

Selected papers presented at

DAWN's African Regional Meeting

on Food, Energy and Debt Crises in Relation to Women

Institute of African Studies

University of Ibadan

27th-29th September 1988

25 X
KEY

DEFINING DEVELOPMENT

a note

Devaki Jain

Feb 20, 1988

for Denn & South Commn

Introduction

1. The disenchantment with attempts made in the developing countries to reorganise their economic systems such that it provides basic needs, such that it introduces equity and such that it reduces its enslavement to the more advanced richer countries, is not a new atmosphere. The analysis, the diagnosis and even the prescriptions have emerged from several intellectual heritages. Whether it is socialistic heritages which analyses and traces the roots of most of these problems to ownership of the means and modes of production. ^{whether it is} ~~There is~~ the liberal heritage which also takes from production the need for growth, for surpluses which can then be fairly shared. Into these debates has entered new dangers and threats from areas which were not earlier central to economic analysis-- namely, dangers to the survival of the planet not only from nuclear warfare and fragile relationships between powerful countries but from those who have pointed out the similar ecological damage ^{not} both on the ground, - land & water, but also in the air namely the ozone layer.

Some of these dangers are associated with advance not only in science and technology, but its careless

application, but it is also the case that it is science and technology and its intelligent use that can save the planet.

Responses of concern have also entered economic debate, in other ways. Some emphasise the organisation of production, others shift from per capital income growth assessments to quality of life assessments; others emphasise consumption restraint, ~~on~~ influence ^{on} production, of certain styles of consumption. Still others taking all this into consideration look at the evaluative measures used in assessing developing ^{ment} and argue that these are misleading. They would base their argument on the nature and experience of the developing countries both pre and post colonial and suggest that other arrangements may need to be made both political, economic and cultural which are more suitable to the basic cultural characteristics of ^{the} ~~these~~ economies and societies. There would be an element of going backwards but perhaps it could be looked at as going downwards and pulling out solutions which are manageable and perhaps even more 'successful'.

Within this same range of comments, there will be another ^{set} who will emphasise process not of the kind which is emphasised by orthodox heritages, namely means of production and its ownership but looking directly at

current experience of reducing poverty in the poor countries, they would link it to the need to evolve the design of development with a greater proportion of learning and listening rather than design at the distant level of macro-economic theory. The argument of this group of people would be more than pure expediency. They would derive their strength^{both} from the natural wisdom of local communities in dealing with land, water, trees and each other; they would add to this the conserving nature of such behaviour. Thirdly they would argue that such processes would build up the strength of communities rather than fragment them- which tend to lead to other types of competitive conflict and violence.

Such people would also point to the history of development and draw their strength from the fact that after 30-50 years of independence in many countries of the third world, after serious attempts at dealing with ^{poverty} it, many of these countries are more entrapped in domination from the north; many of them are politically precarious, economically vulnerable and socially in great distress. Thus they would draw their strength both from their analysis of the current economic predicament and argue that the new

process has not only to be creative but draws its intelligence from the survival strategies of those for whom micro policies are meant..

The South Commission:

The newly formed South Commission is attempting to find a ^{relevant} ~~relative~~ and effective role to play in the development scenario of the globe today. The Commission is born with several handicaps. The scenario could not be worse in terms of crisis in all the so-called three worlds-- namely, the western economies, then the developing economies and in some ways even in the socialistic economies. We have trends such as liberalisation of socialist economies, we have capital crisis in western economies. In the developing world we have hunger in abundance, acute environmental, social and cultural degradation. In this world we also have political fragility, accentuated inequality and a general sense of disarray resulting ^{and} ~~in~~ many unhappy forms of political behaviour. Not the least of which is the expression of violence in internal and international conflict.

Another disadvantage of the South Commission is that it is not a inter-governmental like the United Nations or the non-alignment movement gathering, nor

even the Group 77. It is an independent Commission of individuals, brought together by a Resolution of the Non-aligned movement, but brought together as individuals who are concerned and can perhaps work together towards providing a creative forum, which hopefully could lead ^{to} ~~to~~ providing a healing touch to the scattered globe.

The South Commission has still to define its exact leverage; still to build opinion both of itself as well as in the environment, around it.

However, in its first meeting one of the many areas in which the Commission seemed to agree is efforts at diagnostic analysis. Diagnostic or historical analysis, it was felt, was necessary to provide the foundation for any kind of future thoughts and actions. However, diagnosis itself is so dependent on first principles, whether it is in medicine or in development- and this lead to a recognition of the need for providing a basic framework, a minimum vision as an initial exercise even before diagnosis is undertaken.

One of the ways such an opinion was expressed was to point out that measures for evaluating change economic transformation, economic progress were derived from the theoretical as well as practical foundation which drew their inspiration from theories of knowledge,

intellectual opinion from those countries which were already advanced. It was further suggested that some of those evaluative measures tended to perceive phenomena and change in the developing countries, in a pejorative or poor light-- whereas it was possible that in another framework not only would some aspects like community or like production and exchange systems appear more favourable; but it ^{was} will also worth considering whether they provided an alternative path to reaching the same goal for a better life for all. The practical limitations to imitate the West given to us by a low resource position further emphasised the need to look at 'alternatives'; -- obviously alternative both to orthodox socialism and capitalism..

Defining Development:

In this quest for vision, the framework against which we assess and diagnose, one of the items for work, for more thinking and elaboration, was identified as an exercise in defining development for ourselves, i.e. the South. It was deliberately called defining rather than redefining as redefining already supports the earlier definition as plausible and legitimate. This psychology of dropping re-

defining and calling it ^{''}define was further illustrated by members who wanted to talk of North/South as South North. In other words, the affirmative mode that the South Commission members emphasised tended to constantly invert the pyramid of perception. Defining development then can be translated as laying out the main pillars of the kind of development that would remove poverty, at the same time not be ecologically destructive, at the same time reduce social and economic tensions. It sounds a ~~tail~~ all order and at the same time somewhat simple minded. Many attempts at giving flesh to what is called alternative development are already on the table. However, it is now recognised that it is not enough to identify this need, nor is it enough to paint pictures of the Utopia. It is necessary to confront this issue under given circumstances of acute debt crisis, of hunger of many kinds of domination and inequality and so forth.

Some Efforts and the Basis of preparing a PAPER

One of the attempts that have been made to question past development was by a group of women from the third world who later named their

"movement". Dawn- development alternatives with women for a new era. In this Group retrospective analysis of development in the three continents of the South, Latin America, Carribean, Africa, Asia and the Paccific revealed that the existing theories of growth associated development had failed the poor mostly and amongst them very intensively it had failed women.

Reversing this statement they found that women not only were playing a vital role in the economic system of develop^{ing}ment countries but this role was being reduced, sometimes totally displaced without providing any alternative. They also found that this dislocation of traditional role had accentuated the problems of national hunger and dependence. This is too stenographic and in fact superficial ^{an attempt at} statement describing the efforts of what is called Dawn.

However, all that is being stated is that the exercise of defining development with eyes open to the advantages and disadvantages of socialist and, non-socialist and other kinds of intellectual heritages has been struggled ^{with} by this Group which is

and ever widening net work of South women.

They continue to search for ^{the} alternative framework.

Other attempts building from diagnostic and empirical analysis emerged from those who are working on renewable energy; of quality of life, with special reference to human resource development; those who are looking at the issue from the point of view of population with special reference to labour.

Proposals:

A work programme ending in a Paper which could provide a draft for a Chapter called DEFINING DEVELOPMENT; which could be the basis of more work leading to a Chapter in the South Commission's final report -- could be constructed as follows:

It could be built on these four or five pillars of existing empirical and theoretical work.

The items could be listed as follows:

- Energy *There is energy, one of the critical "Resources" for dev - get renewable and that from energy management in the dev South can meet autarky*
- Population
- Labour
- Quality of life/standard of living/capability *Basic needs. Post-allocation expect being from h & edu*
- Women *Gender - frequency*

Each specialist Group could be asked to provide the present reasoning based on their empirical research on the nuts and bolts of their

alternative strategy , with their eyes open to the fact that it is not an unwritten page and one has to deal with current politics as well as future policies.

Futures:

The Paper could be the basis of a discussion amongst themselves leading to a synthesis paper. The synthesis paper could become the outline for a Working Group of Commissioners to prepare a draft Paper to be considered, if not at the Mexico meeting, *at the next meeting* namely, end of 1988 or early 1989.

Modality:

To build momentum discussions had been held with some Indian Economists who have specialised territories and who ^{recognise} are in the need for this kind of theorising. They are:

1. Dr. K.S. Krishnaswamy
2. Dr. A. Vaidyanathan
3. Dr. Kirit Parekh
4. Dr. Subha Rao (IEG)
5. Dr. Chiranjiv Sen
6. Dr. Geeta Sen
7. Dr A.K. Sen
8. Devaki Jain

Chiranjiv Sen and Subha Rao are agreeable to do short papers by June. Subha Rao using his

data on Health, Chiranjiv from population and labour. A.K. Sen is willing to write a few pages as derived from his work on 'Equity'. The Dawn Group could write from the Women's Perspective.

This exercise draws from "pillars" of substantial work, ^{and also from} but ~~again~~ some of the Papers and terms of reference and concerns of the South Commission, for diagnosis and retrospective analysis, might perhaps provide a more realistic 'alternative'; might be the basis for the defining development exercise.