**Introduction**

Human development discourse has increasingly shifted away from traditional economic indicators towards more holistic paradigms with human wellbeing as the primary focus. Amongst these, the Capability Approach (CA), proposed by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, is a foundational contribution to this paradigmatic shift. It directs development assessment away from income-based measures towards the real freedoms that people possess to pursue lives they have reason to value. At the center of the CA are functionings—the different states of being and activities that make up an individual's wellbeing—and capabilities, which refer to the real opportunities or freedoms to attain these functionings. The strategy emphasizes empowering individuals to become autonomous agents in determining their own futures, thereby placing freedom of choice and agency at the center of development's essential dimensions.

Concurrently, the global development agenda has been influenced by the signing of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—a collection of 17 global goals defined by the United Nations in 2015, with a specified timeframe for implementation through to 2030. The SDGs cover a wide range of developmental agendas, ranging from poverty eradication, health and education promotion, gender equality, sustainable economic growth, and environmental sustainability. These aspirations express a multi-dimensional concept of development that closely aligns with the values of the Capability Approach, especially their prioritization of inclusiveness, equity, and sustainability.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate where the Capability Approach intersects with the SDGs, with a special emphasis on people's wellbeing as the focal point of development. By choosing Bihar, the Indian state, as the primary context for investigation, the research explores how the overlap of these frameworks actually plays out in reality. Bihar, with its multifaceted socio-economic context and entrenched developmental issues, provides a compelling subject for investigating whether or not policy interventions actually extend people's capabilities and enhance substantive freedoms. From this perspective, the paper seeks to critically evaluate how far recent development activities in Bihar coincide with both the normative foundations of the Capability Approach and the transformative vision of the SDGs.