**DEFINITION AND APPROACHES OF DEVELOPMENT**

Development means “improvement in country’s economic and social conditions”. More specially, it refers to improvements in way of managing an area’s natural and human resources. In order to create wealth and improve people’s lives.

Dudley Seers while elaborating on the meaning of development suggests that while there can be value judgements on what is development and what is not, it should be a universally acceptable aim of development to make for conditions that lead to a realisation of the potentials of human personality.

**Seers outlined several conditions that can make for achievement of this aim:**

i. The capacity to obtain physical necessities, particularly food;

ii. A job (not necessarily paid employment) but including studying, working on a family farm or keeping house;

iii. Equality, which should be considered an objective in its own right;

iv. Participation in government;

v. Belonging to a nation that is truly independent, both economically and politically; and

vi. Adequate educational levels (especially literacy).

The people are held to be the principal actors in human scale development. Respecting the diversity of the people as well as the autonomy of the spaces in which they must act converts the present day object person to a subject person in the human scale development. Development of the variety that we have experienced has largely been a top-down approach where there is little possibility of popular participation and decision making.

Human scale development calls for a direct and participatory democracy where the state gives up its traditional paternalistic and welfarist role in favour of a facilitator in enacting and consolidating people’s solutions flowing from below. “Empowerment” of people takes development much ahead of simply combating or ameliorating poverty. In this sense development seeks to restore or enhance basic human capabilities and freedoms and enables people to be the agents of their own development.

In the process of capitalistic development and leading national economy towards integration into foreign markets, even politically democratic states are apt to effectively exclude the vast masses from political and economic decision-making. The state itself evolves into a national oligarchy hedged with authoritarian and bureaucratic structures and mechanisms that inhibit social participation and popular action.

The limited access of the majority to social benefits and the limited character of participation of the masses can often not be satisfactorily offset by the unsuccessful and weak redistributive policies of the government. Powerful economic interest groups set the national agenda of development, often unrepresentative of the heterogeneous and diverse nature of our civil society making for a consolidation and concentration of power and resources in the hands of a few.

Also, a focus on people and the masses implies that there could be many different roads to development and self-reliance. The slogans “human centred development”, “the development of people”, “integrated development”, all call for a more inclusive and sensitive approach to fundamental social, economic and political changes involved in development such that all aspects of life of a people, their collectivity, their own history and consciousness, and their relations with others make for a balanced advancement.

The adoption of a basic needs approach with the concept of endogenous development make for a development agenda that is universally applicable while at the same time allowing for country specific particularities to be given due account.

The challenge of human scale development is to nurture diversity instead of being threatened by it, to develop processes of political and economic decentralisation, to strengthen democratic, indigenous traditions and institutions and to encourage rather than repress emerging social movements which reflect the people’s need for autonomy and space.

The fruits of economic development may be distributed more equitably if local spaces are protected, micro- organisations are facilitated and the diverse collective identities that make up the social body are recognised and represented. Greater control of popular masses over environment is a must. In fact this concept of development seeks for the civil society rather than the state to own up and nurture development, so that the role of social actors is enhanced.

Social and Human Development, therefore necessarily requires a unified approach, integrating the economic and social components in plans, policies and programmes for people’s betterment. The challenge is to simultaneously integrate cross sectoral and regional developmental needs as well as to make for a participative development. The issues of environment, pollution, women, habitat, hunger and employment have come to the fore one by one and continue to require public and institutional attention along with resource allocations. Two major contemporary concerns that require focus in any development initiative are that of human security and sustainability.

We need to ensure that development does not mean social dislocation, violence and war and that we meet “the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Each of these problems is interrelated in complex ways and requires a unified approach. The purpose of development should be to develop man and not to end with developing things. Fulfillment of basic needs of mankind should be the true objective of development and achievements that either do not contribute to this goal or even disrupt this basic requirement must not be pursued as a development goal.