

Social development

Spectacular developments initiated in the early fifties through the economic development approach failed to materialize the dream of human well being. Economic growth could not ensure social progress. It was realized that economic development fuelled the market forces to favour the rich and deprive the poor. This increased the gap between the rich and the poor. Economic growth induced prosperity for a few, but resulted in poverty, massive deprivation and social backwardness. This compelled nations to face a contradiction between economic prosperity on the one hand and social progress on the other which finally culminated in imbalanced development. The failure of the grand economic theories of growth to ensure balanced development of the society led development thinkers to think for alternative models of development. Economists like Gunnar Myrdal argued for a redefinition of development taking the social factors into account. To him economic prosperity has no meaning unless and until it is able to eradicate social miseries. Similarly, The World Bank and the UNDP also insisted for the inclusion of social issues in economic planning to make it more pro people and development effective in character. The alternative model of development was expected to be holistic and multidimensional to touch and impact every fringe of the society and to ensure balanced development. Thus, social development emerged as an alternative approach to development to ensure a healthy and balanced development. It was expected to be multidimensional, multifaceted effecting and benefiting every aspect of society. Thus, economic policies started getting tuned to meet the broader social objectives. This added a new dimension to the development discourse.

1.4.1. Social development: Meaning

Social development is a process that results in the transformation of social structures to improve the capacity of a society in order to fulfill its objectives. It refers to a paradigmatic change within the social and economic structure. Social development attempts to explain the qualitative changes in the structure and framework of society, that help the society to better realize its aims and objectives. When development takes place in progressive way featuring in greater levels of efficiency, quality, productivity, complexity, comprehension, creativity, mastery, enjoyment and accomplishment and brings qualitative changes in human existence, it can be termed as social development. The UN document claimed a social development aims at bringing about a more equitable distribution of income and wealth for

promoting social justice, alleviating poverty, maximizing productivity, employment and expanding and improving facilities for education, health nutrition, housing and social welfare for the disadvantaged individuals, groups and communities. These become the very indicators of social development. Thus it can be noted that society centric development can be designated as social development. This implies that development processes need to benefit people, enrich their way of interaction in groups and societies, and make the norms that facilitate such interaction conducive. Social development thus implies the change in social institutions. Progress toward an inclusive society with the process of normative and institutional changes and changes in the interactional pattern among individuals can be depicted as a good example of social development. To quote James Midgley “Planned change designated to promote the well being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development can be termed as social development.” Emibayer and Mische opine social development aims at enabling the individuals, efficacy building in them, generating a sense of self determination among them and ensuring opportunities to them to satisfy their basic needs to improve their quality of life. In his essay “The idea of Social Development”, Herbert Blumer argues social development is a new concept which is closely associated with the cultural values of the community. According to Gore, social development as a term means economic growth with social justice, eradication of poverty and minimization of economic inequalities, emphasis on human resources development and development of social services which are inclusive of welfare services but extended to cover health, education, housing, rehabilitation etc. Paiva viewed social development as a process of enhancing the capacity of individuals to work for their own, as well as for the welfare of their society. Salima Omer defined social development as a process concerned with achieving an integrated, balanced and unified social and economic development of society that gives expression to the value of human dignity, equality and social justice. Social Development can thus be concluded to be the promotion of a sustainable society that is worthy of human dignity by empowering marginalised groups, women and men, to undertake their own development, to improve their social and economic position and to acquire their rightful place in society.

1.4.2. Features of Social Development

The International Agencies visualize social development as a progressive process of change resulting in steady improvement in social conditions.

The chief features of social development include:

- Promotion of social progress and betterment of human conditions of living by according human beings a life with dignity, equality, respect, mutual responsibility and cooperation.
- People centric development where economic development is a means to achieve human development by fulfilling the basic needs of the individuals.
- Making economic policies and social policies mutually supplementary to each other to maximize development.
- Ensuring social and distributive justice and to achieve maximum sustainable human development.
- Achieving equity and equality for all by ensuring access, opportunity and quality of life to all.
- Creating an enabling environment for all individuals by enriching and enhancing their capabilities.
- Empowering the people to make the right choice for themselves. Also to allow them to enjoy their rights, have access to resources.
- Providing autonomy to all.

To cite some examples, equitable distribution of societal resources like property, prestige, greater and better access to institutions like education, health, food security, greater enjoyment of freedom and dignity by the people, changes in the stratification system and greater opportunity for social mobility are the examples of social development experienced by a society.

All these require facilitating structural changes to bring welfare for all.

1.2.3 Social Development in the United Nation’s Agenda

The World Summit for Social Development was held in March 1995 in Copenhagen with the heads of 117 countries. Here, the Governments reached a new consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development. The Social Summit was the largest gathering ever of world leaders. It pledged to make the conquest of poverty, the goal of full employment and the fostering of social integration overriding objectives of development.

Among the ground-breaking agreements made by the world's leaders in the Declaration are ten commitments to:

•	Eradicate absolute poverty by a target date to be set by each country;
• Support full employment as a basic	

policy goal;	
•	Promote social integration based on the enhancement and protection of all human rights;

- Achieve equality and equity between women and men;
- Accelerate the development of Africa and the least developed countries;

•	Ensure	tha	structur	adjustme	programm	includ	soci
developme		t	al	nt	es	e	al
nt goals;							
•	Increase resources allocated to social development;						

• Create "an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development";
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- Attain universal and equitable access to education and primary health care; and
- Strengthen cooperation for social development through the UN.

The United Nations General Assembly convened a special session in Geneva in June-July 2000 to assess the achievements made at the end of the last century, where the world leaders distilled the key goals and targets in the Millennium Declaration (September 2000). The Declaration reaffirms universal values of human rights, equality, mutual respect and shared responsibility for the conditions of all peoples and seeks to redress globalization's hugely unequal benefits and governments' commit themselves to fulfilling their obligations by 2015. In the 2000 Summit world leaders committed to fight together against poverty and hunger, gender inequality, environmental degradation, and HIV/AIDS, while improving access to education, health care and clean water, all by 2015. These wide-ranging commitments are encompassed in the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).