Development as Freedom: Introduction and Perspective

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What is Development?

**Book**
- Growth of GNP
- Rise of personal incomes
- Industrialisation
- Technological advance
- Social Modernisation

**Zero lecture**
- Growth/Progress
- Access to care
- Happiness
- Basic needs
- Social and economic environment
- Welfare – utilitarian or otherwise

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**Development as Freedom**

- A process of expanding freedoms
- It contrasts against the narrower view
- Of course, GNP and rise of personal incomes are important means to expand freedoms, but there are other determinants such as social and economic arrangements (facilities for education and health) as well as civil and political rights (the liberty to participate in public discussions and scrutiny).
- Similarly, industrialisation, technological progress and social modernisation can contribute to expanding freedoms, but freedom depends on other influences also.

**Focus on Ends**

- If freedom is what development advances
- Should concentrate on this objective
- Rather than on some particular means or a chosen list of instruments.
- We should focus on ends

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**Removal of Unfreedoms**

- Poverty and tyranny
- Poor economic opportunities as well as systemic social deprivation
- Neglect of public facilities
- Intolerance or overactivity of repressive states
- Opulence to some with lack of elementary freedoms to the majority - the agrarian crisis

**Lack of Substantive Freedoms and ...**

- Economic poverty
  - Hunger
  - Malnourishment
  - Remedies for treatable illness
  - To be adequately clothed/sheltered
  - Enjoy clean water and sanitation
- Lack of public facilities
  - Health, education, law and order
- Denial of political and civil liberties
  - Imposed restrictions to participate in social, political and economic life of the community
Evaluative and Effectiveness

- Freedom is central for two reasons
- Evaluative: Assessment of progress based whether the freedoms that people have has been enhanced
- Effectiveness: Achievement of development is thoroughly based on the free agency of people (the interconnectedness).

Some examples

- Social arrangements and political/civil liberties being conducive or constituents of development
- Income versus life expectancy
- Inter-group disparities — African Americans
- Development analysis is relevant for richer countries also
- Relevance of markets (first and foremost, freedom of exchange and transaction is part of basic liberty like the freedom of exchange of ideas …). It contribution to economic growth is also significant
- At the same time the people left out from the market-centric growth need to be looked into

Market and other aspects

- Market is important with regard to fostering development. But, so also are
- Social support
- Public regulation
- Statecraft
- It is not a question of market versus government
- All should be used to enrich rather than impoverish human lives.

Broader inclusive approach

- Simultaneous appreciation of vital roles in the process of development that include
  - Market and market related organisation
  - Governments and local authorities
  - Political parties and civil institutions
  - Educational arrangements
  - Opportunities of open dialogue and debate

Institutions and Instrumental Freedoms

- Political freedoms (free speech elections)
- Economic facilities (opportunities to participate in trade and production)
- Social opportunities (education and health)
- Transparency guarantees (trust to deal with others – can guard against corruption, financial irregularity and underhand dealings)
- Protective security (provide for the vulnerable – social safety net)
- All the above complement each other to enhance capability of a person.

Limitations of Material World

- Will it lead to immortality?
- Maitrayee in conversation with Yajnavalkya in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.
- Live long and
- Have a good life while alive
- Is wealth/income required for itself? — exclusive/uniform
- Development: lives we lead and freedoms we enjoy.
- Expanding freedoms that we have reason to value
Processes and Opportunities

• Procedures (emphasised by libertarians) – inadequate processes are violations of voting privileges or other political or civil rights – Yavatmal example
• Opportunities (consequentialists)
• Both are relevant

Evaluation - Normative

• Differs from other normative approaches – utilitarian, procedural liberty or real income
• Significant in itself for the person’s overall freedom
• Important in fostering the person’s opportunity to have a valuable outcome

Effectiveness

• Freedom is the principal determinant of individual initiative and social effectiveness
• Greater freedom enhances the ability of people to help themselves and also to influence the world, and these are central to the process of development.
• Agency …

Main Points

• Freedoms are not only the primary ends of development but they are also among its principal means. Income an important means.
• Interconnectedness – five types of freedoms.
• Evaluation (normative) versus effective (free agency).

References/Readings

Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom, OUP, Delhi, 1999, pp.1-33. (Primary)