

Chapter 4

Human Development: Concept and Strategy

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1 Overview

The concept of human development has evolved over time. Initially, it was equated to economic affluence that was measured in terms of per capita gross domestic product (GDP). Subsequently, emphasis shifted to capability building for living the life that human beings value. The capability is indeed built upon an economic base, but life expectancy at birth and adult literacy rate too play a crucial role. The three taken together, constituted the Human Development Index (HDI) for comparing countries and entities within a country. Over time, new components were added, of which inequality in income, education and health was considered to be the most crucial. They led to develop the Human Development Index adjusted for inequality (IHDI). Human development was also conceptualized as an individual's experience in living a sustainable, long and happy life without taking away resources meant for others and for future generations. This yielded the Happiness Planet Index (HPI). There has been a further shift that highlights conceptualizing human development at sociocultural and personal value-based states of wellbeing. The evolving conceptualizations of human development suggest the need for an inclusive strategy that can promote sustainable human development encompassing economic, social and psychological wellbeing.

2 Evolving Conceptualization

2.1 Economic Approach

The mainstream economic approach equated human development with economic growth that was measured in terms of increase in per capita GDP. The underlying

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assumption was that human satisfaction and wellbeing are a direct function of the consumption of amount and variety of goods and services. It was purely a materialistic western capitalist worldview that first competed with the socialist worldview, but led to the unipolar economic worldview, particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall in the late 1980s. Creating demand for material goods and services by manipulating market mechanisms, thereby accumulating wealth often without scruples, thus allowing an opulent lifestyle were the salient features of this approach. The approach has shown to have many flaws, but still dominates the minds of the majority all over the world, partly because the material affluence provides an explicit basis for satisfying a range of needs, influencing others and proving superiority over others.

2.2 Access to Material Resources

Access to material resources, when restricted to the extreme, causes poverty, which has a devastating impact on people:

Poverty involves much more than the restrictions imposed by lack of income. It also entails lack of basic capabilities to lead full, creative lives—as when people suffer from poor health, are excluded from participating in the decisions that affect their communities or have no right to guide the course of their lives. Such deprivations distinguish human poverty from income poverty (The Human Development Report 2003, p. 27).

It is this human poverty that, according to Pareek (1970), dehumanizes people, further restricts their access to resources, diminishes their self-esteem and retards their capability to cope with external exigencies causing a sense of helplessness and powerlessness. Sinha (1975) pointed out the negative consequences of poverty for human development ranging from retarded perceptual skills, through weak self-efficacy and nutritional deficiency, to social pathology and poor mental health. It is not only economic poverty, he argued, but a combination of adverse physical factors, social disadvantages, and institutional inadequacy that retards human development (Sinha 1982).

2.3 Poverty Syndrome

This is a fallout of the extreme and pervasive poverty in the minds of even those who are not so poor (Sinha 2000). It gets into their subconscious causing a constellation of beliefs, values and action orientations detrimental to human development. Not-so-poor and even relatively affluent people perceive that societal resources such as money, job, positions and material things are extremely limited while there are many aspirants vying to grab them. The smartest among them grab disproportionately larger share depriving others from what justifiably should go to them.

This compulsion to grab resources does not end with acquiring what one needs. One has to keep accumulating, controlling, and protecting them from being usurped

by other competitors. The more resources a person acquires, the more he feels temporarily secure and satisfied, but paradoxically soon starts fearing that he might lose them. Hence, he acquires, hoards and monopolizes and continues doing so till the very end. In order to acquire more and more, he needs power more than merit or social norm that can delimit what he deserves. Power helps to acquire even undue resource which in turn, further enhances power. Thus, power and resources mutually support each other to the extent that people start believing that they cannot have one without the other. So, power, like resources, has to be continuously enhanced in order to keep it effective and immune from being eroded. Power, like resources, has to be conspicuous in order to maintain an increasingly larger gap from the less powerful persons who have to live with the leftovers of the resources. In other words, fewer and fewer individuals have the larger share of scarce resources.

2.4 Too Much Wealth

Too much wealth possessed by a few does not help people realize a higher level of quality of life. The more one accumulates, the more conspicuously one spends on showing off by proving one's superiority and to cover up a sense of insecurity. Such consumption-oriented lifestyle neither remains healthy nor does it promote longer life or ensure greater happiness. The opulent lifestyle is associated with a variety of mental and physical health problems (Kasser 2002). Studies from many different nations, involving preschoolers to the elderly and both males and females, show that when people of different income levels place high premium on financial wealth and material goods, this is associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression and low life satisfaction. Individuals with a strong, materialistic orientation are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour, have personality disorders and experience difficulties in intimate relationships.¹ Those trapped in hankering for materialistic values have also detracted themselves from other people. They become less sensitive to the needs and feelings of others which in turn damages interpersonal relationships. Consequently, less empathy and intimacy are experienced, adversely affecting others, including their own children.

2.5 Relative Deprivation

Those who are engaged in getting ahead of others by acquiring more suffer from relative deprivation as well. It is natural that economically disadvantaged persons compare themselves with advantaged ones and suffer from relative deprivation (Sinha 1982), which affects their development. Interestingly, however, all of those competing for material gains find to their dismay that there are always persons ahead of them. Human

¹ <http://www.sustainablecale.org/AttractiveSolutions/UnderstandingHumanHappinessandWellBeing.aspx> on August 25, 2011.

beings have an in-built need to compare with others (Festinger 1954). High-acquiring persons tend to compare with those who are ahead of them, causing dissatisfaction with what they have, which, in turn, puts pressure on them to keep acquiring. Studies (Sinha 1968; Sinha & Pandey 1970) have shown that such people acquire, hoard and monopolize resources that they might not need, thereby depriving others' access to resources.

2.6 Economic Disparity

The race for acquiring more results in fewer people acquiring more. This leads to greater economic disparity in the society. It is noteworthy that the gains of economic growth do not spread evenly either at global, national or subnational levels. As a country develops economically, the disparity between the poor and the rich generally increases. According to the Human Development Report (2002), the world's richest 1 % of people have 57 % more income as 1 % of the poorest. The income of the world's richest 5 % is 114 times that of the poorest 5 %. A more recent report shows that this gap is even wider because inequality estimates do not take into consideration the offshore wealth of the rich (Shaxson et al. 2012). The bottom half of the world's population owns roughly 1 % of the world's wealth compared to 84 % held by the top 10 %. Year after year, the *HDR* reports have pointed out that member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have increased their income... but most have seen rising income inequality most consistently and dramatically in the UK and the USA. In the USA, for example, according to a *New York Times* report (October 10, 2012), income inequality had risen to the highest level after the great depression with the top 1 % earners making 93 % of income gains. OECD countries show similar trends except in the case of Greece, Ireland and Turkey (OECD 2011). The case of China is a little different. While there was steady rise in inequality with the Gini coefficient rising from 30 % in the 1980s to about 45 % in 2005, and 51.1 % in 2011, the real income of people in the lowest quintile also rose, according to a World Bank report (2012). India in comparison to China reported a Gini coefficient of 39.9 relative to 36.8 in 2005 (Euromonitor International 2012). In the 10 years of liberalization (1992–1993 to 2001–2002) of the Indian economy, the climbers (income range Rs. 22,000–45,000 per annum) and the consuming class (income range Rs. 45,000–215,000 per annum) had doubled themselves while the size of the very rich class (income above Rs. 215,000 per annum) increased by about four times (National Council of Applied Economic Research Survey quoted in *Business Today*, January 20, 2002, p. 177). In the course of 2010–2012, the number of Indian billionaires (in terms of US \$) has almost doubled from 27 to 48. According to one estimate, 0.00001 % super rich of India's population now account for around 25 % of its trillion-dollar GDP.² The media is replete with stories of displays of their money power. For example, of two

² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/nov/19/number-of-indian-billionaires-doubles>, retrieved on August 25, 2011.

billionaire brothers, one presented a yacht worth US\$84million to his wife on her birthday; another presented an Airbus 319 worth US\$59million on his wife's birthday, and then built a 27-storey sky palace at the estimated cost of US\$1billion for their family of four; the son of a billionaire casually gifted a handbag of Rs. 2.5 million to his girlfriend in addition to similarly priced assorted items that he casually gifted to her; and two top executives of an industrial development bank get over Rs. 60 million salary annually, besides perks. All this in a country where about 300 million people survive on Rs. 20 a day! Noam Chomsky was cited commenting during his visit to India in 1996, "The lifestyle of the Indian elite is amazing. I have never seen such opulence even in America" (Varma 1999, p. 176).

A similar trend of disparity is observed among the major states of India (Appendix Table 1). The growth rate in per capita GDP of India increased from the 1980s to the 1990s. But the increase was uneven for the major states. The five major states (Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu) having the highest per capita income reported increase in the growth rate of the state domestic product (SDP); while in the lowest per capita income states [Bihar, Assam, Uttar Pradesh (UP), Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Orissa], the rate of economic growth in the 1990s in fact decreased from that of the 1980s. There were only two exceptions—Punjab, where the growth rate decreased and MP, where it marginally increased.

Thus, equating human development with economic affluence is flawed reasoning since it discounts factors such as disparity among individuals and collectives, absolute and relative deprivation, insecurity and anxiety in the minds of even those who are affluent, and their lack of sensitivity to others.

3 Capability Building

GDP, despite its vital role in providing tax revenues to the government and goods and services to the people that might give them a sense of material wellbeing, cannot be equated to human development. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defined human development thus:

Human development is about people, about expanding their choices to lead lives they value.... Fundamental to enlarging human choice is *building human capabilities; the range of things that people can do or be*. The most basic capabilities for human development are leading a long and healthy life, being educated, having access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and being able to participate in the life of one's community (The Human Development Report 2002, p. 13; italics added).

4 Human Development Index

The basic capabilities were first operationalized in 1990 in terms of life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate and per capita GDP that were combined to develop the HDI for ranking countries. The founder of the *Human Development Reports*,

Mahbub ul Haq, mentioned a number of other components such as greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence and satisfying leisure hours. Later, the capability to enjoy political and civil freedoms to participate in the life of the community was added. Human development was considered to be based on three essential conditions: environmental sustainability, equality particularly gender equality, and enabling global economic environment by strengthening the partnership between the developed and developing countries (The Human Development Report 2003, p. 28). However, for a while, HDI remained a composite of the GDP per capita, life expectancy at birth and adult literacy rate. India has slowly improved its HDI from 0.407 in 1975 to 0.519 in the year 2010, but still stands at the 119th position out of 169 countries (The Human Development Report 2003, 2010). According to The Human Development Report (2010), India has just improved one rank between 2005 and 2010, though India was among the top 10 performers globally in terms of HDI measured on income growth. There has been an obvious discrepancy between the economic growth and improvement in India's human development position.

5 Human Development Index Adjusted for Inequality

The United Nations General Assembly set in the year 2000 eight millennium goals that were considered to promote human development globally (The Human Development Report 2002, p. 17). They were to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development. Except the last two, all other goals pertained to income, education and health, which were considered to play a pivotal role in human development.

However, the aggregate measures of the indices were found to be misleading as they cover up inequalities within a nation or collectives. Further, the way the indices of income, education and health were added allowed the deficiency in one area to be compensated by the progress in another. Similarly, adult literacy and life expectancy at birth were found to be inadequate in reflecting the essence of human development. Hence, The Human Development Report (2010) made a number of modifications in the measures and the way they were summated.

More specifically, the GDP per capita was replaced by gross national income (GNI) per capita as a measure of the standard of living on the ground that differences between them are often large in a globalized world. Income may have many sources and may not match with the domestic production. Many, for example, receive international remittances or remit or spend their income abroad. Similarly, adult literacy was considered to be inadequate and was replaced by mean years of schooling and enrolment. Life expectancy was replaced with access to health care facilities. Modifications were also made in the way the indices were summated to

derive the IHDI, which was now based on the geometric mean of the three indices. Poor performance in any measure was now, instead of being substituted by others, directly reflected in the IHDI. This captured a realistic position of a country across the three dimensions. The IHDI also recognized health, education and income also to be important and must be taken into account separately as well as aggregately to get a better understanding of the state of human development in a country or collectives within a country. As a result, The Human Development Report (2010) provided the IHDI within a country along with HDI, which allowed across countries' comparison. The difference between the two revealed the loss in human development as a result of the magnitude of inequality.

Figure 1 displays a comparative picture of India, China and the USA. The USA not only had the highest Human Development Index (HDI = 0.902), but also the lowest percentage of loss (11.40 %) due to inequality in per capita GNI, schooling and health facilities. India stood third (HDI = 0.519) next to China (HDI = 0.663) and also suffered the highest percentage of loss in its HDI (29.6 %), which was lower than that of China (23.0 %).

India's loss in the HDI was much more due to inequality in education (43 %) than in health (34 %) than in income (16 %). As reported earlier, India has been doing rather well in increasing its purchasing power parity (PPP) claiming fourth rank in the world, next only to the USA, China and Japan (The World Bank 2011), but still restrained to the category of medium-developed HDI countries, and in fact fell into the low-developed IHDI ones (The Human Development Report 2010).

A recent attempt to profile Indian states in terms of the HDI and IHDI roughly matched the national profile (Suryanarayana et al. 2011). Kerala topped (0.625)

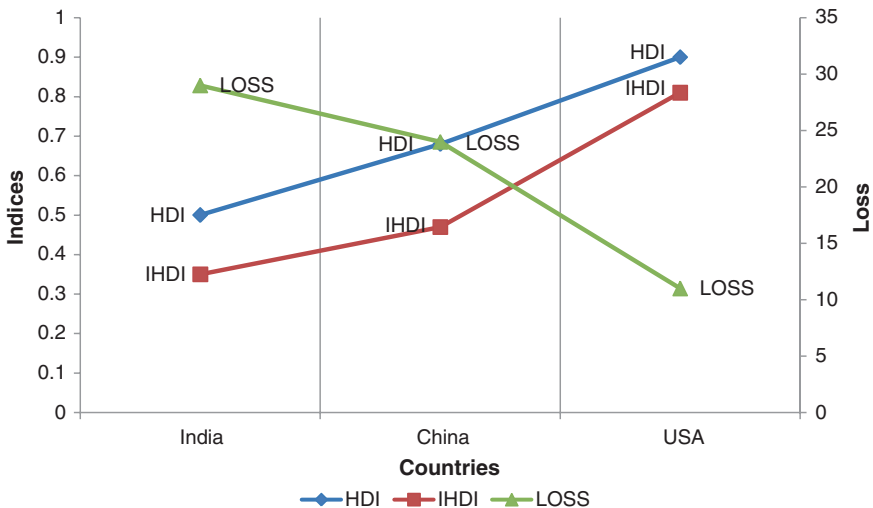


Fig. 1 Human Development Indices. *Note* Human Development Index *HDI*, Human Development Index adjusted for Inequality *IHDI*, Loss is percentage difference between HDI and IHDI. *Source* Human Development Report (2010)

followed by Punjab (0.569), whereas Orissa (0.442) and Bihar (0.447) were at the bottom of the HDI. The most developed Kerala and Punjab suffered less loss in the HDI (16.78 and 28.04 %, respectively) than Orissa (33.11 %) and Bihar (32.06 %)—the losses which were the highest among the 19 major states. The average loss in the HDI due to inequality in income was highest for Maharashtra (19 %) followed by Tamil Nadu (17 %) but lowest for Bihar and Assam (9 %). Loss due to inequality in education was the highest in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand (46 %) and lowest in Kerala (23 %) and Assam (34 %). The loss due to inequality in health was the highest in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh (43 %) and the lowest in Kerala (11 %). In other words, Kerala, which was the best on the HDI, was the one that also was able to reduce inequalities in income, education and health. Other states had varying degrees of inequalities probably due to differential interventions in the areas of health and education (Appendix Table 2).

Indices of human development apart, inequality is endemic in Indian life-style. Income inequality is abominable; but inequalities in health and education are not less appalling. World class health care facilities are available, but only in a selected few metropolis. The rest of the cities and towns, and more miserable rural areas are left to poorly trained doctors, quacks and faith healers. Some of the higher educational institutions are of reasonably high standard, but the rest of them are either hardly functioning or are left to the educational entrepreneurs who are like sharks in extracting the maximum not only from the neo rich but also from the marginal middle class which bleeds to see their children share the “shining” India’s future. Education, which is considered to be the most effective instrument for development, has not always been found to deserve the adoration. Recent findings of a survey in the villages of UP (Tripathi 2011) exploded the myth of education as the most potent driver of human development as the levels of education were associated with the increasing gap in the gender ratio, levels of infant mortality rate for girls, decline in interpersonal contacts, loss in social cohesiveness, prevalence in polyandry, “*purdah*” and fewer participation in *gram panchayat*. In fact, and contrary to the expectations, educational levels were unrelated to villagers’ happiness and wellbeing.

To conclude, it can be said that income, education and health indeed are essential ingredients of the capability to live the life that people want, though, in conditions of gross inequality, people tend to want what might be detrimental to others’ as well as their own development. Income, health and education may be necessary, but not sufficient for human development.

6 Human Happiness

A universally held assumption is that people want mostly happiness. Happiness for a moment or a short period is not enough. They want it for an extended period. The longer and healthier their life full of happiness, the greater will be their sense of wellbeing, and hence development. Further, the happiness has to be experienced

collectively, by not infringing upon the opportunity of others' happiness or the happiness of future generations. Hence, people's search for happiness should not lead them to overexploit resources and degrade the natural environment, which are common heritage to all human beings. Resources have to be utilized judiciously to maximize the totality of happiness of the world, the nation and the collectives within a nation.

7 Happy Planet Index

The New Economics Foundation, a British think-tank, developed the HPI in July 2006 for cross-cultural comparisons. The HPI is a measure of the environmental efficiency of supporting people's happiness as an indicator of their wellbeing in a given country. Computation of HPI is a little complicated, but, in a simplified form, the HPI is the product of life satisfaction multiplied by life expectancy and divided by ecological footprint. Ecological footprint is measured in terms of the natural resources exploited, the carbon emission, etc., by a country causing permanent damage to the planet earth, and thereby impacting the happiness of other people and the people of future generations.

A comparative profile of the GDP per capita, HDI and HPI of India, China, Japan and the USA was given in Fig. 2. It was interesting to note that the USA topped the list in the GDP, but had the lowest happiness level. India had the lowest GDP per capita and HDI, but much higher happiness score than the USA, better than Japan, and only next to China, which had the second lowest GDP and HDI, but the highest score of happiness. Obviously, GDP per capita plays a vital role in affecting the HDI but not the happiness of people. The average income of an American in 50 years

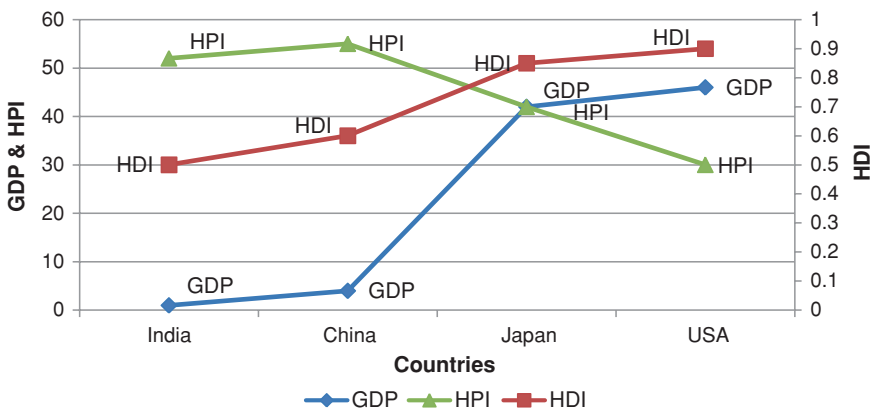


Fig. 2 GDP, HDI and HPI. *Note* Gross Domestic Product *GDP* per capita (US \$). Human Development Index *HDI*. Happiness Planet Index *HPI*. *Source* *The World Bank* (2011), Human Development Report (2010) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happy_Planet_Index

(1955–2005) has more than doubled, but the percentage of the very happy people remained below 40. Similarly, the fivefold increases in GDP in Japan over the twentieth century did not increase in Japanese personal happiness (Myers 2000). There are instances of people in the West suffering from a sense of insecurity, loneliness, depression, high divorce rates and so on (Bellah et al. 1985; Cobb 1976; Naroll 1983). Bhutan is another exemplary case. In the year 2009, Bhutan was quite low on the GDP, but reported the highest score (58.50) on the HPI compared to China (57.50), India (53.00), Japan (43.30) and the USA (30.70).³

So it can be said that the concept of ecologically supporting happiness adds to our understanding of human development that was previously based on income, education and health. Ecological sustainability is well taken for lasting happiness, but the source of human happiness is still left unexplored. Happiness is a cultural construction. It means satisfaction in enjoying material comforts and luxuries in the West but that is not considered to be the real measure of happiness in the spiritually oriented collectivist culture of India.

8 Psycho-Social Approach

There has been an improvement in the conceptualization of human development as it shifted from economic affluence, through the capability to live a life that people value, to their ecologically efficient sustainable happiness. All of them claimed to view human development as people's wellbeing and attempted to tap it through the measures that were believed to be universally valid so that the countries can be compared meaningfully. The measures were indeed comparable, but not the meanings attached to the constructs of wellbeing, values, or life satisfaction of people across cultures. Hence, a doubt is raised about the adequacy of the measures in doing full justice to the concept of human development. Further, they reflected what Rist and Sabelli (1986) called western "developers" perspective that may not gel fully with the indigenous characteristics of non-western countries. As back as the early 1980s, the UNESCO sponsored a project that advocated for a culture-specific endogenous human development:

Endogenous development meant development that corresponds to the internal characteristics of the society in question, that takes account of its specific features and its integrative qualities. When a country develops endogenously, its way of life should be based on respect for its traditional values, for the authenticity of its culture, and for the creative aptitudes of its people (Alechina 1982, p. 19).

The concept of endogenous development is based on the premise that human behaviour, including those reflective of their levels of development, is determined to a large extent by their cultural conditions and experiences. No doubt, there are indeed a set of universal capacities of human beings that are neuro-biologically determined; but they turn into capabilities only when tempered by a culture (Berry 2010). Freedom

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happy_Planet_Index on August 26, 2011.

to choose a lifestyle, pursue what people value, experience of being deprived, life satisfaction, happiness and wellbeing may mean different things in different cultures. If that is so, the discourse of human development needs to be contextualized in, apart from ecological and economic reality, the cultural frame and the mindset of the people.

Box 1. Development in the West and the East

We have over a century been dragged by the prosperous West behind its chariot, choked by the dust, deafened by the noise, humbled by our own helplessness and overwhelmed by the speed. We agreed to acknowledge that this chariot-drive was progress, and the progress was civilization. If we ever ventured to ask, “progress towards what, and progress for whom”, it was considered to be peculiarly and ridiculously oriental to entertain such ideas about the absolute-ness of progress. Of late, a voice has come to us to take count not only of the scientific perfection of the chariot but the depth of the ditches lying in its path (Rabindranath Tagore, quoted in Human Development Report 1996, p. 45).

8.1 Indian Values

Indian culture, for example, is characterized by the paradox of collectivism with a built-in individualistic orientations, spirituality that rises from materialistic indulgence, hierarchical orientation that recognizes exemplary merit and qualities, harmony that is vulnerable to frequent violence at even modest provocation, excessive dependency that quickly transforms into competitive entrepreneurship as soon as an opportunity arises, emotionality that blends with calculative orientation, hair-splitting analytical mindset that seamlessly turns synthetic and intuitive and so on (Sinha [in press](#)). Given such a cultural context of diversity, human development has to assume corresponding contours of complexity that is likely to be somewhat different from the western linear view of development. Tripathi (1988), for example, proposed to align human development to the values of embeddedness and openness. Collectivist Indians relish being embedded in their collectives so that they have a mutually supportive, meaningful and gratifying social network and yet be open to others’ views and new ideas that are floating around in a culture of diversity. Only such a seemingly inconsistent but internally unifying approach can realize human potentials in India.

8.2 Western Values

In contrast, the people in the individualist culture of the West want to develop as autonomous individuals who want to realize three core interrelated values: *Success, freedom, and justice* (Bellah et al. 1985, p. 142). For Americans, for example,

success means climbing the corporate ladder, making lots of money and owning material objects of satisfaction. Freedom means “being left alone by others, not having other people’s values, ideas, or styles of life forced upon, being free of arbitrary authority at work, family, and political life” (p. 23). Justice means equity in social transactions, that is, one must get what one pays for. Society is like a market place where individuals are entitled to exchange success and freedom with the goods and services that assure both distributive and procedural justice. People value getting a fair amount of freedom and success by engaging in social transactions that too are expected to be fair and transparent. Following such values, Triandis (1982) delineated the following elements of human development: openness to new experience, independence from parental authority, concern for time and planning, willingness to defer gratification, mastery over nature, determination, cosmopolitan perspective, having enlarged in-group and striving for excellence.

Some of these characteristics are obviously detrimental to human development in the Indian perspective. For example, independence from parental authority might signify the value of freedom but negates the value of embeddedness and social integration; mastery over nature allows over exploitation of natural resources but increases ecological footprint and hence sustainability of human wellbeing, striving for excellence of individuals accentuates inequality that dents human development.

8.3 Agentic Capabilities

Striving for individual’s excellence is indeed the core of agentic capabilities that are crucial for human capabilities for whatever people want to achieve. Agentic capabilities in the West, however, follow the cultural imperatives and generate highly competitive behaviour where individuals strive to be on their own and achieve success by their own efforts without concern for others. Agentic capabilities manifest in self-reflective, self-organizing and self-regulative mechanisms (Bandura 1997) that human being employ enabling them to improve the conditions in which they live and to create new opportunities for further development.

We all have the potential to cultivate agentic capabilities. Further, whoever, the poor or the rich, the privileged or the deprived, the people of developing or developed countries, are engaged in the process of cultivating agentic capabilities to solve problems, live quality of life, and transcend limitations, will improve their levels of development. The major difference lies in whether people cultivate it individually (as they do in the West) or collectively as advocated by Indian scholars (Mehta 1987; Sinha 1968; Tripathi 1988). The developed countries, because of their thin population density, sound infrastructure, efficient work organizations and the protestant ethic, provide a favourable condition for individuals to enhance their agentic capabilities with very little dependence on other individuals, groups or agencies or government. There exists a strong value of self-reliance and sorting out problems on one’s own. Seeking help or support in fact is taken for one’s weakness.

Not only are Indian values different from western values, but, opportunity structure for Indians is also vastly discriminating the poor, the backward, the low castes and variously challenged persons and groups. There are systemic barriers to growth. Pervasive corruption, caste compulsions, rise of fundamentalism and many others drain people's energy and prevent its use for development. The rich and privileged in India do shine as high achievers and successful in various domains but they also accentuate inequalities, which, as stated earlier, are appalling. The mass of Indians are left out being so deprived of and feeling so helpless that they do not think of even making efforts for a change. They surrender to their destiny. Agentic capabilities need to be kick-started in such conditions by planned efforts of the State, international cooperation and grassroot agency.

8.4 Communitarian Agentic Capabilities

Agentic capabilities that are to be initiated have to be communitarian in nature. Indians value "affective reciprocity" and "mutual caring" of others (Roland 1988). People are emotionally connected to each other. Lapierre (1986) contended "Every individual in India is always linked to the rest of the social body by a network of incredibly diversified ties, with the result that no one in this gigantic country of seven hundred and fifty million [now above one billion] inhabitants could ever be completely abandoned" (p. 56). "Indians seem to emphasize protection and caring [of those below in hierarchy] in their social (and political) relations" (Kakar 1982, p. 272).

Achievement for Indians ideally means being good persons, thinking about the wellbeing of in-group members, fulfilling their duties to friends and the family, helping them, and being able to get affection and blessing from elders (Agarwal & Misra 1989; Misra & Agarwal 1985). The scarcity of resources and weak infrastructural facilities render Indians interdependent. Together, they can cope with external exigencies more effectively and can help each other grow. It is not the strong need for individual achievement, but a strong need for either social achievement (Mehta 1987) or cooperation (Sinha 1968) that can help people maximize their collective gains.

8.5 Spirituality and Materialism

Indians' *communitarian* values are inextricably blended with the core of their spirituality, although the upper end of spirituality is a highly personalized in nature. Spirituality, according to Kanungo and Mendonca (1996, p. 97), consists of the profound *consciousness* of the eternal values of truth, goodness and beauty (*satyam, shivam, and sudaram*), emotionally entrenched faith in these values, and altruistic behaviour to keep others' interest and concerns over one's own interest and concerns even at one's personal risk and self-sacrifices. Roland (1988)

believed that “the fundamental goal of all relationships and living [of Indians] is the gradual self-transformation toward inner and subtle qualities and the refined aspects of power in the quest for self-realization” (p. 294). Further, Roland contended that spirituality is so deeply engraved in the Indian psyche; “it is virtually impossible to comprehend Indian psychological make-up, society, and culture” (p. 289) without taking into account of Indian’s striving for spiritual development.

Box 2. A Human Development Perspective

Individual’s growth and development comes about not when the individual seeks his or her own interests, but rather when the individual strives, even at a great pain, risk or inconvenience to the individual, to seek the good of the other—whether that other be a friend or foe or stranger (Kanungo & Mendonca 1996, p. 125).

There is a growing literature (Bhawuk 1999; Chakraborty 1987, 1993; Sharma 2007, among others) documenting the importance of seeking spiritual transformation and showing the effectiveness of the techniques of yoga, meditation, control of breathing and stilling of turbulent mind. The techniques have the potential to enable people to rise from animalistic impulses, through humanistic values and spirituality, to a harmonious relationship with nature (OSHA model of Sharma 2007). They can develop an attitude of *niskam-karm*, cultivate *sattva guna* (purity in thought and action) and adopt a *drashtaa bhava* (an observer’s stance) that enable them to discharge their worldly duties in a detached spirit (Pande & Naidu 1992; Sinha 2003). *Sthitpragya* (totally composed) is the ultimate form of human development that is ideal and at best can be approximated rather than realized.

Indian spirituality does not deny the presence of materialism in the mindset. People need money and material resources to meet their basic need and to have a reasonably decent life. We all have animal impulses and it is natural for us to seek sensuous pleasure. There is nothing wrong about it. However, there is a deeply ingrained cultural belief that by living a fully sensuous life, a person would get disenchanted, and should aspire to refine his human qualities, relate with others pro-socially, and connect with humanity at large. The underlying belief is that lasting satisfaction in life emanates not from earthly pleasures but from containing one’s needs and rising on the spiritual level. The ideal Indian values, contrary to the western, are humility, austerity, contentment and peace of mind that come from inner self-transformation, and not from possession of wealth and material things. Even in the West, questions are now raised about the validity of unlimited linear material progress, disregarding austerity (Watkins & Shulman 2008).

The culture-specific endogenous human development in India has to be conceptualized in terms of the cultural values of embeddedness coexisting with openness to diverse possibilities and influences, cultivating communitarian capabilities and

accepting the reality of material needs, but aspiring to transcend them in order to live a spiritual life of contentment and care and consideration for others.

9 Intervention Strategy

Intervention strategy for promoting human development in India has to be inclusive with the aim to (a) create a sound economic base that enables people to meet their basic needs and live a reasonably decent life, (b) build economic, social, educational, religious and political institutions to provide enabling milieu to the people for communitarian capabilities and (c) cultivate culture-specific values, attitudes and practices that are functional for promoting human development. Sinha (1982) has contended that human development is the result of a very complicated interaction of a number of variables such as economic, social and psychological that have to be examined in an ecological framework incorporating a range of micro-psychological process of acquiring perceptual skills during the childhood to the general modernization of social structure, institutions, families, attitudes and value systems—in fact, a large-scale programme of social change and transformation for entire society (Sinha 1984, p. 19). Some of the ways of interventions that have been or can be tried out are the following:

9.1 Economic Inputs and Relief

9.1.1 Change Agents

Initially, the Government of India assumed full responsibility for addressing all problems of development. It created at central-, state-, district- and block-level organizations designed for planning and implementing development schemes. However, the failure of some of its prestigious schemes such as the one directed at the community development (Mehta 1957) and limited success of many others made it realize that the bureaucratic nature of the government organizations rendered them handicapped in effectively implementing the schemes. The government officers remained distant, impersonal, rules and procedures bound, insensitive towards the needs of (particularly poor) people, elitist, power oriented and in fact politicized (Mehta 1989). Consequently, the government slowly moved to get non-government organizations (NGOs) involved in the process of development. The *Sixth Five-Year Plan* (1980–1981 to 1984–1985) allowed NGOs to supplement government efforts for providing distress relief and social services to disadvantaged groups such as women, scheduled castes and tribes. By the *Eighth Five-Year-Plan* period, the government realized the potential of NGOs to go beyond providing distress relief and “make tremendous contributions in bringing about people’s participation both in financial terms and through beneficiary

support” (*The Eighth Five Years Plan 1992–1993 to 1996–1997*, p. 39). They were called upon to get involved in almost all development-related activities. Simultaneously, the government also invited or attracted international organizations such as UNICEF, Oxfam, UNDP, World Bank, WHO and others to extend, through bi-lateral agreements, a helping hand in development efforts. Now the public–private partnership is called upon in most of the areas of development. Even smaller international agencies are allowed to approach NGOs directly to share development-related responsibilities.

9.1.2 Design for Development

While the strategy of the government to address to development challenges evolved from being solely responsible to seeking partnership with varied development agencies, the design for developing people has not changed radically. It remains largely *externally determined and supply driven*. All development agencies—governmental, non-governmental, private sector and international—most often tend to offer material assistance and relief to people, trying particularly to reach out the poorest of the poor. The approach is to *identify* the targeted poor, estimate the *cost* of giving help and *deliver* the help in an efficient way, mostly in the areas of health, education, environment and poverty alleviation, as per the millennium goals of the UNO.

Although they all employ the rhetoric of instilling self-reliance, people’s participation, capability building, sustainable development and so on, their concerns remain how to allocate more and more resources and deliver them efficiently to the needy. The volume of investment, not necessarily the impact that the investment has created on either improving conditions for development or building recipients’ capabilities, has been the basis for estimating the extent of their success. The underlying assumptions are that once (a) resources are allocated, (b) required services and products are provided and (c) regulatory and monitoring mechanisms are put in place, the people will automatically become developed.

It does not so happen always. Contrary to their understanding, dumping resources without requiring the people to make efforts to develop their capabilities inculcates excessive dependency in them (Sinha 1992). People attribute a moral responsibility to development agencies to keep them providing the goods and services, the magnitude of which depends on how miserable they are or present themselves, but not necessarily on how much efforts they are making on their own. As a result, the people fail to acquire agentic capabilities. The only skills that they cultivate are how to display off their miseries in magnified forms in order to create a pressing sense of moral imperative for the agencies to bestow maximum benefits on them. Such a skill obviously is self-defeating in long run. As soon as the inflow of resources dries up people reverse back to even worse conditions. There are also reports that foreign aid has detrimental effects in other developing counties, for example, African people became accustomed to the aid, and lost their cultural identities, motivation and sense of common purpose rendering them dependent, corrupt, and even poorer (Maathai 2009; Moyo 2009). Similarly, foreign aid trapped Mexicans into a self-abnegating process (Diaz-Guerrero 2000).

At times it may be indispensable to give distress relief, allot protective quota in allocation of jobs and access to education and health facilities, reserve avenues of opportunities for the deprived sections of population and subsidize the costs of essential goods and services that are primarily meant for those who cannot afford to procure them at market rates. To continue indulging in them helps neither the recipients nor the change agents. Initial help may be useful as a kick-start to the helpless and weak to take initiative, but must soon shift to stimulating self-help and building their capabilities. Long back, Sinha (1984) highlighted the need to shift from dumping resources to preparing the needy to avail of the opportunities:

It is tacitly assumed that given equal opportunity, financial incentives, and resources, all persons and communities will respond similarly in their productive efforts and economic achievement. The fact of the matter is that it does not happen that way. Further, Change in economic and political environment must first provide opportunity, if the individual is to change and benefit from it. But the ability to exploit the opportunity is determined by the cognitive and motivational characteristics of the individual (p. 21).

10 Use of Psychological Knowledge

Knowledge from psychology can be fruitfully utilized to shape their cognitive and motivational structures in order to enable them to have the capabilities to avail of opportunities (Kagitcibasi 2002). Psychologists till recently have conducted evaluative studies on the impact of development schemes, showed ways and means to smooth the impact or to facilitate the implementation of schemes and made interventions for making micro-level improvements in the areas of health, education, skills acquisitions and wellbeing of people. There are other areas that have supportive—positive or negative—relevance to development. They are, for example, religious and caste prejudice and discrimination, social conflicts, cultural contacts, interpersonal and intergroup tolerance, national identity, communication, social stratification, national cohesion where psychological concepts, methods of interventions and training skills can be effectively utilized (Berry 1984, p. 1). Kagitcibasi (2002) further identified the relevance of psychology to the domains such as early childhood education and health, role of family in empowering and training of mothers, and improving the quality of social, cultural and economic life of people. The description of the psychosocial approach to development in the preceding section suggests that psychology can now participate with other social sciences in conceptualizing the upper ends of human development that goes far beyond human achievement equity in income, health, education and political empowerment.

10.1 Institutional Frame

Psychological knowledge can be best utilized in the institutional frame. People live and function mostly through organizations and institutions. In the family, they acquire values, norms, beliefs and practices, learn how to relate with others,

obey superiors, take care of younger ones, compete with siblings and so on. They carry this mindset to schools and colleges and subsequently to work organizations and to the society at large where they participate in religious, community, social, political and other organizations. Organizations and institutions have their own systems, practices, rituals and demands. People modify their mindset and yield to them even by suppressing their early acquired beliefs, values, norms and practices, particularly if an organization is fair in dealing with its members and committed to larger societal objectives.

There exists substantive evidence that the organizational characteristics are reflected in employees' perceptions and performance (Sinha 2008). In one of the studies, for example, Sinha and Pandey (2007) indicated that Indians were perceived to manifest a materialistic mindset in multinational organizations; but were likely to turn holistic in combining excellence in work, personalized relationships, abstract thinking, emotionality, rationality and spirituality in those organizations that valued both performance and people. Studies by Krishnan and Mulla (Krishnan 2001, 2008; Mulla & Krishnan 2008, 2009) revealed that spirituality and *karm-yoga* of organizational leadership have impact on employees' duty orientation and beliefs in Indian philosophy. They substantiated Chakraborty's (1995) thesis that ethics in management can change how the members of the organization view their work and relationship with others.

Evidence regarding the impact of work organizations on employees' beliefs, values, norms and practices are more unequivocal than that of the social organizations on the thought and behaviour of their members. The latter are less structured and less demanding with scantily defined routines and weak control over their members who are more open to a variety of extraneous and conflicting influences. Global influences of largely western origin often overwhelm indigenous thoughts and aspirations and market forces run over traditional Indian values and social norms.

It is here that the society at large, its civil society, media and thought leaders have to intervene in the discourse on the nature of human development that the people of India need. Once a broad understanding is articulated, it can serve as a guideline to people and organizations and institutions to develop their road map to realize the full potential of their members' economic, social and psychological wellbeing. Education, for example, provides thinking capability. Whether it leads to human development or exploitation of others and self-injury, as Tripathi (2011) recently found, depends on the contents of education that would reflect the values that would guide our education policy. Similarly, greater income and better health facilities, fair and transparent procedural justice can create an opportunity structure to which Indians as individuals and groups would respond readily and responsibly. As indicated earlier, Indians in their repertoire have variety of seemingly discrepant values, beliefs and skills that they are prone to use selectively to respond to opportunities.

So the strategy for interventions has to be calibrated to an inclusive conceptualization of human development by encompassing economic, social, psychological, ecological inputs through building up organizations and institutions that are guided by continuous societal discourse on the nature of human development.

11 Conclusions

Human development is the state of wellbeing of human beings. It is characterized by having income to meet the basic needs of life and access to material resources to have a reasonably decent life. It also means having a long healthy life and the education that lead to the capabilities to live a life that people value. More crucial than capabilities, which can take people in a right direction, is the right kind of valuing. If people value having unlimited income, they cause inequality that hampers other's access to material resources, health care and education sapping their capabilities, and hence depriving them of their development. One legitimate value is happiness which, however, should not encroach upon other's happiness by over exploiting natural resources.

However, what happiness means is a cultural construction. In the capitalist individualistic context, it means having unlimited amount and variety of material objects and services. On the other hand, in the collectivist spiritually oriented culture of India, the real and lasting happiness ideally emanates from being integrated with collectives, open to the diversity of thoughts and practices, and pro-social in caring and being cared by others. Human development in such a cultural context is only partly external in its form; partly, and more importantly, it is internal in realizing oneself having peace and contentment. Strategy to promote human development hence has to be calibrated accordingly.

Appendix

Table 1 Growth rate of per capita state domestic product (SDP, percent per annum)

States	1980–1990	1990–2000	Difference in Growth Rate
Andhra Pradesh	2.56	3.62	1.06
Assam	1.74	0.65	–1.09
Bihar	2.97	1.86	–1.11
Gujarat	3.62	6.38	2.76
Haryana	4.12	4.42	.30
Karnataka	4.00	5.27	1.27
Kerala	3.04	4.78	1.74
Madhya Pradesh	2.74	3.22	.48
Maharashtra	3.60	5.04	1.44
Orissa	3.96	2.12	–1.84
Punjab	3.19	2.71	–.48
Rajasthan	4.41	4.09	–.32
Tamil Nadu	4.79	5.40	.61
Uttar Pradesh	3.46	1.98	–1.48
West Bengal	2.93	5.41	2.48
All-India	3.36	4.07	.71

Source Bhattacharya and Sakhivel (2007)

Table 2 HDI and IHDI estimates across Indian states

State	HDI	IHDI	Loss (%)	Rank	
				HDI	IHDI
AP	0.485	0.332	31.55	11	12
Assam	0.474	0.341	28.17	12	11
Bihar	0.447	0.303	32.06	18	16
Chhattisgarh	0.449	0.291	35.14	17	18
Gujarat	0.514	0.363	29.50	8	7
Haryana	0.545	0.375	31.18	5	6
HP	0.558	0.403	27.81	3	3
Jharkhand	0.464	0.308	33.67	15	14
Karnataka	0.508	0.353	30.44	10	9
Kerala	0.625	0.520	16.78	1	1
MP	0.451	0.290	35.74	16	19
Maharashtra	0.549	0.397	27.75	4	4
Orissa	0.442	0.296	33.11	19	17
Punjab	0.569	0.410	28.04	2	2
Rajasthan	0.468	0.308	34.02	14	13
Tamil Nadu	0.544	0.396	27.28	6	5
UP	0.468	0.307	34.47	13	15
Uttarakhand	0.515	0.345	33.03	7	10
West Bengal	0.509	0.360	29.30	9	8

Source Suryanarayana et al. (2011)

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