

## **Human Development**

### **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Both growth and development refer to changes over a period of time. The difference is that 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. Yet, positive growth does not always lead to development. Development occurs when there is a positive change in quality.

For example, if the population of a city grows from one lakh to two lakhs over a period of time, we say the city has grown. However, if facilities like housing, provision of basic services and other characteristics remain the same, then this growth has not been accompanied by development economic growth. This meant that the bigger the economy of the country, the more developed it was considered, even though this growth did not really mean much change in the lives of most people.

The idea that the quality of life people enjoy in a country, the opportunities they have and freedoms they enjoy, are important aspects of development, is not new.

These ideas were clearly spelt out for the first time in the late eighties and early nineties. 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.



A meaningful life is not just a long one. It must be a life with some purpose. This means that people must be healthy, be able to develop their talents, participate in society and be free to achieve their goals.

A man of vision and compassion, Pakistani economist Dr Mahbub-ul-Haq created the Human Development Index in 1990. According to him, development is all about enlarging people's choices in order to lead long, healthy lives with dignity. The United Nations Development Programme has used his concept of human development to publish the Human Development Report annually since 1990.

## **THE FOUR PILLARS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

Just as any building is supported by pillars, the idea of human development is supported by the concepts of **equity, sustainability, productivity and empowerment.**

**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 in the Indian case, caste. Yet this is very often not the case and happens in almost every society

For example, in any country, it is interesting to see which group the most of the school dropouts belong to. This should then lead to an understanding of the reasons for such behaviour. 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.

**Sustainability** means continuity in the availability of opportunities. To have sustainable human development, each generation must have the same 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.

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A good example is about 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.

**Productivity** here means human labour productivity or productivity in terms of human work. Such productivity must be constantly enriched by building capabilities in people. Ultimately, 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.

**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. The empowerment of socially and economically disadvantaged groups is of special importance.

## **APPROACHES TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

There are many ways of looking at the problem of human development. Some of the important approaches are:

- (a) The income approach;
- (b) The welfare approach;
- (c) Minimum needs approach; and
- (d) Capabilities approach (

## **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.

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.

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 is measured in terms of purchasing power (in U.S. dollars).

Each of these dimensions is given a weightage of 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. Yet it is not the most reliable measure. This is because it does not say anything about the distribution.

The human poverty index is related to the human development index. This index measures the **shortfall** in human development.

### Approaches to Human Development

<b>(a) Income Approach</b>	This is one of the oldest approaches to human development. Human development is seen as being linked to income. The idea is that 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>(b) Welfare Approach</b>	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. People are not participants in development but only passive recipients. The government is responsible for increasing levels of human development by maximising expenditure on welfare.
<b>(c) Basic Needs Approach</b>	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. The question of human choices is ignored and the emphasis is on the provision of basic needs of defined sections.
<b>(d) Capability Approach</b>	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.

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## INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

International comparisons of human development are interesting. Size of the territory and per capita income are not directly related to human development. Often smaller countries have done better than larger ones in human development. Similarly, relatively poorer nations have been ranked higher than richer neighbours in terms of human development.

For example, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago have a higher rank than India in the human development index despite having smaller economies. Similarly, within India, Kerala performs much better than Punjab and Gujarat in human development despite having lower per capita income.

Countries can be classified into three groups on the basis of the human development scores earned by them

### Human Development: Categories, Criteria and Countries

<i>Level of Human Development</i>	<i>Score in Development Index</i>	<i>Number of Countries</i>
High	above 0.8	57
Medium	between 0.5 up to 0.799	88
Low	below 0.5	32

*Source: Human Development Report, 2005*

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