

Characteristics of Development

The following are the important characteristics of development.

1. Development is a continuous process

The process of development continues from the moment of inception of the society. The society always marches forward. Sometimes the process of development is faster and under some situations it slows down. However, it witnesses no complete halting point. It is ongoing in nature.

2. Development follows a pattern

Development occurs in an orderly manner and follows a certain sequence. Thus, primitive, medieval and modern are the different phases of development of the society. The society cannot skip one stage to reach at the other in the process of development. The pattern is always maintained.

3. Development has a direction

It runs as corollary from the above said feature that the process of development follows a definite direction. The direction is always forward and never backward. August Comte's "Law of Three Stages", Herbert Spencer's proposition that the society moves from a simple to the complex one, Ferdinand Tonnies's idea that the society transits from community to association, Emile Durkheim's proposition that the society makes a shift from mechanical to organic solidarity and Karl Marx's idea that the society progresses from a class to a class less society amply justify the directionality involved in the process of development. It also impresses that in the process of development, the society progresses towards maturity.

4. Development can be evolutionary or revolutionary in nature

Development when occurs in a slow and gradual manner it is said to be

evolutionary in character. Evolutionary development takes its natural course, time and in not very spectacular in nature. In the long run the impacts of development become visible. On the other hand, revolutionary development refers to the abrupt and rapid change in the society. Revolutionary development is triggered by some factors like education, migration in large scale, introduction of policies etc. Revolutionary development is marked in a quick span and is vividly visible in nature. For example, transition of a society from pre modern to modern is evolutionary development, but transition of a society from monarchy to democracy due to some revolution is revolutionary in nature. Even the developments taking in India in the post globalization period can said to be revolutionary.

5. Development is multidimensional

The conventional notion of development always insisted upon the uni dimensionality of the concept of development focussing on economic growth. However, later on it was felt economic growth is a parameter of development, but not the sole or whole of it. At this moment the social scientists and development practitioners felt that development has to be multidimensional touching various aspects of the society. So that it can become better yielding in nature. It should not confine itself to the economic dimension, but should have its political, cultural and social dimensions too. Its political dimension is expressed through the process of democratization, distributive justice; increased consciousness for human rights, equity, liberty etc. The cultural dimensions of development is manifested through the growth of secular culture, increased consumerism etc. The social dimensions of development include increased participation of people in societal affairs, development of

self reliance, better human development and environmental sustainability, etc.

6. Development is universal, but not uniform

Development is a common process witnessed by every society however primitive or modern it is. Every society witnesses the process of development in some form or the other. Time and space cannot arrest it. Right from the beginning of the society development process is initiated. The rich and the poor societies, the most developed and the most under developed societies too experience it. In some societies it is faster while in some societies it is slow. In some societies the yields of development are more remarkable than other societies. So, the process is universal, but the outcome is not uniform.

7. Development insists upon adaptability

Development as process is driven by human needs. Human needs change with the changing time and situations. The process of development demands the existing institutions to change and adapt to the upcoming demands to fulfil the emerging needs of the individuals. For example: with the process of industrialization there was increased migration which required the institution of joint family to disintegrate structurally.

8. Development stands for dynamism

Development necessarily entails change. It brings changes in the status quo of a society. No development process can be imagined without bringing subsequent changes. Thus, the concept of development is against the notion of static.

9. Development is irreversible

Development as a process is always forward looking and has no look back. There may be temporary stalemates but once a society is into the process of

development, it will never revert back to its original state. So development is always progressive.

10. Development is diffusive

Development never remains concentrated in the place of its origin. It has a natural tendency to spread beyond its place of origin. The best example of it is that when a new technology is innovated, very soon, it spreads to other areas beyond the place of its origin.

11. Development always has positive yields

The outcomes of development are always positive. It is for the betterment of the society. Development thus is progressive. But sometimes when development outcomes are used by human beings in a negative way its consequences become disastrous. For e.g. Development of technology necessarily improves human quality of life. But when men blindly use it for destructive purpose the outcomes become sorrowful.

12. Development has got its qualitative and quantitative connotations

Development as a process can be judged through the qualitative improvement human conditions of living. For example when there is a reduction of house hold drudgery for the women we find a qualitative change in their living conditions and term it as development of women. Similarly when there is a quantum lift or there is an increase in number of some institution, then also we feel the impact of development. For example the increase in the number of educational institutions is also described as development. Thus the qualitative aspects of development are felt while the quantitative aspects of development are observed.