

## Unit 14

### Ethno-development

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#### Contents

- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 New Concern in Development Theories
- 14.3 Emergence of Alternative Approaches
- 14.4 Methodology of Ethno-development
- 14.5 Conclusion
- 14.6 Further Reading

#### Learning Objectives

The central objectives of this unit is to explain:

- reorientation of developmental perspective;
- cultural consideration in development;
- endogenous development approach; and
- strategies of ethno-development.

#### 14.1 Introduction

This unit deals with the approach of ethno-development as one of the approaches to sustainable development. Before going into details of the ethno-development it is necessary to discuss the growth of the approaches of development over the times. This will help us to understand how and why there has been growing demand over the times to develop appropriate development theories covering all sections of human societies. From time to time various scholars have pointed out the importance of understanding diversities of culture and specific needs of the communities for their own development. This growing concern about the social and cultural dimensions of development has brought changes in the developmental thinking, and as a result, approaches of sustainable development and ethno-development have emerged as the critics of the earlier developmental theories. In view of these issues, this unit will explain the various perspectives on development, cultural considerations in development and strategies of ethno-development.

#### 14.2 New Concerns in Development Theories

The study of the development theories reveals that the meanings and concepts related to the theories vary over times. In the beginning, the core meaning of development was to achieve the status of advanced industrial countries of West mainly referred to remedies of shortcomings and maladies of progress. The development thinkers of the twentieth century have rejected the development thinking of the previous century due to the latter's failure to explain the development patterns of then society. Their reactions to the nineteenth century's failure are related to the process of industrialisation of non-western countries where this transformation uprooted a large section of people and made them workless. It was also alleged that this development approach has even dislocated social relations among the members of these societies.

##### a) From economic growth to human development

The growth of colonial economics of development has generated dependencies of colonial countries on their rulers. The colonial rulers are mainly the European countries. It has been experienced that such dependencies has not created

any environment of proper industrialisation in the colonial countries, although some development has been taken place in the interest of colonial rulers. In the name of the development the European or colonial countries have destroyed native manufactures as found in case of textile manufacturing in India and sabotage efforts at industrialisation in Egypt, Turkey and Persia (Stavrianos 1981, Pieterse 2001).

Gradually the economic growth theory emerged as development thinking. Mechanisation and industrialisation have become parts of concept of economic growth. To widen the scope of development, the dimension of political modernisation has been incorporated. Further, the new way to develop the thinking has included the wider dimensions. In the mid 1980s Amartya Sen's contribution to the concept of human development has been important to bring a different direction in the development approaches.

Structural reform of society is the basis of neoliberalism of development thinking. This structural reform of the society came about through liberalisation and privatisation of the economy. All classical and modern development theories are fundamentally structuralist. In the latter phase of progress of development theories this structuralist emphasis has started to change with the influence of phenomenology (see box 14.1). The theoretical orientation has been brought a shift in development approach to structuralist to institutional ones. It can also be interpreted as change from deterministic to interpretative views and from materialist to multidimensional and holistic views. Such a change can also be interpreted as shift from structuralism to constructivism. The source of constructivism is found into phenomenology and ethnomethodology (Peterse 2001).

**Box 14.1: Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology**

Literally, phenomenology is the study of phenomena; appearances of thing or things as they appear in our experience or the ways we experience things. Phenomenology studies various experience as experienced from the subjective or the first person point of view. Phenomenology is a 20th century philosophical way of thinking about the nature of reality, which has influenced sociology. The German philosopher Edward Hussral (1859-1938) is closely linked with phenomenology. Phenomenology argues that the only "phenomena" that we can be sure of is that we are conscious thinking beings therefore we should study any phenomena around us in terms of the way we consciously experience them. This examination should be free of pre-conceptions of causal ideas. These ideas influenced sociologists such as Alfred Schutz (1899-1959) who thought that sociology should look at the way individual construct the social world (Schutz 1967). Phenomenology is used in two basic ways in sociology: (1) to theorize about substantive sociological problems, (2) to enhance the adequacy of sociological research methods. There are two expressions of this approach, which are constructivism and ethnomethodology. Ethnomethodology integrates the Parsonian concern for social order into phenomenology and examines the means by which action make ordinary life possible. (Garfinkel 1967).

Ethnomethodology as a sociological perspective was founded by American sociologist Harold Garfinkel in early 1960s. The main ideas behind it are set out in his book *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967). It differs from their sociological perspectives in the way that which all the perspectives pre-suppose that social world is orderly, ethnomethodologists start out with the assumption that social order is illusory. For them social order is constructed in the minds of social actors as society confront the individual as a series of sense impressions and experiences which she or he must somehow organise into a coherent pattern.

However, along with the changes in the broader perspectives in the development studies there can be seen another trend of changes in the approaches. The development approach gradually started to be more specialised and specific.

It has become more local and regional in orientation. The early and the modern thinkers of development has been fundamentally associated with theoretical orientation of structuralism but the later development thinking has rejected this view. This approach exhibits more diversities in theoretical orientation. The earlier groups are concerned with generalized theoretical orientation having world - wide application for development. But the present development thinking does not believe in general application of generalised theories. Now the development approaches are not relevant across the wider regions. This development approaches are related not only to growth but to what kind of growth, not simply to development but what kind of development. This has helped in emergence of approaches in diverse new directions which have come to be known as sustainable development, people-friendly growth, pro-poor growth, etc. Now the development approach is related to groups, actor - oriented approach (Long 1994), and participatory approach (Oommen 1998).

#### **b) Sustainable development**

Sustainable development needs development approach from within the community. Earlier it was felt that technological and capital transfer from other countries would bring development. This has been gradually found ineffective in continuity of development process of society. Groups of scholars believe that to make the development sustainable there should be participatory and community based programme. The development approach should be identified by the local people themselves on the basis of their own needs. The designing and the implementation of the project principles and techniques suited to the local people are developed with the help of local people from whom the development planning is being designed. Since it is the development for the people the development process essentially depends on people's participation. Development cannot be successfully imposed on a society from outside. The sustainable development put stress on the participatory aspects of the local people on decision making process that affects their lives. The people for whom development programme has been adopted must take part in planning and the execution of every aspects of the programme. It believes that the development programme which does not involve the local people often fails. Therefore community participation or people's participation is essential.

#### **c) Culture consideration in development**

During the colonial period colonised societies have tended to modernise themselves for their own development. They have tried to adopt the attributes of modern societies, i.e., their colonial rulers. Therefore, modernisation and development mean westernisation of colonised societies and culture. The process has established strong trend in social transformation. But this approach and belief have started to decline along with development of colony-free national culture. Culture has gradually become a part of development studies. Along with the World Commission on Culture and Development in 1996 there has been increase of importance of the cultural dimensions and development. Now culture is not considered as an obstacle to the development process, rather as influential factor for development of a society.

In due course of time the development studies have been oriented more to cultural dimensions on the basis of cultural diversities. Earlier in most of the development studies Nation has been considered as the unit of development. But gradually this "Nation" has undergone considerable changes. Now the nation is not always considered as unit of development; it is the community or small section of a nation considered as the unit of development. The community development, local economic development and micro-regional development are gaining importance in the development studies. Local development in the various forms, like urban development, rural development, regional development, regional inequality, regionalism, ethnic development (ethno-development) are the common orientations of the development studies.

However, there has been a trend of development beyond the nation, at the macro-regional level with inter-national cooperation and global macro-economic policies. The regional has become a familiar unit of development. There is yet another developmental approach at the world level with global macro-policies of the international institutions and UN system.

Consideration of culture in development is now new. Culture is found to be implied in many earlier approaches. The culture and development studies originated from Anthropology, particularly, Development Anthropology. Therefore, the anthropological methodology has influenced and modified the development studies in course of its changes. The anthropological participant observation method has gradually emerged as participatory and action oriented development studies. Participatory action research, rapid rural appraisal and goal-oriented project planning have been commonly used in the development studies.

Now development planning is generally “based on culture” because it is not possible to operate development outside culture. In development, culture is interpreted in relation to economic development. Political and social development get less importance. The Dutch Development Corporation policy asserts culture as the basis of sustainable development. The argument of culture for sustainable development has been developed by Stavenhagen (1986) and following him by Hettne (1995). According to their view and development should consider the “ethnos” (people) for whom development is intended. This is what is known as ethno-development approach. It is the approach that is concerned with the development of indigenous culture. The Dutch Development Policy recognised communities as bearers of culture, not the nations as a whole. It maintains cultural diversities and cultural differences among communities of a nation.

**Reflection and Action 14.1**

Why should cultural considerations be made part of planning? Discuss with suitable illustrations.

### 14.3 Emergence of Alternative Approaches

In the course of development of developmental theories the mainstream development theories, such as growth oriented theories and others, have been severely criticised. Gradually, alternative development theories have emerged to avoid the weakness of the earlier theories. The alternative approaches and their methodologies have emerged as development paradigm indicating a theoretical break from the mainstream development approaches. Some of the alternative theories are concerned with local development.

Dependency theory, one of alternative to the mainstream development theories, is concerned with structural macro-economic changes in the non-western societies in the line of western societies. There is another alternative development approach that emphasizes the capacity of people to bring about change with development. This development approach depends on different means: participatory action and people centred development. It does not depend on the other societies or countries for its own development.

#### a) Alternative Development

Since 1970 onwards alternative development approaches have emerged as people centred development. This development is geared to the satisfaction of needs of the people for whom development is directed. The alternative development is also known as endogenous development. This approach has its own distinct methods associated with it. Usually participatory method is also used for such approach. The participatory method initiates development process within the community and take into consideration the basic needs of the people for their

development. The alternative developments are different from the earlier development approaches in respect of their methodology; a participatory, endogenous, self-sufficient and objectives oriented. Therefore, development here must be undertaken from within the people and geared to their basic needs. Hettne (1995) believes that these are mainstream approaches. He puts least emphasis on the idea of demodernisation and anti-development theories.

In course of the development of developmental theories, the alternative development approaches have been institutionalised as part of mainstream development. The alternative development is accepted as progressive, but not radical; it does not embrace any clear ideology and this could be absorbed by the mainstream development ideology (Pieterse 2001).

Hettne (1995) presents "another development" which is combination of the basic needs, self-reliance, sustainable and endogenous development. But this could not be developed as a paradigm or alternative model. Today there is not much differences between the approaches of alternative development and mainstream development. The components of alternative development approach like, participation and sustainability have been adopted by the mainstream development. There is no difference in principles. Gradually, this approach has become popular as Mainstream Alternative Development (MAD).

#### b) Endogenous Development Approach

The idea of endogenous development has emerged from the approach of the alternative development. It is more specific to ones' own culture in respect of its own development. The term, as it suggests, indicates the development from within the culture. It takes impetus from its own foundation of culture and gears the process of development. The notion of the "endogenous" takes into consideration social, cultural and symbolic aspects of a society. When we call endogenous development, we think it is opposite to the idea of mainstream development, which emphasises development through the process of change, that means, through the process of modernisation i.e. development of a society following the cultural characteristics of western societies. It is the process which can be called as westernisation. But endogenous development means shaking off all the traditional and existing customs, values, and beliefs of the society which intends to develop its self confidence. When goals and values are generated from within the culture, it also generate self-confidence. Here it is believed that modernity is generated from within own culture. Therefore, modernisation is not a thing to be borrowed from the west. There is no need to believe in modernisation of tradition. Any society can develop of its own; it can develop itself without the help of the others' path of development. Rahman (1993) mentions " Development is endogenous – there are no front runners to be followed". If a society tries to modernise itself by following models of any western country, it will lead to the destruction of its own culture by inviting western cultural elements in its own culture which may not be adjustable to the existing situation. There will be destruction of its own social values, moral and beliefs. Tradition always resists any change towards modernisation in the form of western model. Therefore, there may be conflict between tradition and modernity leading to unstable traditional cultural situation in a society (So 1990). But modernisation from within means innovation of new elements from within the society and adaptation to these new elements. Tradition is also considered as sources of innovation, change, development and modernisation.

It is seen that the endogenous idea of development is the foundation of the alternative development approach. But there are some problems to discern what is endogenous and what is exogenous element in a culture. There may not always any distinct boundary between endogenous and exogenous elements in a culture and development thinking. There is also a problem with regard to

the unit of development in the endogenous concept. In the conventional idea “society” is used as a unit of development or a “state” or a “nation”.

In criticising the approaches of the mainstream development the ethno-development approach has highlighted that the development statistics usually show country statistics, or at the national level. Besides country statistics other development statistics are available at the regional level concerning Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, etc. In development studies the regions have become a familiar unit of development similar to the nation. The other scale of development action is the world - local, national and macro-regional under UN system. These broader units of development may not have any systematic in-depth approach at the micro-level such as the community or ethnic group of a nation or of a region, etc. The need-based approach of the ethnic group of community requires micro-and in-depth analysis of the community own ideas or perception of development. In other words this is what is called understanding of indigenous knowledge. The idea of indigenous knowledge has emerged to recognize the local knowledge (Chamber 1983, Brokensha et al and Hobart 1993). Agrawal (1995) has pointed out that ignoring people’s knowledge about their own development is almost to ensure failure in developmental efforts. There has been a clear shift of the orientation of developmental approach which has been largely influenced by ethnomethodology in opposition to the enlightenment or positivistic approach in the areas of development. Norman Long (1992) has advocated “actor-oriented” approach in criticising structuralist approaches in development and prefers to adopt anthropological approach.

**Reflection and Action 14.2**

Discuss the various alternative approaches to development and describe reasons behind the emergence of ethno-development as distinct approach to development.

## 14.4 Methodology of Ethno-development

The concept and methodological approaches of ethno-development incorporate conventional anthropological method such as participant observation. From this concept there emerges the methodology of the alternative development which is based on participation by the people. This is what has come to be known as participatory method. The idea is that development must be participatory and must involve local persons in decision making processes that affect their lives with development. The people or community, for whom development programmes are adopted must take part in formulation of development programmes. Those which do not involve the community or local people often fail. Participatory Action Research, Rapid Rural Appraisal, critical pedagogy and empowerment are the various elements of alternative development programme. What is special to these methods? These methods are applied to the local community context.

It is argued that since development should come from within the society not from outside, it must be participatory and community based. The initiative for development must be identified by the local people, who will involve themselves in designing and implementation of the development projects using principles and techniques suited to the local conditions.

Cohen and Uphoff (1980) have interpreted participation as “generally denoting the involvement of a significant number of persons in situations or actions which enhance their well-being, e.g., their income, security or self-esteem.” Paul (1987) has defined participation, in the context of development, as “community participation that refers to an active process whereby beneficiaries influence the duration and execution of development projects rather than merely receiving a share of project benefits”. Santhanam (1993) defines

participation as “commitment on the part of the individual towards all forms of action by which the individual can ‘take part’ or ‘play part’ in the operation without being conscious of any socio-economic barriers to achieve certain common goals in a group situation”. This commitment is possible only when he is appraised with the situation so as to enable him/her to form an attitude based on his/her own perceptions. Lele (1975) from the study in Africa has explained that the local participation may mean involvement of people in planning and assessment of local needs. They may also be informed of the plans designed for their society if they are expected to give consent and to cooperate with the programme implementation. Participation thus can bring self-reliance to accelerate self-development.

#### Reflection and Action 14.3

There may be several problems in your own community related to water, electricity, repairing of road, or even livelihood security. Based on your own experience as a community member explain how the cultural resources of your community could be integrated for the solution to any of these problems.

## 14.5 Conclusion

This unit began with a small discussion on the various theories of development. The issues of sustainable development and cultural considerations in development are important dimensions of development discourse in contemporary world. Development is no longer defined solely in terms of economic growth. The cultural dimensions of society have emerged to play significant roles in contemporary development orientation. In this context the emergence of various alternative approaches to development i.e., endogenous development and ethno-development approaches are elaborated.

## 14.6 Further Reading

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Oommen, T.K. 1998. “Changing Paradigm of Development: the Evolving Participatory Society”, *Journal of Social and Economic Development*. 1:35-45

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Pieterse, J.N. 2001. *Development Theory*. Vistaar Publications: New Delhi