the developing world. The arguments made highlights the deeply contested and fragmented terrain of development. The paper provides a historical overview of the changing nature of discourses on development, how the imageries of development have shifted since the postwar period. It deploys diverse meanings associated with development as a concept and as a theory. Thus development without dignity means little for those living in the margins of the society. At the same time the language of development has undergone revolutions and convulsions and the role of buzzwords and catch phrases have only helped to prolong misery in a neoliberal world. Development has become a 'one size fits all' concept shorn of cultural and regional specificities. It has been decontextualised and dehumanised to relate to targets resulting in greater dissonance than resolution of aim and outcomes. The way forward is a better appreciation of the cultural capacity of the social groups for whom development is critical for survival. The conclusion highlights the endemic contradictions inherent in the meaning and delivery of development as a goal, especially when we seek to achieve resilient and sustainable development.

Keywords: *Development, Neoliberalism, growth, participation, empowerment, efficiency, market, state, societies, entitlements and capabilities, stakeholder, rights, structural adjustments, globalisation, self-help, doing development, freedom and unfreedom.*