Development In Politics And Socio-economic Spectrums: The World Bank As A Global Welfare Organisation

Development as a discourse has been subjective to numerous debates in politics and socio-economic spectrums. Where these spectrums explain development through their characteristics and values, development in itself has emerged as a contemporary discourse. In this contemporary setting, the debates on development not only explore its theory but also deconstruct the previous definitions of development. As its definitions offer structure to agencies of global welfare organisation such as the World Bank which would be discussed further, it is essential to understand development in a global perspective. Hence to understand this relationship of structure and agency the chosen texts analyse the different lenses through which development is perceived and its implications on countries and their developmental ideas.

The focus of the review remains to access the developmental concepts examined by Amartya Sen, the practical outline on knowledge production by Dethier and the relevance of the synthesis that these works produce. To this, the article Human Development and Economic Sustainability - Sudhir Anand and Amartya Sen aims to explore the theorising concepts and practical concepts of development. - describes human development and the role of economic instruments such as wealth and opulence play in the understanding of development. It further explores how the idea of sustainable development is linked to development through the concept of universalism. Producing Knowledge for development: Research at the world bank - Jean Jacques, Dethier on the other hand factually depicts the factors that contribute to knowledge production in world organisation, such as the World Bank.

Anand and Sen in 'Human Development and Economic Sustainability' analyse the concepts of human development and sustainable development. It aims to aim at understanding the extent to which instruments can be mistaken for objectives, such as in the matter of wealth based approach to human development. In a trial to create a clear distinction between instrument and objectives of development, they use concepts such as universalism, individual development and resource allocation. In the context of human development, they regard human rights to be universal. Yet, certain individuals in minorities in the past have suffered exclusion from this universalism. They give a classic instance of women and slaves in the ancient Greek period being excluded from individual development processes. On this, Anand and Sen argue that as developmental interests of future generations too are universal, resource allocation and planning should be conducted to justice their human rights. While highlighting the theoretical inconsistency of wealth-based development being perceived as the only instrument of human development, they analyse the historical economic literature. Furthermore, the literature heavily focuses on private property and material success as not only essential instruments of development but also as the objective. This stagnation on wealth also exists in contemporary measures of development such as GNP and GDP. They argue that even though wealth-based development might lay a foundation for development, it still fails to view real individual opportunities that humans have in the aspects of social justice and individual development. Further to support their argument of wealth based approach not always complying to human development objective, he gives examples of countries and states such as China, Sri Lanka and Kerala that have achieved higher levels of human development than what was expected based on their GNP. With this, Anand and Sen do acknowledge the importance of economic growth as

it does facilitate the ground building for development yet it overlooks concepts of individual development and development of opportunities. Furthermore, they recommend that this wealth-based approach may be contingent in certain societies or have alternative approaches. Hence it remains debatable in its nature of universalism.

Anand and Sen in the context of sustainable development suggest the necessity of resource allocation for the preservation of resources. They mark it as an obligation of the present generation towards the future generation. As the market forces naturally do not compliment this obligation, the concept of intergenerational should be adopted to ensure the success of impartial treatment for development. Contributing complementarily to each other, the present generation and future generation ensure equity in developmental opportunities and social justice of the society.

Yet, in the matter of resource allocation, it is important to avoid over-specification as well as under-specification of resources as it may create difficulty of comprehending and guaranteeing preservation for both generations.

Dethier in producing knowledge for development gives a detailed and practical account of working of the World Bank in knowledge production. He progressively marks the impact of research publications by the World Bank on the developmental ideas of the developing countries in his work. With this, he also tries to analyse the factors influencing the research agenda.

While calculating the decrease in research expenditure at World Bank he points out the difference between the research projects conducted and research publications. For instance, the research projects conducted in 2006 were approximately half in the number of research publications. He argues that the research outcome results from agendas that heavily focus on providing policy results on the relevant matter than on academic ones. With this, he explains the overriding assumption of a policy being the sole channel through which research contributes to development indirectly tampers with the rawness of research projects. Furthermore, the research agenda is fixated around the World Bank’s two-pillar development strategy of building conditions for investment and empowering the poor for participation in this investment. This limits the Bank’s research work to solely focus on monetary motives rather than research. In the matter of quality and relevance, a gap in what the research had to offer and the requirement for policymaking was noticeable regardless of how heavily the agenda was previously influenced by policy outcome.

Interestingly he marks the advocative nature of the research rather than the academic orientation. That this research work was used to proselytise the bank policies instead of contributing to the development ideas for the developing countries, which was aimed to do originally. Furthermore, while the Bank formally claims to be apolitical at the same time advocates itself for the developing countries and their ideas of development. Which the bank supports by giving examples of development conducted in such countries.

He concludes that the research work and publication nevertheless being policy-oriented play a vital role in creating developmental trends on a global scale.

While Anand and Sen do examine correlation and causation between economic and human development, that economic development solely causes human development, they neglect its

role in the modern and contemporary period. Furthermore, while arguing for sustainable development, they fail to critically evaluate its relevance in current global politics. The power dynamics of the contemporary world influence both the theoretical perception of development as well as the capitalistic instrument for it, which is to an extent touched upon by Dethier in producing knowledge for development. The World Bank in its functioning is massively influenced by the developed countries and their notions of development, which may not always be applicable in numerous developing countries. Dethier misses this mention of influence that global politics cause other than policy outcome on research agendas of organisations such as the World Bank.

The World Bank through its agendas and policy demands informally normalises the notion of development through the wealth-based approach. The problem with this occurs when a wealth-based approach enjoys an exclusivity from various socio-cultural factors that may be instruments of development. Furthermore, this pure focus on the capitalistic value of development may lead to degradation of the quality of education, social organisation and ethical behaviours in societies. This normalisation further reinforces international politics by creating a gap between what international welfare organisations offer and what the developing countries are in need of. Further leading to smaller recognition of problems that developing countries face, domestically as well as internationally.

The exclusivity that instruments for development enjoy in some societies actually problematise development for the others. For instance, where development for a woman in a developing country could be access to education, similarly breaking the barriers created by glass ceiling and sticky floors in career advancement might be developed for a woman in a developed country. This makes it important for both, the objective as well as the instrument of development to be inclusive in nature by accommodating and incorporating fresh and new ideas of development.