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THE EMERGING TRENDS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract:- Much has been written on the contestation on the nature, scope and historical background of development studies from its inception after the Second World War but there is hardly any discussion and literature highlighting on the emerging trends of development in 21st Century.

Keywords: Emerging Trends , Development Studies , literature , global axis .

INTRODUCTION:-

This article undertakes to present some of the emerging trends in development studies in order to make development studies a socially responsible and relevant field in development process and planning in the local and global axis under the guidance of the following questions: 1. How development studies emerge as an academic discipline in institutions of higher learning; 2. How development and development studies are defined; and 3. What the objectives and relevance of development studies in the context of global challenges.

Emergence of Development Studies as an academic discipline

Development has been a major concern for social scientists and thinkers for a few centuries now, but underdevelopment as a distinct category meriting analysis on its own terms is something that came into existence in the mid-1940s or so. As the world adjusts to seven billion people begins its creep toward eight billion, doing more with less will become increasingly important. Greater efficiency and effectiveness in development is paramount. The emergence of development studies in the second half of the twentieth century is in large part due to increasing concern about economic prospects for the Third World after decolonisation. Development studies evolved after the Second World War when many economists question the adequacy of neoclassical theories to analyse and solve the problems of underdevelopment in the Third World where many nations were beginning to gain independence from their colonizers. Many development economist considered economic development as an economic problem. Most of them looked inwards for ideas to address the issues of development, instead of following the cross or multidisciplinary approach. However, the idea of development studies as separate branch of knowledge was retained by a few of its founders. They raised the broader issues and sought to define the purpose of development in social as well as economic terms, arguing the importance of such objectives as social and political equality, the development of communitarian rather than individualistic pattern of life and work, the fostering the ecological balance (between people and nature) and psychological balance (between the material and spiritual) and the promotion of cultural and institutional diversity rather than remaking of the Third Word in the image of the advanced capitalist society.

Some of these ideas surfaced in late 1960s when analysts like Myrdal, Seers and Frank began to question the received fundamental principles of development practiced by most development economists. Economists like Adelman, Chenery and Streeten demanded that other economists pay attention to the distributional consequences of the economic growth and to devise policies to bring about greater equity and provide for the basic needs of the poorest of the poor citizens of the Third World.

Aware of these new developments, development studies evolved separately as an intellectual enquiry by retaining some of its old commitments the orthodox neoclassicism, when ideas from other related disciplines and areas interested in issues related to development and Third World problem began to influence the thinking in development. The intellectual founders of development studies questioned the validity of neoclassical price analysis and keynsian income analysis as applied to the condition prevailed in the Third World. For example, the much celebrated dual model (economic development with

unlimited supplies of labour) of Lewis (1954) and the Stages of growth model of Rostow (1956) among other prominent economic development theories came under severe scrutiny in order to ascertain their appropriateness to the Third World situations. The intellectual founders of the development studies argued that in order to properly address the developmental problems of the Third World a Structuralist approach was necessary. A Structuralist approach was called for because it attempted to specify specific rigidities, lags and other characteristics of the structure of developing economics that affect economic adjustment and choice of development policy (Meier, 1984).

Challenging the method of orthodox traditions, Myrdal argued that an institutional approach is the proper way to study the problems of underdevelopment, and that the history, politics, theories, ideologies, economic structures, social stratification, agriculture, industry, population development, health and education, and so on must be studied not in isolation but in their mutual relationship. He exhorted young scholars from Third World to formulate a new set of theories and ways of addressing the problems of their respective nations. Myrdal urged these students of development and change to forge themselves into a new generation of thinkers who would have the courage to throw away large structures of meaningless, irrelevant and sometimes inadequate doctrines and theoretical approaches to addressing the problems of underdevelopment (1957:104).

Besides, Myrdal, Prebisch, Singer, Hirschman, Baran and later Seers, Streeten, Sen, Frank, Stewart, Sunkel, Furtado, and Griffin among others, questioned the adequacy of neoclassical theories to address the problems of development. The Stable Equilibrium, comparative Advantage, and free trade theories of neoclassical economics were attacked by Myrdal (1958). The Realism of Western economic theories were challenged by Seers (1976). He cautions that they are limited and are only a special case when contrasted to the conditions prevailing in the Third World countries. According to Meier, economics must be broadened –indeed at times becomes interrelated with other disciplines in order to explain the determinants of population growth, technological progress, institutional change and increase in the supply of entrepreneurship (1977: 77)

While development economics seems to have merged with its forebears, development studies began to assert itself as an independent and autonomous intellectual enquiry beginning in the 1960s. Along with Myrdal, Prebisch, Singers and Seers, a new group of thinkers many of whom were from the Third World, forged an alliance with concerned scholars from other areas of development studies. Economists, historians, sociologists, political scientists, cultural anthropologists, feminists, and others interested in issues related to development from a social, cultural and geographical point of view forged their alliance with those who regarded development as a structural and institutional problem. A reconstruction of the intellectual history of development studies thus shows that it evolved into an autonomous and progressive field of study taking the base from the development economics.

How development is defined?

In common parlance, development can be defined as a process through which the potentialities of an object or organism are released, until it reaches its natural, complete and full-fledged form. Development as a concept is loaded with value judgments. While it means different things to different people, social science researchers have defined it in various ways. Until 1970s, development was used in the sense of 'growth' indicating a quantitative increase or progress in production, income, consumption of food etc. and thus emphasized mainly on economic aspect rather than social, political and cultural aspects.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations in 1962 recommended the integration of both 'social' and 'economic' aspects of development. In the same year, the Proposals for Action of the First UN Development Decade (1960-70) established that:

"The problem of the underdeveloped countries is not just growth, but development. Development is growth plus change [it added]. Change, in turn, is social and cultural as well as economic, and qualitative as well as quantitative... The key concept is improved quality of people's life."

After recognising the fact that a high rate of growth did not bring satisfactory progress in development during the first development decade, Robert S. McNamara, the President of the World Bank insisted that the 1970s should see more than gross measures of economic growth.

In a broader sense, while development signifies all aspects of development that are of collective nature pertaining to the society as a whole, in a narrower sense, it has been used either with reference to the human welfare aspects of development or in connection with structural transformation in a society.

George Frederick has defined development as a balanced process of self-reliance, economic growth and social justice in order to guarantee the basic needs (food, clothing, housing, health, education etc.) and their satisfaction in holding of self-reliance, balanced sectoral development, high degree of dissociation from the international market. The main aim of development is to increase national and per capita income and to raise the standard of living of the people and to secure justice, freedom, equality and security for them in a society.

The focus of development is now increasingly on (a) equitable distribution of wealth and income, (b) full utilisation of man power (c) better utilisation of natural resources, (d) protection of the human environment, etc. Thus, while development can be conceived as an aspect of change that is desirable, broadly predicted or planned and administered or at least influenced by governmental action, it consists of (a) an aspect of change, (b) a plan or prediction, and (c) involvement of the government for the achievements of the planned or predicted goal.

By development Gandhiji meant the development of man in his entirety, making him aware of himself as part of the development process, raising the standard of his living, and life and giving him freedom not only from foreign domination but also from economic exploitation, economic indebtedness and intellectual servitude. It is the process of growth of man, gaining in self-confidence and becoming self-reliant and self-sufficient. For him the attainment of self-sufficiency, self-reliance and self-confidence are the major aspects of development.

Development is, thus, never complete; it is relative, a state of mind, a tendency, a direction; rather than a fixed goal, it is a rate of change in a particular direction. Therefore, the fulfilment of a certain goal alone cannot be termed as development. In the ultimate analysis, it results in a sense of well being among the members of the society. Development, therefore, relates to transforming the entire society enmeshing together its economic, social, political and administrative aspects, for an all round balanced upward change. It is a process of creating and guaranteeing conditions in which people can enjoy, exercise and utilise all their human rights- economic, social, cultural, civil and political. From out of the discussion made above, following inferences can be drawn:

Development is a process not only of generating the self-sustained growth of a community but a concurrent and qualitative transformation of the society through social, political and cultural changes; Development means development of man in his totality on the basis of the satisfaction of his basic needs; It also making one aware of himself self-reliant, and self-respecting and giving freedom from exploitation; It involves active participation of the people in the process of making social, political and economic decisions; and It also requires action for preparing a planned programme of development, which can be implemented effectively by the available instruments of administration.

How development studies is defined?

Understandings of the nature and concepts of development studies are as varied, multiple and contentious as definition of what constitutes development itself. There is a general agreement that development studies cannot claim to be a distinct and separate academic discipline as for example economics or geography. According to Kothari (2005,3), development studies are cross -disciplinary engaging with different bodies of theories, conceptual and methodological frameworks and understanding of policy relevance and practical implications. It is this borrowings and application of ideas from different disciplines that to some extent provides the distinctive characteristics of development studies.

Development Studies is a multi- and inter-disciplinary field of study (i.e. not a discipline) that seeks to understand social, economic, political, technological and cultural aspects of societal change, particularly in developing countries. It is characterized also by normative and policy concerns. It aims at contributing to possible solutions to societal problems that development or its absence may produce.

In pursuit of these objectives, Development Studies is context sensitive. It examines societal change within a historical, comparative and global perspective. It aims to take into account the specificity of different societies in terms of history, ecology, culture, technology etc. and how these differences both can and often should translate into varied 'local' responses to regional or global processes, and varied strategies of development and methods.

Development studies is a changing and evolving field of study, at present covering topics and concerns such as poverty, environmental and socio-political sustainability; women's empowerment and gender equity, globalization, sustainable development and human development.

One widely agreed issue relating to the characteristics of 'Development Studies' is that they involve the blending of analytical approaches and insights from several 'disciplines'. This, first, raises the question of the nature of a discipline, and whether 'Development Studies', as an area of study which synthesises several disciplines, can itself be regarded as a discipline. Most of those involved in 'Development Studies' would probably not regard it as a discipline, and most would also have their own 'home' discipline – such as economics, sociology, political science, civil engineering and so on. This implies that 'Development Studies' is an 'umbrella' field of study – covering a range of disciplines – rather than being a discipline in itself.

Emerging Trend in Development Studies

Development studies in the early 1950 emerged in a very specific historical context. This was pertinently defined by Myrdal as a combination of three elements: decolonisation, the emergence of new power elites in many developing countries with a development oriented agenda and the Cold War. Decolonisation and the Cold War called for a new approach towards both countries and territories-most of them colonies or former colonies- in which poverty, illiteracy and poor health standards were widespread. The scene has since then considerably changed.

The field of development studies has indeed seen quite fundamental policy debates over the past decades. Thinking on development has changed, as well as the main paradigms that provide its foundation. Though there have been dominant concerns in Development studies, there has never been a simple consensus on solutions.

In the early days of post-colonialism, with the emergence of independent nationalist regimes, there was a strong belief in the virtues of the “development state”, interventionist policies, import substitution, protectionist models of development and a strong emphasis on overcoming or mending “market failures”. Several stages of the development debate emerged, such as the introduction of the “basic needs approach” and the classic debate over whether growth and equity objectives can be reconciled. By the mid- and late 1970s the focus shifted towards “state” or “bureaucratic failure” and the realisation that there was

substantial rent-seeking within the state, which had previously been seen as benign or good.

The early 1980's saw the emergence of a neo-liberal development agenda, which radically turned the clock towards a near sacrosanct belief in the virtues of the market. The foundations were laid for the era of structural adjustment and what has later become known as the “Washington consensus”. The pendulum shifted from regulation and state control to deregulation. Adjustment took place in the midst of a profound debt crises, and renewed lending, particularly by the international financial institutions, followed, making the debt crisis a sometimes forgotten but nonetheless structural issue for the developing world. The role of the World Bank and the IMF became more important than originally intended at Bretton Woods, and also different, for example, in their invoking conditionality related to structural adjustment before lending could follow. In the early stages of adjustment (known as the “structural adjustment programmes”) it was fashionable to consider poverty as a temporary phenomena which would be resolved after economic growth had resumed and economic recovery was realised. The “trickle down” theory, according to which any type of growth has a high elasticity of poverty reduction, regained popularity in the neo-liberal area. Actually the period of economic adjustment has shown growing income inequality to be a main factor underlying rising poverty.

In the 2000s the Millennium Development Goals, alongside with conceptual development and discussion around sustainable development and human development, have provided a new impulse to the international development and policy debate. The Development Goals by 2015 mark concrete targets for “Development”, and many governments have agreed to these objectives. Whether these goals can be achieved is another issue. They have to any extent brought focused attention and renewed intense debate about the relationship between the process of globalisation, widespread poverty and the emergence of many violent conflicts.

Though some scholars have tried to show that there is convergence, it appears now largely accepted that the gap between poor and rich (in the various manners that this can be measured) became more profound in the past decades. While globalisation may provide increased opportunities, it seems that quite some countries and segments of the population have been unable to benefit and a process of “exclusive” rather than “inclusive” growth has taken off. There are positive signs such as the rapid development of countries like China and India, which house most of the world's poor and show reduced poverty incidence (at least in China). Africa, however, is lagging, alongside, quite a number of “transition” countries that emerged after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the former Soviet Union. In both cases, nationalist and ethnically based conflict have caused much suffering and widespread poverty in politically unstable and fragile societies where sustainable development seems still a “bridge too far”.

As development decades have gone by, the boundaries of development cooperation have equally evolved and have been constantly expanded. New objectives have not been replaced but rather added to original ones. In a first phase, accelerated growth was often the key objective. It was to be brought about by higher rates of capital formation made possible by international transfer of resources. This objective is still very often in the forefront, particularly for low income countries. However, the means advocated to promote growth have changed and tended to shift to policy and institutional reform rather than the transfer of resources per se.

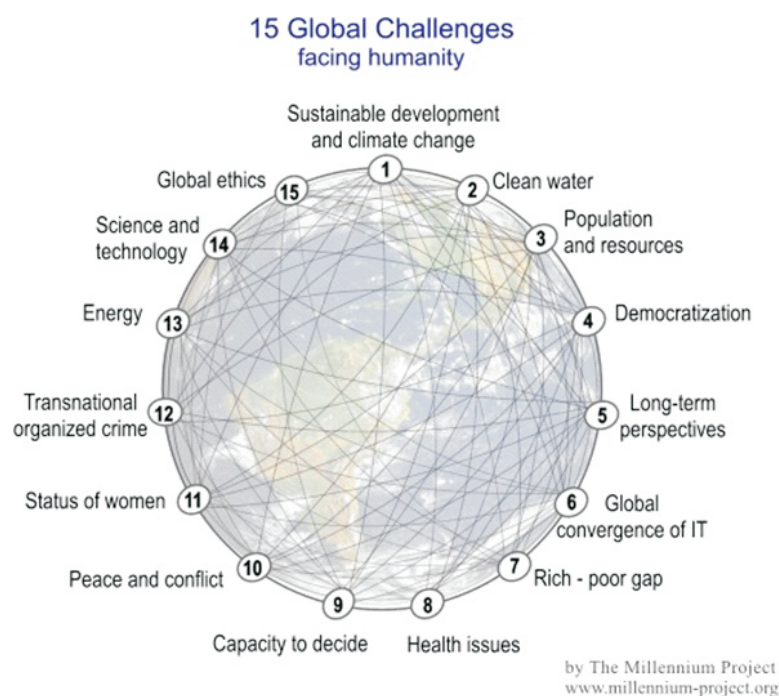
The world finds itself in a myriad of 'crises', from issues related to food security, climate change and energy sources. People are faced with pressing shortfalls, volatile commodity markets and a general lack of clarity on how best to address these various and inter-related challenges. The current economic downturn and financial turmoil add to the complexity of the response needed as they affect the capacity of the international community to achieve the MDGs and to provide for the types of programmes and policies needed to build a more sustainable future. The achievement of MDG 8, which is to 'Develop a Global Partnership for Development' and which embodies the concept of development cooperation, is more urgent than ever. In this regard, the United Nations plays a key role in mobilizing political support to strengthen the concept of global partnership for development.

At the turn of the millennium yet new dimensions were included in the North-South international development cooperation. Issues such as democracy, human rights and good governance, in brief political reforms, came to the forefront of aid relationships at the end of the Cold War. Today the scope of development cooperation has grown in complexity and diversity and comprises both bottom-up approaches (such as community development, women empowerment) and top-down strategies (such institutional development and state-building).

In view of the changing context of Development studies in the North and the South, there is a need for Development studies to adopt a new agenda based on its strengths and comparative advantages. Development studies in the North have to further develop or define an enhanced partnership with organisations in the South based on genuine partnership and complementarity. In student training, new modalities involving more partnership based approaches with multi-locational delivery and distant learning are emerging, and the centre of gravity of the point of delivery of training is shifting away from the North. This may pave the way for a movement from northern supply-driven international Development studies education to more demand driven cooperation in education and research between the North and the South.

Rethinking on development and development studies is pertinent because, as Rahimah (2004:9) asserts, despite the various development achievements, there are still many issues and problems that need to be addressed. The development process can be said to be unsuccessful in achieving its objectives to generate growth and wellbeing among the majority of the world's population in view of the continued presence of age old problems such as poverty, inequality, unemployment, discrimination etc Rahimah (2004: 8-9). To this we may add some of the following emerging global challenges to which development studies need to incorporate in its syllabus.

1. How can sustainable development be achieved for all while addressing global climate change?
2. How can everyone have sufficient clean water without conflict?
3. How can population growth and resources be brought into balance?
4. How can genuine democracy emerge from authoritarian regimes?
5. How can policymaking be made more sensitive to global long-term perspectives?
6. How can the global convergence of information and communications technologies work for everyone?
7. How can ethical market economies be encouraged to help reduce the gap between rich and poor?
8. How can the threat of new and reemerging diseases and immune micro-organisms be reduced?
9. How can the capacity to decide be improved as the nature of work and institutions change?
10. How can shared values and new security strategies reduce ethnic conflicts, terrorism, and the use of weapons of mass destruction?
11. How can the changing status of women help improve the human condition?
12. How can transnational organized crime networks be stopped from becoming more powerful and sophisticated global enterprises?
13. How can growing energy demands be met safely and efficiently?
14. How can scientific and technological breakthroughs be accelerated to improve the human condition?
15. How can ethical considerations become more routinely incorporated into global decisions?



The ontological commitment of the development community is that development does not mean just the growth of the economic pie. As Seers points out, growth itself might be bad for the poor. In most Third World societies, the benefits of the growth accrue to those who control the social and economic power in the society, thus negatively affecting those who earn the constant wages. Besides, growing inflation lessens the purchasing power of the poor more than of the economically powerful in the society.

The new thinking of development was cogently articulated by Mahbub Ul Haq. According to Haq, “Development goals must be defined in terms of progressive reduction and eventual elimination of malnutrition, diseases, illiteracy, unemployment, squalor, inequalities. We are taught to take care of our GNP and this will take care of our poverty. Let us reverse this and take care of poverty as this will take care of GNP”. (Haq quoted in Meier 1984: 160). Self reliance and distributive development program became the cornerstone of the new thinking. The need for equitable development strategies by the active participation of people who used to be the subjects of development was called for. The new world view according to Edward is concerned with “the processes of enrichment, empowerment and participation, which the technocratic world simply cannot accommodate” (1989:120).

New theories and hypothesis on structural rigidities, informal sectors, underemployment, technology choice, core-periphery relationship, foreign debt, industrialization, north –south relationship and foreign trade, technological transfer and multinational corporation, entitlement, capabilities, social movements and their role in development are constantly being added to the course curriculum of development studies while many old theories and hypothesis are discarded.

In recent years the use of political economy analysis- the application of the analytical techniques of economics- to try and assess and explain political and social factors that either enhance or limit development has become increasingly widespread as a way of explaining the success or failure of reform processes. In recent development thinking, the emphasis is now on “economic restructuring” is opposed to an emphasis on growth whether or not accompanied by redistribution (Griffin, 1988:6). Also the stress is now placed on “Human Resources” instead of the previous focus on “human capital formation”(1988:7). Human resources programs put emphasis on primary health care, public nutrition, food distribution, family planning, universal primary and secondary education and creating opportunities for women. The new development program encourage the active participation and mobilization of the people for whom such programs are intended.

More recently, the emergence of human security – a new, people-oriented approach to understanding and addressing global security threats – has led to a growing recognition of a relationship between security and development. Human security argues that inequalities and insecurity in one state or region have consequences for global security and that it is thus in the interest of all states to address underlying development issues. This relationship with studies of human security is but one example of the interdisciplinary nature of development studies.

CONCLUSION

There is no one particular methodological guideline in the new development studies, apart from the understanding that a development study is the interdisciplinary enquiry in which the views of all participating disciplines are respected. It is an inquiry in which consensus on addressing the issues of development seems to be the norm. Instead of focusing on quantitative indexes, the new development community pays attention to qualitative factors. Development studies need to readjust and accommodate emerging phenomena as mentioned above. There is a growing need to rethink on the development theories and approaches according to the need of the time. A good starting point for development thinker is to ask what is good or relevant for the people? By asking this question, we will begin to think from the perspective of the people. Hence, we need to go back to the people and discover what really they want from development. How do you do this? We go to the people, learn their language, culture and values, live with them for a while. From here we can develop a model appropriate to their needs, conditions and suggest suitable solutions.

Development studies is a progressive and growing (interdisciplinary) field of study with a core commitment, namely that issues of development must be investigated from the point of view of the people and their institutions. According to Griffin (1988:7) despite the horrors that surround us such as starvation, destitution, inequality, violence and oppression, most of the people in the developing countries are measurably better off than they were when the enterprise of development or development studies evolved after Second World War. Giffin (1988:7-8) further adds that “ if ideas have the power to affect events in a fundamental way..... then the ideas of those who have pondered the problems of development have surely resulted in improved wellbeing of many millions of people.

When adding to the economic/financial crisis, the climate and the ecological crises including the crisis of the peak oil that demands a dramatic change to other sources of energy as well as the crisis of food sufficiency that, despite the gigantic technological progress over the past 200 years, still leave almost one billion people hungry and undernourished on a daily basis, there is a need for serious reconsiderations of development. Debate on the ingenuity of mankind versus resource depletion and population increase. Subsequently, there is a need to reconceptualise development and subsequently the role of development studies.

The North–South hegemonic dominance based in the traditional development concept is receding with the economic and political power gradually shifting to the East–South led by the major emerging economies. This opens up for new development paths based in the local context of natural resource endowment, local economic, social and political structures, institutions, politics and cultural heritage that create development pluralism that all has to be seen in the framework of (most likely) a multi-polar world architecture. Most importantly, however, is that the pluralism of future developments must take place within an ecological finite world.

The epistemology of the interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary development studies has a major role in this to analyse the contextual framework for development options and guide states, markets and civil societies for them to pursue in an informed way their own development model, allowing the 9–11 billion people by the middle of this century to live a good life in sufficiency, including sufficient frugality to let future development for the entire global population be sustainable.

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¹United Nations, The UN Development Decade- Proposals for Action, New York, United Nations, 1962

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⁹See Myrdal, G., 1996, Asian Drama. An inquiry into the poverty of nations, New York, Twentieth Century Fund and Pantheon

¹⁰See for instance Spoor, M. (editor), 2004, Globalisation, poverty and conflict, Dordrecht, Kluwer

¹¹Of particular importance in the definition of the specificity of DS as an interdisciplinary and context sensitive field of study is the critique that emerged in the 1960s on the need for a specific approach towards problems of economic development. Dudley Seers' "Limitation of the Specific Case" (1967) very aptly poses this critique. He argues that the study of these problems cannot be adequately undertaken out of "general theory" of economics derived from the experience of a few highly special cases based on western countries. "A book is not called "Principles of Astronomy" if it refers only to the earth or the solar system or even the local galaxy". The major inadequacies of conventional economics with the typical case of unindustrialised economies are, according to Seers, that the analysis focuses on the wrong factors, and the models do not fit at all closely the way in which non-industrial economies operate, for instance because they take institutions as given (whereas the question precisely is what institutions to change and how), and because they omit the conditional nature of economic progress on raising the quality of labour. This renders conventional economics not only irrelevant but also makes the student of development gradually unfitted to understand, let alone, solve, the problems of non-industrialised societies.

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