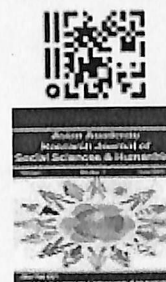




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**CHANGING NOTION OF DEVELOPMENT: LESSONS, CHALLENGES AND
AGENDA BEYOND 2015**

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Abstract

There has been enrichment of development thinking during the last Fifty years and so and the notion of development has become something fairly simplistic to much more complex. The present paper has focused on the notion of development, the path of development goals that have been followed since 1960s, evolution of MDGs, its strengths and weaknesses and the experiences that have been accumulated during the last 15 years. Basing on these, the paper suggests different ways how they could inform and enrich the process towards the formulation of post 2015 agenda. The notion of development till 1970s was confined to the concept of growth measured in terms of GNP per capita, development assistance towards backwardness and state planning. The main thought emerged was that development is possible but not inevitable. The subsequent decade development was focused on poverty alleviation, employment generation, provision of basic needs, self reliance, ecological balance and women development. During 1990s focus was given on Neo Liberalism and monetarism-macroeconomic stabilization and structural adjustment. Market mechanism took the place of state planning. In the era of globalization, development became more complex and wider by including other dimensions such as human freedom, global peace, gender equity and environmental sustainability. The MDGs is the culmination of these ideas. Out of several measurable indicators the world is currently on track on reducing extreme poverty, gender parity on education and improved water sources. But the challenges are uneven global progress in all the targets. For example Sub Saharan countries are lagging behind in reducing poverty and hunger, reducing rate of women vulnerable employment compared to the men, reducing the percentages of stunting children, maternal mortality, infant mortality and chronic diseases like HIV infections. But there is impressive growth in case of employment in non agricultural sector and school enrolment ratio. The lessons from these years are: performance of the countries is dependent on the donor recipient countries' relation; choice of base line omitting the location and need specific situations; evaluation of global targets at national level without considering the capacity and realities of the specific country; wrong assumption of the transition path that are expected from the developing countries ; lack of clarity in various concepts and indicators; difficulty of having a database on the qualitative indicators; omission of the unfair inequality factors and inappropriate characterization of the indicators. The main mistakes of MDGs are treating MDGs as a social provision and neglecting the growth and welfare aspects. Building on these experiences and mistakes the post 2015 agenda must focus on inclusion of all, participation of all, strengthening the capabilities at all levels appropriate coordination, improvement in local leadership, identification of local need on the basis of consultation through multi-stakeholder partnership, development of human resources, technological resources and specification of SMART indicators (Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Time limited). Hence, the agenda for development should express the voice of the people and the principle that the globe is one family must be the spirit.

Key Words: Notion of Development, SMART, Sustainable Development, Millennium Development Goal.

Introduction:

The perennial human effort throughout the ages in the quest for a sustained standard of living has made the 'notion of development' a key to global harmony. Yet the unfinished task is haunting everyone for a suitable alternative. There has been an enrichment of development thinking during the last fifty years or so and the notion of development has become something fairly simplistic to something much more complex (Thorbecke, 2006). The resulting broadness of knowledge and experience at a particular time of history at particular location brought a multiplicative change in the 'agents' of development and 'levels' of development (Hettne, 2008).

The paper seeks to contribute to the process of 15 years of focus on development goals by highlighting the main strengths and weaknesses of the MDGs; deriving the lessons that can be learned from the long experiences. Building on these points, the paper suggests different ways how they could inform and enrich the process towards the formulation of new development agenda for the post Millennium Development Goals.

1. The Notion of Development: The concepts development must be viewed as an essentially contested concept as such there will be no agreement on the proper interpretation and application of the concept. Hettne (1995) argues that there can be no fixed and final definition of development. It changes over time because as society solves some problem new one tends to emerge, therefore, development is never '*socially neutral*' (Hettne, 2008). According to Hettne (1995) in the process of discourse the mainstream ideas incorporates certain aspects of counterpoint ideas and this is why history of development thinking involves both '*continuity and change*'. In the words of Potter (2002) development theories and strategies have tended to stack up, one upon another, coexisting sometimes in what can only be described as convoluted and contradictory manner.

2. The Legacy of the Notion of Development: The development thinking as a concept catches the totality by incorporating the aspects of theory, strategy and ideology. During post WW-II and 1960s, poverty and lack of development became threat to the super powers and accordingly it became the basis for development assistance. Promotion of liberalized trade got more strength due to inceptions of international institutions. The notion of development was equivalent to economic growth and can be achieved through huge investment made through state planning. This momentum continued till 1970s with a new thought that '*development is possible but not inevitable*'. Hence, new sources like agriculture, social infrastructure and role of entrepreneur were brought into the discussion. During 1970s and 1980s aid became more oriented towards poverty alleviation and employment generation. UN defined development in terms of need oriented self reliant, ecologically sound, women

development and structural transformation as it was realized that there is 'limits to growth'. In 1980s and 1990s there was a shift in thinking from Keynesianism to Neo liberalism and Monetarism- macroeconomic stabilization and structural adjustment program. The state planning was replaced by market mechanism and aid was replaced by trade. The role of the civil society and NGOs in sustainable development became prominent. In the era of globalization (1990-2000), the development thinking became more complex. Human freedom, environment sustainability, gender equity and global peace were considered as the goals of development.

3. Millennium Declaration: Consequent upon the request of UN General Assembly, the Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan (2001) prepared an annual report on progress achieved by the United Nations system and Member States towards implementing the Millennium Declaration. The task set out in the MDGs were to reduce extreme poverty, improvement of basic conditions of health and education, improvement of material health and reduction of child mortality and ensuring environmental sustainability.

4. Achievements and the Failures: Despite remarkable progress (1990-2012) in reducing extreme poverty close to half of the people living on less than \$1.25 per day, progress across globe is uneven. Some regions such as Eastern Asia and South Eastern Asia have met their target but sub Saharan Africa and Southern Asia still lag behind (unlikely to meet the target by 2015). In 2010, one third of the world's 1.2 billion extreme poor lived in populated countries such as India, 13% in China, 9% in Nigeria, 5% in Bangladesh 5% in Republic of Congo (MDGs Report, 2014).

Vulnerable employment rate accounted for an estimated 56% of all employment in developing regions in 2013 compared to 10% in developed countries. This shows wide spread informal working and workers lack adequate social protection and suffer low income and arduous hard work under which their fundamental rights are violated and is more pronounced in West Asia. Vulnerable employment rates continued to be higher for women than men. In developing region 60% of women in 2013 are in vulnerable employment compared to 54% for men. The larger gap is found in Northern Africa, Sub Saharan Africa, Western Asia and Oceania. On an average the labour productivity slowed down from 5.6% annually to 4%. It affected central Asia and western Asia.

Out of 842 million (m) people suffering from chronic hunger in 2011-13, 827m resided in developing economy. However, the proportion had declined from 23.6% in 1990-

92 to 14.3% in 2011-13. But marked differences persisted across the region. The target of reducing it to halve has been reached in South Eastern Asia, Central Asia, Latin America, where as Sub Saharan Africa has shown limited progress, Western Asia shown a rise. In some countries underweight and stunting in children still persist even though undernourishment is low. This is due to insufficient nutritional food value and poor health condition and high incidence of diseases. Approximately one in seven children under 5 is undernourished.

Despite decline (from 40% in 1990 to 25% in 2012) one in four children (162m) around the world remains stunted. All regions except Sub Saharan Africa where stunted children increased from 44m to 58m during the same period shown decline.

In case of achieving full course of primary school, there is substantial progress between 2000 and 2012 increasing by 7 percentage point. By 2012 one in ten children of primary school age was still out of school. The greatest improvement was in Sub Saharan Africa (net enrolment increased by 18 per cent between 2000- 2012). But due to rapid population growth in this region still 35% of more school children are to be accommodated in 2012 and 56% of this were girls. Children in conflict areas, Sub Saharan Africa account for 44% of these children. Despite increase in literacy the dropout rate remains high. Three out of five pupils in Sub Saharan Africa were able to complete primary schooling. In case of gender equality, only 74% girls were enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys and this remained same in 2012. In Sub Saharan Africa, Ocenia and Western Asia, girls still face barriers to entering both primary and secondary school. Women access to paid employment in non agricultural sector has been increasing slowly over the past two decade (from 35% to 49% in 2012). Most impressive is in Sub Saharan Africa (10 percentage point).

Child mortality rate has almost halved since 1990 from 90 to 48 per 1000 live birth in 2012. Globally, four out of every five deaths of children under age five continue to occur in Sub Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. Almost 3 lakhs women died globally in 2013 from causes related to pregnancy and child birth. In 2012, 40m births in developing region were not attended by skilled health personnel and over 32m of these births occurred in rural areas. Despite progress, the maternal mortality rate in developing region (230 per 1 lakh live birth) was 14 times higher than the developed region (16 per one lakh). In Sub Saharan Africa it is highest (510 per one lakh). Sixty two per cent of the total maternal deaths in 2013 took place only in Sub Saharan Africa.

Globally the number of new HIV infections per 100 adults (15-49) declined by 44% between 2001 and 2012. Southern Africa and Central Africa with high incidence has shown sharp decline. Still out of 2.3m new cases, 70% belong to Sub Saharan Africa. Almost 600 children died every day of AIDS related cases in 2012.

Global emissions of Carbon Dioxide have increased almost by 50%. It reached 32.2 billion metric ton in 2011, a 48.9% rise above sea level. There were 13mh of forest land lost world wide each year between 2000 and 2010. However afforestation has reduced net loss to 5.2mh annually. This is due to policy taken by Brazil, China, Chile, Vietnam and Rwanda. Over 2.3b more people have gained access to improved source of drinking water from an unimproved source. Between 1990 and 2012, 2 billion people obtained access to improved sanitation. One billion people still resort to open defecation One third of the urban residents in developing countries still live in slums.

5. Lessons: Before evaluating how the world is fairing with regard to the MDGs, it should be kept in mind that there exists a typical 3-5 years time lag in the generation of global statistics. So a clear picture can come only by 2017 to 2020. Till then the evaluation is to see whether they are on the track or off the track. For the eight important measurable¹ targets as it is obvious from the Global Monitoring Report (2012), the world is currently on the track in case of extreme poverty, gender parity on education and improved water source. But even they are satisfactory at global level, progress at national level is not sufficient in half of the countries.

Another dimension is the impact of donor recipient relation on the performance of MDGs. 16 out of 24 indicators showed accelerated improvement after the implementation of MDGs for at least half of the Sub Saharan African countries compared to 5 out of 24 in case of developing countries (Fukuda-Parr and Greenstein, 2010). Therefore, global conversation² through national consultation, thematic consultation, regional and local level consultation can make most difference to the lives of the people.

The second lesson is universal applicability i.e. global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into different national realities capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. Global targets cannot be evaluated at the

¹ : i) extreme income poverty as measured by international \$1.25 poverty line (MDG 1a); ii) Primary completion rates (MDGs 2a); iii) gender parity in primary and secondary education (MDG 3a); iv) infant mortality rates (MDG 4a); v) under five mortality rate (MDG 4a); vi) maternal mortality rate (MDG 5a); vii) access to improved water sources (MDG 7c) and viii) access to improved sanitation

² There are several goals- Bellagio Goals, save the children goals, getting to zero goals, Oxfam Doughnut Peoples goal Sustainable development goals- have been initiated for the post MDGs agenda

national level. For example MDGs evaluation report claims that sub Saharan African countries are lagging behind. Hence, there should be new agenda in evaluating country progress. MDGs were without adaptation interpreted at national level. This led to serious distortions as these global goals are highly disadvantageous to countries with bad starting conditions. In fact Vandemoortele (2011) provides justification that MDGs targets have been higher in Sub Saharan Africa than the average progress of developing countries. The countries should be clustered according to the criteria and then set the national targets. The second method measures the progress of countries against the progress that could be expected according to the transition path. However, many countries with initial bad conditions can not follow S-shape progress. For example, empirical results reinforce that sub Saharan Africa is no way a region of 'stagnation, the greatest tragedy of our time'. For instance, Angola, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique and Niger are clear over performers with regard to MDGs-4 (under 5 mortality). However, due to unfavorable, starting condition, they are still considered as failure.

The next lesson from MDGs was their focus on limited number of targets which made the framework clear and manageable. However, these are couple of targets and indicators- 'decent work', 'full employment', 'access to secure tenure' was not properly defined. So due to lack of data it sometimes induces human rights violation. Secondly the commitments are overloading (124 commitments in 2010). Therefore, the ambitious task is to provide a clear methodology to make limited number of goals and targets.

The most important lesson from MDGs is inequality. According to Global Risk 2013 report Global risk is most likely to manifest over the next 10 years is severe income disparity. MDGs do not capture whether progress has been achieved through the improvement of the situation of the poor or improvement of the situation of the wealthy people. One of the main concerns is that they might slow down economic growth (without clear empirical validity). The unfair inequality can be reduced through identification of the discriminating factors- race, caste, disability, region, economic status. Again the challenge is to determine the maximum degree of inequality.

Some indicators- decent work, full employment and secure tenure are not defined properly. Again many indicators do not have quality specification like universal primary education. It is not important that how much time the children spent in the school rather it is vital that what they learn in the school. The learning outcomes of the school education are not up to the international standard. For example, Brazil is the first country to conduct survey on the learning achievements across the country. Lastly there are indicators which are

overlapping each other. For example, universal education and gender parity. If universal education is achieved then gender parity is automatically achieved. Hence, indicators used for MDGs require being SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time limited).

6. Challenges: The challenges for the achievements of goals are high population growth, urbanization, migration, water and food scarcity, financial volatility, communicable diseases and spreading inequality. Population projection ranges from 6.2 billion (b) (with low fertility) to 15.8 billion (high fertility) (UNDESA, 2011).

It depends on the decision taken today how strong the future pressure on labour market, social system, global resources and environment. As per UNDESA the world population lived in cities will increase to 6.3b by 2050 (67% of world population). Urbanization can be a virtue or curse depending on the careful urban planning and investments are needed in order to ensure that the megacities turn into hubs of economic growth. Due to loss of 30 million hectares of high quality agricultural land by 2030 and another 20% loss of agricultural productivity in developing countries between 2008 and 2050 due to climate change requires investment and innovation for increasing agricultural productivity (Mc Kinsey, 2011).

The World Bank (2012) report says that without further commitment and action to reduce Green house gas emissions, the world is likely to warm more than 3⁰ c above the pre industrial climate and could warm by 4⁰ c in 2060s if commitments are not fulfilled. 19 out of 20 countries that are most at risk as a consequence of extreme weather condition in 2015 are countries with large number of people. The quick and the right response to this threat is to separate the growth process from primary energy use. This is what is called as *Decoupling*.

7. Mistakes: MDGs mobilized public attention and overcome aid. Instead of invoking a turn from narrow economic growth paradigm towards broader human development paradigm, these were interpreted as social provision. Hence, MDGs have been criticized for discouraging investment in productive sector and promoting 'welfare and aid dependence over growth and self reliant (Manning, 2010). Secondly, the interpretation of these goals at the national level is strongly distorted favoring those countries with better initial conditions to start. Therefore, other methods should be employed in order to measure the progress towards the goal at the country level.

8. Post MDG Agenda: In an attempt through global³ consultation about post 2015 on 11 thematic issues called My World, the main messages in the report “A million Voice: The World We want” revealed that people would like their government to be more honest and responsive. People have asked for a government that does a better job, delivering key services, encouraging growth while regulating markets and preventing insecurities linked to compromising planet and wellbeing of the future generation. Equality and non-discrimination stands out as the main ingredient. The important post-MDGs agenda should be: participation (making the world a better place requires people’s engagement through right to be heard, participation and ownership); Inclusion (engaging all people at local level, paying attention to all voices including women and girls, marginalized groups and individuals, people living in poverty and in indigenous community, persons with disability, forcibly displaced and stateless persons, children, young people, migrants and Lesbian gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT); Capabilities (coordinated and integrated institutions and capabilities and strong effort need to be made to improve local leadership human resources and technical management capacities at local level and Multi stake holder partnership (UNDG, 2014).

9. Conclusion: The present paper has focused on the notion of development, its evolution and its reemergence in the form of MDGs. MDGs have been analyzed in the form of its achievements, challenges and lessons learnt and the post MDGs agenda for sustainable development goals. Regarding development, MDGs missed the mark. The issue of sustainability was missed as instead of focusing on human development beyond economic growth it reduced to social provision neglecting economic development. Despite complete removal of poverty and hunger the issues of mal nutrition and, child mortality, maternal mortality require greater focus in specific areas of Sub Saharan Africa. The contradictions are: economic growth has tended to increase inequalities, increasing informal employment, low labour productivity and increasing ecological imbalances; coexistence of increasing literacy and high dropout rate and low quality, increasing arm race and international conflict and violation of human rights. The major challenges are to ensure that any process towards development is full participatory with complete freedom in choosing the goals; new development agenda should be broken into realistic and fair national targets through adjustment of national targets according to state capacity and derivation of national targets from their respective transition paths. National level institutional coordination should be

³ The global survey (4582736 people) on the priorities revealed that people gave most priority to education (2933414), better health (2452170 persons), better job opportunity (2246787 persons) and responsible and honest government (2213872 persons) as the agent of development.

given utmost priority for effective implementation. Sustainable energy consumption must get priority. The aspects of inequality should take into account other discriminating factors such as caste, race, disability, disease and economic status. Lastly the challenge is to formulate goals targets and indicators that are SMART and thus, the global effort to make a development goal should be based on the concept of *Vasudheiva Kutumbakam*- the universe belongs to one family.

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