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Conceptualising Education in the Human Development Paradigm

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Abstract

This article is an attempt to conceptualise the two dimensions of education in the human development paradigm. First, how education as an indicator for indexing has been used in this paradigm; and second, how education, by its very basic nature, determines the whole paradigm beyond the limitations of indexing in HDI? Theories of human development and definition of HDI and IHDI has been analysed to identify the actual role of education and perspective of knowledge. It has been found that education, as an aspect for indexing in HDI, has been put as equitable contributor against other two indicators- health and income. Even IHDI, that provides actual developmental situation at individual and group level in this paradigm, is not showing actual values for 'role of education in various aspects of human development'. Also, education, as very wider aspect goes beyond the status of literacy, enrolment, mean year of schooling, and expected year of schooling. As 'an end in itself', it determines the basic ideas behind the development perceived in terms of 'freedom'. Works of Sen and Haq and various HDRs have been analysed in the light of modern debates on education, health, and impact of economic progress to evaluate the findings.

Key Words: Human development, HDI, IHDI, education, health, freedom.

The 21st Century, as the bearer of the fruits of the past Centuries, is the most advanced era of human civilization. Technology, communication and interaction, mobility, all are unprecedented. And education, in its various forms, has played critical role in all these, in many different ways. The developmental paradigms have been redefined to emphasise on 'human and their environment', and so it is important to assess what kind of environment determines the human development in modern days and how. During 1990s, these assumptions got more space and impetus in the globally led approaches. They emphasized on education (Education for All 1990 and 2000), multiple dimensions (Millennium Development Goals 2000), and environmental conservations (Earth Summit 1992). Among these, educational aspects constitute the core of the programs and determining base of other aspects. By identified that economic aspects have no direct implication in human development in a country, the Human Development Reports (HDR) indicated that either of the remaining two or both- health and education- aspects could be the most determining

factor. This article is divided into three sections. First, looks into the Human Development perspectives and theories. Second, examines the theories and approaches of human development paradigms. Third, deals with the perception of education in the human development reports/paradigm and examines the implications and potential of educational aspects in furthering human development beyond Human Development Index (HDI) and Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI).

Emergence and Theories of the Human Development Paradigm: The initiative of United Nation Development Programme to publish Human Development Report- 1990, has been one of the most influential events of the 1990s. It introduced the new dimension of “Human Development” in the global discourse of ‘Development’. Backed by the intellectuals like Amartya Sen and Mahbub ul Haq, the idea of ‘Human Development’ is such as to accept ‘human and their enabling environment’ as the ‘core’ of all development process. It deals with the most critical and fundamental issues of human life- health, education, living standards, gender, poverty and sustainability aspects of the socio-cultural environment. As HDR 1990 defines, human development is about “enlarging people’s choices”. It has been analysed with the ‘freedom’ dimensions by the economist Amartya Sen. Surrounding these all, it also emphasises on ‘providing enabling environment’ for individuals to enhance their ‘*capability*’ to realize their rights and freedom to ‘choose’ and determine their own development.

Human development has become one of the globally well accepted and appreciated approaches to assess, explain and guide the developmental process across the world. Beyond earlier economic-centric approaches, based on crude GDP, and rigid ways of analysis, human development approach believes in dynamism and openness of the indicators for measuring the developmental aspects. Capability Approach and Social Power Approach (SPA) are the two major approaches which perceive and explain Human Development in their own ways, but essentially keeping the idea of human welfare at their core. Capability Approach is the most influential among these all and is the base for Human Development Report (HDR).

The Three Parameters of Human Development: In 1990, the first HDR identified three basic indicators to build the Human Development Index (HDI) “*Longevity*”, “*Education*” and “*Decent living standards*”. In time, the scope and parameters for these basic indicators have been broadened, refined and some new parameters of gender and poverty etc have been introduced. Since 2010 HDR, for calculating HDI, ‘Health’ indicator is about measuring *life expectancy at birth*; ‘Income’ about *gross national income per capita*; and ‘Education’ in two aspects- *mean year of schooling* and *expected year of schooling*. HDR 1990 highlighted that there is no direct and uniform relationship between national income (in any terms of GDP, GNP or GNI) and level of human development of a country, particularly in education and health aspects. Also, economic growth has even weaker correlation with health and educational development in medium and low human development countries (UNDP 2010:4). As some countries have achieved better educational and health at low economic growth.

HDR 2010 also introduced Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI), the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to make human development perspectives more inclusive and pure. Nature of HDI was modified to make it a *projection of potential* of all individuals of an economy/country, which, when generalized, will remain unchanged for the whole economy/country as well. To highlight the existing realities of individual and group level differences in access to resources and opportunities and inclusion in developmental processes, the report introduced the new indexing- IHDI. Simply, in absence of any 'inequalities' IHDI will be equal to HDI, while it will decrease against HDI with an increase in inequalities, in a particular country/economy.

Approaches to Human Development: Human in the Developmental Process: With the introduction of Human Development aspects, various researchers and literature came out as critic and appreciation, both, for the HDI. It's due to critical analysis of human development paradigm and HDI; the HDRs in subsequent years introduced new paradigms and redefined HDI. The Human Development Reports are very basic literature for theoretical aspects, definitions, various data, and comparative analysis of human development levels, in countries and regions. These reports define and identify the various indicators of the very concept of Human Development. It states that HD is to "*enlarge people's choices*". Also identifies the three basic indicators- "*Longevity*", "*Education*" and "*Decent living standards*"- to calculate the level of development of various countries, regions, and the world. These three indicators are very vast in their-self to determine various aspects of human life but are dynamic and open in nature to adopt other measuring and defining aspects.

Income as the determinant of human development has been questioned by the economist and Capability Approach theorists, mainly Amartya Sen. His works challenge the contemporary approaches for measuring the well-being and development of human which were calculated on the basis of the national income and states. It emphasised that income itself cannot ensure the development of a country or region. So, the aim of development activities should be focused on enhancing the '*capabilities*' of individuals so that they could acquire a sense of dignity and self-confidence from within and in the society. It's about eradicating the '*unfreedoms*' that prevent the enhancement of '*capabilities*'. Sen's Capability Approach is individualistic in nature and considers individuals as the basic agents for achieving the goal of human development. This approach targets a real problem of today's society where so many socio-economic-cultural and political factors have suppressed the majority of the population in a way that they have lost their self-confidence and dignity of life. With such out of box thinking and non-traditional attempt beyond economic aspects, the '*Capability Approach*' is the basis for the HDRs and dominates the theoretical issues within this paradigm.

Capability Approach theories to human development have been widely promoted and practiced by the economist and founder of the Human Development paradigm, Mahbub ul Haq, including in the South Asian region. He argues that human development actually is-

“a development paradigm that is about much more than the rise or fall of national income. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative life in accord with their needs and interests” (Haq, 2000).

By accepting ‘People’ as the ‘real wealth of nation’, this approach believes in the human potential in developing themselves if they are provided what they need. Such an enabling environment must provide educational, health and decent income related choices, facilities, and freedom. Haq and Sen were the two leading theorists in the human development debate during 1990s, and their approach is the core of the idea of human development.

Social Power Approach (SPA) to human development was forwarded by Ananya Mukherjee Reed as critic and substitute for ‘Capability Approach’. This approach criticizes Capability Approach of human development on three basic grounds of how they define and perceive *social justice*, understanding of individual and group *differences* and nature of the *agency* (Reed, 2009). Taking help of I. M. Young for defining the groups and structural view of differences, the SPA argues, in terms of Reed, that not the “*identity-centered notion of difference*” but the “*structural inequality* between different social groups that should be subject matter of human development” (Ibid: 19; emphasis added).

SPA emphasises that the major hurdles and challenges before the human development process are *structural inequalities* that can only be remedied by “altering the structure itself and the social relations between structural groups that are embodied by such structures” and not by adopting individualistic remedies like the Capability Approach theorists believe (Ibid). This approach explains human development as “a process of challenging and altering social relationships through the *mobilization of social power*” (Ibid: 30; emphasis added). SPA considers ‘institutions’, like state, as the powerful agent as well as an effective means to deliver, or which must be forced to deliver, the freedom and right to choose, and environment to develop self. So it criticises the notion of ‘voluntarism’ in the Capability Approach and argues that no any institution will work by its own for challenging and altering the existing suppressive social structures, but these are the “*ordinary citizens*” who have to “mobilize social and political power” for that. Thus, the social power is the core of SPA of Reed. She has provided and explained a very different view of human development that require individuals to claim all ‘choices’ and ‘freedom’ identified by the Capability Approach for human development. So basically, SPA differs from Capability Approach in terms of how an enabling environment can be developed and provided to the people but does not question the idea behind the human development.

Human Development aspects constitute the core of every developmental process in present societies- First, it breaks the traditional views for defining and accepting Human Development exclusively in economic terms of GDP of a country and introduces social and health aspects to it. Second, it believes in the human capabilities and human dignity. Third, it accepts human as the basic unit and the primary target of human development processes.

Role of Education in Human Development Paradigm: Education, as it is today, has

multiple dimensions. At positive side, for school level development, some of the most critical aspects are- high, preferably, universal, enrolment and retention rates, low or no dropout, hundred percent primary to secondary transition, gender parity, and quality of education, and efficient health, nutritional, sanitation, toilet, playground, library etc facilities and relevant support system. Friendly and caring environment attract students into schools, especially at primary (and elementary) levels. It is also a fact that despite the lack of some facilities, even some of the most basic ones like- infrastructure, health, nutrition, toilet, drinking water- children are enrolled in the formal school system in various developing countries. So, only counting enrolments, retentions, and dropouts through 'mean year of schooling' and 'expected year of schooling' do not provide a clear picture of all aspects of educational development in any country, but just some aspects. This very fact is the basis for examining education and human development relations in present contexts. Primary things in formal education are enrolment, retentions, and transitions from lower to upper stages. So, enrolment and retention rates do provide a valid scaling method that can be used to assess the most basic factors of modern education system. And, except in a tyranny or fascist country where enrolments and education have been forcefully made compulsory, till age 25 or so, with severe punishment for any violations, universal or high enrolments and continuation, till around 25 year age, indicate that quality, impacts, and fruits of education in that country are quite better.

In modern political-economy of the world, systematic/formal education and training, and that with verifiable certificates, are very determining for getting jobs to secure one of the basic material needs- decent living standards. Whole knowledge system has been materialized around this system. But, as an end in itself, education implies that gaining 'knowledge' is more about filling a void and enlightening self from within. In these terms, the formal or informal system of education based on schooling and classroom studies cannot be the sole system of imparting or gaining knowledge. Human society has existed for thousands of years but modern system of formal education is very new comparatively. But knowledge, in its different forms, has not only been carried out from one to the next generations but also grew and expanded in all terms. Education, fulfilling one of the basic needs of 'being human'- knowledge, cannot be just a means or instrument to get a job. It would be a very narrow definition of 'knowledge'. Broader aspects of education and knowledge dimensions not only imply some but also demand some positive environment for individuals, groups, and society.

HDR 1990 carried forward the idea that 'people are the real wealth of a nation' and human development is about 'enlarging people's choices', freedom, and 'creating enabling environment' for the people. For all these, HDRs have never claimed directly about the dominating role of education. But, it considers educational and health parameters among the most determining factors for measuring human development. Though, it has been identified by HDRs that economic growth has no direct implications for human development, it's a fact that health sector and educational development require investment and resources. Resources can only play determining role through- carefully planned investment in health,

education, poverty, hunger, and nutritional aspects; efficient utilization of resources; and by *enlarging people's choices*. From these perspectives, availability of resources, until people are granted just access to it, and value of the economy, unless governments devise mechanisms for its optimum utilization for common good, have no any positive implications for human development. That is, economic role in education is determined by- the capabilities of the educational policies and practices in challenging multiple and rigid traditions, exploitative hierarchical systems, multidimensional exclusions etc; strength of the relevant institutions in implementing and monitoring of educational practices, and data-generation for assessment of policies and proposing necessary reforms; and proactive role of civil society and mass participation in education to check corruptions and put demands for better educational and allied facilities and incentives. Same are also true for the development of the health sector.

Role and importance of education in the development of individuals, communities, cultures and state has been emphasized by many. Amartya Sen points out that Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and China are good examples where better educational atmospheres have played a crucial role in achieving respective levels of development. Similarly, India with only 50 percent literate-population in 1991 is lagging far behind in development index (Sen 2000: 41-42). And, it's only 'literacy rate', just one of many aspects of education. From Plato and Aristotle to postmodernist thinker Foucault, many have argued that 'knowledge is a virtue' and 'knowledge has power' or 'knowledge is power', in one or different ways. From employment to scientific-technological developments and innovations, and strategic advantages, everywhere education is a determining factor today. Due to these, education has become one of the highest preferences of the nation's today.

HDR 2000 explains that health, nutrition and education have intrinsic as well as extrinsic worth- 'on human capital, productivity and capabilities for participation and social interaction'. Particularly education (of the husband and wife) has a positive role in solving the problems of domestic violence. As it has been observed in India, if a woman has more than a secondary education, the incidence of such violence falls by more than two-thirds. In this way, HDR shows that education empowers women as well as changes the dynamics in households and thus changes norms. Education is one among the basic indicators and scales on the basis of which the framers of HDRs analyse and explain the level of human development in a particular country or region etc. Mahbub ul Haq talks about 'enlarging people's choices' as the basic objective of the human development process (Haq 2000; UNDP 1990). Enlarging people's choice has two aspects- first, to build such an environment with a large number of better and easily accessible choices and second, to make every individual capable enough so that they can acquire what they need from available (and enlarged) choices. In this globalised world, education is one among the powerful factors that determine and expands the horizons of qualitative and quantitative choices of individuals. In particular, better education enables a society to generate and make available more and better choices and at the same time enhances individual capabilities to select and acquire the best choices for them. These aspects are far broader than the numerical value of

enrolment and schooling.

UNESCO mentions that 'education is a major catalyst for human development' and accepts 'universal primary education' as one among the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It has mentioned eight important reasons due to which education is important to achieve the MDGs. It believes that with good education- 1) more people would grow and develop; 2) more people would learn and know; 3) more people would be equal and just; 4) more children would survive and live; 5) more mothers would be healthier; 6) more people would be able to combat illness; 7) more people would think of the future; and 8) more people would work together. Thus, it considers education as an effective instrument not only for enhancing the basic human capabilities, but also for developing socio-psychological relations in the societies, imaging better, prosperous and healthy future, and strengthening fabrics of human to human bonds.

Prabhat Patnaik also sees education as a base for the development processes. He argues that any social formation requires a set of intellectuals for its functioning and the major objective of education system within it is to produce these intellectuals. He believes that the educational institutions are not only sufficient but a necessary condition for producing good literature and "*organic intellectuals*" for ensuring the human development and progress of a particular society (mainly the society having deprived/marginalized or excluded social groups). By '*organic intellectuals*', Patnaik identifies the intellectuals belonging to and emerged from the marginalized sections of a society, whose ideas develop independently of the ideas of the prevailing socio-economic order responsible for the miseries of some group of people and who will be able to solve such problems. And for producing such '*organic intellectuals*' there is no substitute for education. But he criticizes the comparative approach which "sees higher education as a homogeneous commodity of which some institutions are better producers than others and not as a means of producing *organic intellectuals* for a particular society" (Patnaik 2005:103). His approach is critical to the borrowings of concepts and copying curricula and syllabi from the Western universities unless they are 'genuinely *scientific*' and do not "imbued with the ideological objective of defending the hegemony of the advanced countries". Thus, he accepts the greater role of education not only in the development of human being into intellectuals but also as a founding base for establishment and functioning of the various socio-cultural-economic and political structures. It is a holistic view about the role of education based on its capability and nature to accept the contextual needs and dignity in any society.

Reed, as per her alternative "Social Power Approach", believes in the broader role of the state. In the field of education, as she says, such role shouldn't be only like 'basic education services' but it must be treated as the process of "decommodification of basic needs". She talks about the active role of the 'ordinary citizens' for mobilizing the social and political power and this demands a vibrant civil society which further needs better education system to make people capable enough to function in that very manner. Thus she also somehow believes in the greater and broader role of education in the process of human development, despite the fact that she is proceeding through a different approach to it (human

development).

Availability of ‘good’ teachers, doctors, engineers, care workers, other workforce, and individuals are the backbone of the present economic system and essential for securing better future. Though ‘good’ is a vague term in general, but here it implies the characteristics of ‘individuals’ who respect their work and do justice with the duties attached to the position. Here, education cannot be the sole determinant for making a person be good to others or perform noble, honest and determining works and feel dignified. But these are ideal, essential and most desirable expectations from an individual in a society. All individuals perform some work, and so their activities determine the human development perspectives for their society. HDR 2015 highlighted the work and human development perspectives and their mutual relationship. It shows that ‘work’ is a critical part of human functions and human development as-

“(w)ork strengthens its link with human development when it goes beyond individual benefits to contribute to shared social objectives, such as poverty and inequality reduction, social cohesion, culture and civilization” (UNDP:5).

And, better educational access and quality, at higher or university and technical levels, provide better workforce and quality services in- health improvement and disease control; engineering and infrastructure development; research and developments in other critical socio-cultural and political-economic fields. Education plays a critical role in development in the educational, literary, ethical, moral, and philosophical dimensions too, which are very important part of humanity. These all together constitute the positive environment in which individuals function and acquire their needs- one of the basic criteria for the human development paradigm.

Education and Human Development Perspectives: The New Challenges: These works in education and human development perspectives have emphasized that, if understood and utilized wisely, education, as a means, is capable of transforming whole society in most positive manners and with substantive implications. Also, that health, economic, inequalities, gender-aspects, poverty, and other multiple aspects are determined by the educational progress and in the process determine educational development too. Gender aspects that restrict women and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) communities are also critical factors for human development for all debates of the 21st Century. Universal enrolment and retention automatically imply male-female parity in education but cannot indicate the multiple gender issues of education, despite which women continue their education in schools and universities. LGBT communities still face multiple challenges in all these aspects. Dropouts and non-enrolments at elementary stages are critical in developing world. That’s why, since 2010, IHDI and GII are attempting to capture these aspects too in the human development perspectives. Presumably, education is at the core of Sen’s approach and idea when he talks about ‘Development as Freedom’ because education plays a crucial role in capability enhancement of individuals and the whole society.

Environmental crisis demands greater role of masses in preserving, nourishing and protecting the local ecosystem and control pollutions. Success of programs and initiatives of United Nations and UNDP and UNESCO etc are dependent on the active participation of individuals at local levels and countries at regional and global levels. Policies and legal frameworks in a country are also determined by the education and knowledge of the policy makers and voters. Global organizations and nations have also acknowledged this all, so all dimensions of development and sustainability are emphasising on educational aspects in the world. From EFA and MDG to Sustainable Development Goals, Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), and many other initiatives are trying to provide, promote, and protect education at global level, with special focus over countries and places where conflicts, wars, cultural-religious fanatics etc are destroying the education systems. Especially, the agencies like GCPEA (formed in 2010) have been established to protect schools worldwide by dealing with the challenges of 'targeted attacks on education during armed conflict'. With educational aspects becoming critical and determining, human development parameters must also acknowledge multiple aspects of educational challenges in developing countries and the world.

Conclusion: Education is not prior to 'health' but it is prior to 'income' aspect. Human development paradigm gives all the three parameters equal value for calculating HDI. But the newly introduced IHDI and GII highlight the multidimensional issues, emerging today, with all the three indicators. Complexities in various societies are gaining grounds with time and groups are asserting their demands for identity, equality, rights, justice, and freedom in the economic, political, and multicultural dimensions. Here education is the most positive means to bring transformations towards an open, inclusive and equitable society through imparting knowledge to all individuals. Despite that fact that human development index, or more precisely IHDI, gives education and other indicators more variables in 2010s, role of education remains under represented in this paradigm.

Even a well-educated individual cannot be said 'developed' or 'capable' from human development perspectives unless other criteria are not fulfilled for that person. Similarly, a completely healthy or very rich person cannot satisfy all requirements of this paradigm without education and knowledge. But, education determines the socio-cultural, psychological, political and economic aspects; develops scientific and critical thought processing; and determines the health and income dimensions for all individuals and groups. Just to identify, highlight, and critically evaluate and differentiate 'freedom' and 'unfreedom', understanding the gender-based arguments, and developing a sense of understanding towards cultural-traditional differences- a person must be open-minded and may also be educated, but not necessarily healthy and wealthy. That is, knowledge is important through any means possible. And education is one of the most important means for that in this Century.

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