Two Decades of Human Development

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Contemporary Issues in HDP
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Pluralist Conception

- Public Acclaim as a Measure of Success
- John Mill’s Subjugation, Wittgenstein’s Philosophical Investigations, Mozart, Russell’s work on mathematical logic, Guru Dutt’s Kagaz ke Phool
- The success of HDRs
  - Pluralist conception
    - Profundity of Mahbub ul Haq’s idea
    - HD accounting (cogent and coherent without overlooking pluralities)
  - Pluralist concern and specific conception of health, education and income as envisaged in HDI

Utilitarianism and single-mindedness

- One variable – ethical accounting
- Happiness or desire fulfillment
- Analytically mistaken or ferociously clumsy to have many things as valuable
- Victory over other mono-concentration theories
- Not, ‘how should we value alternative possibilities’ but, ‘what one variable should we use to judge alternative possibilities’.
- Diminution of freedom is bad ...

Rawls

- Against formulaic and reductionism
- Fairness of process
- Priority of liberty
- Resistance to arbitrary privileges
- Efficiency and equity
- Opened the door for many rival claims
- Development and mono-concentration
  - Development – income
    - Messy if we bring in other concerns
    - Single operational metric

Plural concerns in development

- Basic needs, Children, Hunger and epidemics, Disparities, Physical Quality of Life, Social ethics
- (Mahbub’s integrating vision) – coordinating discontent and weaving them together
- Criticism: It does not have a single operational metric.
  - (social valuation vs engineering solution)
- Public discussion
- World was ready for it
- Agreement on diverse things (impatience with theory) – pragmatic reasoning
- Broad framework where we want to listen and include all views – reasoned social evaluation

The future

- Not concentrate too much on HDI
- Lack of general theory and openness (political freedom, human rights)
- Sensitive to the new reality
  - social intervention, but had problems in the economic domain;
  - vulnerability of those dependent on buoyant market without safety nets
- Democracy (accountability and sharing of social responsibility)
- Open-mindedness, scepticism and willingness to listen.
- Plural concerns, coordination, diverse and dynamic
- Stream, not pool.
20 Years on

"People are the real wealth of a nation." With these words the 1990 Human Development Report (HDR) began a forceful case for a new approach to thinking about development. That the objective of development should be to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives may appear self-evident today. But that has not always been the case. A central objective of the HDR for the past 20 years has been to emphasize that development is primarily and fundamentally about people.

Challenges

- Cannot assume future will mimic past
- Varied experience and specific context preclude overarching policy prescription
- New challenges like climate change need to be addressed.
- Challenges lie ahead – local context, global institutions and implications for research.

Challenges

- Celebrating 20 years – people first
- Enlarging choice and sustaining positive outcomes
- Plural principles such as equity, sustainability and human rights are key.

Issues

- Celebrating 20 years – people first
- Reaffirmation
  - "Human development is the expansion of people’s freedoms to live long, healthy and creative lives; to advance other goals they have reason to value; and to engage actively in shaping development equitably and sustainably on a shared planet. People are both the beneficiaries and the drivers of human development, as individuals and in groups."
- Evolution of well-being

Issues

- Understanding patterns and drivers
- How institutions matter
- Good things do not always come together
- New measures (to be taken up when we come to the measurement)

References