

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

“Social Development is 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.....”

- Bilance, 1997

“ Social Development is equality of social opportunities”

- Amartya Sen, 1995

“Human development is a process of enlarging peoples’ choices... The most critical choices that people should have, include a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and income, assets and employment for a decent standard of living... (But) human development concerns more than the formation of human capabilities such as improved health or knowledge. It also concerns the use of these capabilities”

- India Human Development Report , 1999

2. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CONCEPT

The Copenhagen Social Summit 1995

defined Social Development in terms of three basic criteria:

- Poverty Eradication
- Employment Generation
- Social Harmony

The Human Development Reports of United Nation Development Programme (UNDP)

have developed indices such as the Human Development Index (HDI), the Human Poverty Index (HPI) & the Gender-related Development Index (GDI).

1. The Human Development Index (HDI)

is in terms of capabilities of three basic dimensions of human development:

- Life longevity
- Knowledge (adult literacy and combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment)
- Decent standard of living (real per capita income)

2. The Human Poverty Index (HPI),

meant for most deprived sections of the community, is based on deprivations in the essential elements of decent human life:

- Basic Survival (Death before age 40, child and maternal mortality)
- Educational levels (% of illiterate adults)
- Overall economic provisioning (% of people without access to health services and safe water)
- Sustainability (% of underweight children under 5)

3. The Gender-related Development Index (GDI)

measures the above variables

in terms of inequality between women and men.

Social Watch, Uruguay

(using inputs from mass movements and development networks across the globe)
has developed “**An index of Fulfilled Commitments**”
(made by Governments in the 1995 Global Summit).

It monitors countries under the following “Goals for 2000”:

- Basic education for all
- 80% of children finish primary school
- Reduce by a third 1990 infant mortality rates
- Blanket vaccination
- Reduce by half 1990 malnutrition levels
- Medical attention during pregnancy and birth for all women
- Health services for all
- Life expectancy over 60 years
- Drinking water and sanitation for all
- Reduction in military expenditure
- Designate 0.7% of GNP (of rich countries) to aid
- Eliminate gender gap in literacy
- Equal access for girls and boys to primary school

Bilance, Holland,

the development Agency, speaks of

Three Components of Social Development:

1. The Fight against Poverty
2. Development by people themselves
3. A Rightful place in society

Three Fields of Operation (within Social Development)

1. Basic Services
2. Means of Existence
3. Human Rights and Democratic Domain

Three Fixed Measuring points for Social Development

1. Gender
2. Sustainable development
3. Social Cohesion

While the above definitions and descriptions open us out to the wide horizons of human / social development, we need to develop our own indigenous definitions and indices of human / social development in Tamilnadu, using all the variables deemed appropriate for our specific conditions.

Indices need to be developed, with usefulness for policy planning purposes being kept in mind.

We need to see social development

- as a Socio-Economic Cultural Right
- as the root of democracy and a process of participative decentralization
- as the process of removing inequalities and ensuring social justice
- as the mechanism of empowering the marginalized sections of our State: dalits, women, children, fisherfolk, tribals, labour

Given the large heretogeneous nature of India, national indicators often hide the considerable variations that exist from State to State, region to region.

There is surely the need to break national human development Indices into inter-State variations.

There is also the need to look at relative indices of different groups of people and regions, especially the disadvantaged ones.

The present Report is an attempt to venture into these much needed, but hardly ever entered, areas.

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“..... Even the average HDI figure masks much of the variation across different regions and groups of people, especially, in large countries such as India. It is thus important to obtain a picture of the levels of living of the disadvantaged regions and groups of people in a country in order to evaluate the success of national development programmes in improving the life of the less well off.... Since practically all human development investments are made by the State Governments in India, substantial inter-State variations in this may be expected.....”

- India Human Development Report, 1999

Tamilnadu vis-à-vis India

