CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introductory view:

Aspects of human development, have for a considerable period of time, been the central issue in the development debate for the world economies, especially the third world countries. The concern for making provision for better opportunities and advantages for a reasonably good standard of living for the majority of human beings, if not all, has been expressed in different quarters in different forms.

The concept of human development is not new. Actually it is a reclaim of an old and established heritage. According to Aristotle¹, 'wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking, for it is merely useful and for the sake of something else.' The same line of thought was reflected in the writings of early founder of quantitative economics as well as in the works of the pioneers of political economy- Adam Smith², J.S Mill³. According to Adam Smith⁴ economic development should enable a person to mix freely with others without being ashamed to appear in public. Though Smith⁵ and Mill⁶ put a great stress on the growth of per capita real income, they treated income as one of several different means to reach the important goal of the betterment of individual lives. According to these classical economists there are reasons to value many things, other than income and wealth, that relate to real opportunities to lead a decent and dignified life. Hence they considered that freedom was intrinsically important to attain a life squarely enjoyable. It is thus historically observable that throughout this early period i.e. before the 20th century the concept of development treated income and its growth as means and the end of economic development was associated with real lives of people. The main concern of development was the quality of peoples' lives. The development analysis of a country used to incorporate what the people were capable of doing and what
they actually did, the discrimination they faced, the struggles they had to carry on and the expanding choices they enjoyed. The choices were not merely economic choices, but all kinds of choices exercisable in every field of life.

During the 20th century growth of income and wealth acquired tremendous attention from all quarters (of economic policies). Almost all-economic policies were geared to propel material progress rather than the development of quality of human lives. Hence it can be said that with the entrance into the 20th century opulence oriented approach towards economic development found a sound welcome in most of the countries. In this approach humanity was regarded as an instrument of production only and increase in gross national product was treated as the only way to promote economic development. But in reality it is found that though wealth plays a very significant role in human life it is not absolutely necessary for the fulfillment of some human aspirations which are not economic but are powerful indicators of actual or real state of living of people. This is because well being of the vast inhabitants of a country must not be viewed as economic well being only. It is a fact that the people want to be wealthy, but at the same time, they want to enjoy long, healthy life in a clean physical environment. They also want to acquire knowledge. They want peace, which is conditioned by the security in their homes and security in their jobs. Thus they want to enjoy their lives totally. From the point of view of a family, a society and even a nation, increasing wealth is not indispensable. A family does not require wealth in order to respect the rights of its member. In order to attain democracy a society need not be wealthy. A nation can provide equal treatment to men or women and this treatment is independent of wealth. Hence the important thing to note is not wealth itself rather what the nations do with their wealth is the decisive factor. Societies should recognize that their real wealth is their people. The generally accepted notion that there exists positive correlation between material wealth and human well being has now-a days come to be questioned since it has been found that many countries have high gross national product per capita but low human development indices which depend upon the use of national wealth. The maximization of wealth and enrichment of human lives need not move in the same direction.
Apparently it seems that the countries with higher average income tend to enjoy higher average life expectancies, lower rates of infant and child mortality and higher literacy rates and hence a higher human development index. But intercountry comparisons in this field reveal that these income variations tend to explain less than half the variations in life expectancy, infant/child mortality and differences in adult literacy. The central message from this analysis is that in assessing human development the matter of concern should not be income alone but the use that this income is put to. A society can spend its income on arms without expending on education. An individual may buy narcotic drugs without consuming essential food.

Thus economic growth is very important but at the same time it is insufficient for human development. Hence enhancement of human capabilities rather than promotion of aggregate growth of gross national product alone should be our main concern.

Shortly after 2nd world war, development economics emerged as a distinct field of study separated from growth economics. The main theme in development economics so far has been to equate development with the growth in per capita income ignoring the distributional objectives, because it was assumed that benefits of rapid economic growth would trickle down to the poorest sections over time. But it has been found that after World War II the average per capita income of developing countries increased considerably, but their income gap between the richer section and poorer section as well as among various socio-economic groups remained almost the same. So doubts have been raised about the hypothesis that given sufficient time, effects of economic development percolate to the poorest section of the society.

During 1970's growth with redistribution emerged as main objectives of development policy. Here redistribution meant redistribution of income only. Reduction of poverty became the most desirable end of development policy. Various poverty eradication programmes were designed so as to increase income and employment. Hence it can be said that till then income was treated as the only means to judge the standard of living of individuals and growth of national product was viewed as a yardstick of economic development.
In his book *Commodities and Capabilities* (OUP, 1987) Prof. A.K. Sen provided a new approach to economic development in which he persuasively argued that enhancement of well being of individuals must be the ultimate objective of development policy. He defines well being in terms of functioning and capabilities instead of using opulence approach, which puts undue emphasis on command over commodities in the assessment of well being. Functioning is an intrinsic part of an individual. An individual's achievement in promoting well being is a vector of his functioning. Some examples of the relevant functioning are: being adequately nourished, being in good health, being educated, capable of acquiring self-respect and being happy. According to Prof. Sen freedom is an intrinsic component of well being. Freedom means freedom of choice- choice regarding the opportunities available to the individuals. One example is freedom to read or write without being constrained by illiteracy and ignorance. In this perspective economic development can be seen in terms of an expansion of opportunities that the individuals enjoy in the society or economic development can be treated in terms of the expansion of the real freedom enjoyed by the citizens in pursuing their objectives. Expansion of human capabilities should be the ultimate objective of economic development. So it can be said that the purpose of economic development is to create an environment in which all people can expand their in-born potential capabilities. The success of development programme must be judged not merely by their effects on incomes and outputs but by noticing their contribution upon the quality of lives of the general mass of people.

Sen's approach has provided a conceptual basis for UNDP's (United Nation's Development Programme) concern for human development. According to UNDP's Human Development Report (HDR) published in 1994, human development values human life for itself. It does not value life by considering the fact that human beings can produce material goods. At the same time lives of all persons should be given equal valuation i.e. no new born child should be considered as destined for a short life or miserable life only because the child has been born in a wrong class or in the wrong country or belongs to a wrong
sex. The hope expressed in this report is that economic development must enable all individuals to enlarge their human capabilities to the fullest and to put those capabilities to the best use in all fields-economic, social, cultural and political. This report recognises the fundamental fact which is the universalism in acknowledging the life claims of every one. The term universalism vigorously demands both intragenerational equity and international equity in opportunities and not equity in final achievements. Actually universalism of life claims depicts a world where each and every child is provided with education, all inhabitants can avail of health care etc. In this way they can enlarge their potential capabilities. Hence universalism implies empowerment of people which protects all basic human rights- economic, social, civil and political. It advocates that no discriminatory treatment can be carried on among people by considering gender, religion, race or ethnic group. The main focus in HDR 1994 was directly on human beings and universals means equality of opportunity and not equality of income though a minimum income should be guaranteed to every one in each country.

There has long been a notion that investment in people will definitely increase human capital and then productivity. Hence through human development, more precisely through human resource development total productivity of a country will be increased resulting in accelerated growth of gross national product-, which is a very desirable objective of economic development. So here the end is growth of gross national product and the means to achieve that end is the human development by increasing human capital.

But this kind of valuation of human beings calculating profits or returns which they produce is dangerous and self-defeating for a country. Follow up of this extreme view may lead to the problem of child labour, slave labour camps, exploitation of workers by management and so on.

The HDR 1994 successfully reveals the fact that the indicator of economic development is not the production of more and more commodities without considering their uses. The concept of human development provided in HDR rejects the exclusive concentration on people as human capital rather it reveals
the fact that appropriate government policy will lead to the enhancement of 
human productivity through human resource development and at last an 
economic and political environment will be created in which people can 
expand their human capabilities by using that environment and can be able to 
make choices. Hence quality of life should always and everywhere be 
regarded as an end. In HDR 1994 stress has been put upon sustainable human 
development. Sometimes the term sustainable is wrongly interpreted in the 
sense that the present level and pattern of development should be sustained for 
future generations. But if the present pattern of development contains various 
inequalities among socio-economic groups and if the present form of 
development is sustained for future then it will perpetuate similar inequalities 
for future generations and at last development of the country will be retarded 
instead of being accelerated as well as being sustained. Hence it is better to 
use the terms sustainable human development which is more inclusive in the 
sense that the word human development discards all sorts of inequalities 
among various socio-economic groups.

The essence of sustainable human development is that everyone should have 
equal access to development opportunities—now and in future. And the 
strategy for sustainable human development is to replenish all sorts of capital— 
physical, human and natural so that the future generations will be able to meet 
their needs at least at the same level as that at present generations. All sorts of 
debts whether it is an economic debt or social or ecological debt puts a bar to 
the efforts of sustainable human development. Hence financing of current 
consumption through economic debts which others must repay should not be 
continued. In order to prevent social debts for future generations sufficient 
investment must be made upon education and health of present population. 
Natural resources should not be extracted in such a way that it will lead to 
ecological debts because of overexploiting the productive capacity of the 
earth. Hence the overall productive capacity to produce similar level of well-
being—perhaps with an entirely different stock of capital should be preserved 
so that it leads to the conservation of opportunities for future generations to 
lead worthwhile lives. In order to launch sustainable human development 
combined individual and institutional effort is necessary. This is because
individual's achievement in terms of capability often depends on many circumstances over which they may not have much control. For example, a child is kept outside the school and hence cannot be literate and throughout the life he/she have to suffer for illiteracy. Let a girl from the early part of life face discrimination- she is fed less, is sent to school later or not at all and so many other deprivations. In both these cases government intervention is essential so that appropriate policy may be taken and according to that policy all children whether a girl or a boy must be sent to school. At the same time people should be made aware of the importance of the girl child so that discriminatory treatment towards girls will come to an end. For sustainable human development this complementarity between individual action and public policy is very important.

At the national level the strategy towards attaining sustainable human development puts stresses on three core themes – reduction of poverty, employment creation and social integration.

At the global level sustainable human development requires policies concerning a more equitable world order based on fundamental global reforms. The present world consists of one-fourth rich people and three fourth poor people. Half of the world is democratic and the remaining half is authoritarian. In this world poor nations are denied equal access to global economic opportunities and one fourth of humanity is unable to meet its basic human needs. Rich nations are consuming four-fifth of natural capital without being obliged to pay for it. Hence global sustainability without global justice will always remain far-reaching goal.

In order to attain global sustainability it is hence imperative that the difference in levels of development between the rich and the poor nations be leveled up and the multiple forms of exploitation that is unleashed by the rich on the poor come to an end. In other words, there should emerge a level playing field in the availability of various social opportunities and capabilities as well as functionings in the rich and poor economies. This is conditioned by continuous enrichment of health facility, education, employment availability,
and income earning capacity within the periphery of the developing countries themselves. Besides this the opportunities should be available to all equally alike and any kind of discrepancy in treatment meted out to the weaker sex regarding such basic facilities of life would not only keep half of the nation weakened, but their dignity at the international level would also be relegated to the background. Besides this a healthy and soundly educated, equally endowed human populace in an economy can create international pressure for mutually beneficial development.

1.2 Indian context:

Along side the issues of human development, in India there has of late emerged equal concern about the existing gender discrimination as revealed in the various achievements of social development and relative well being. In fact the gender discrimination in the various fields of social and economic achievement can be viewed as the paramount form of institutionalised deprivation.

The principle of gender equality has been one of the basic edifices of Indian social, economic and political thinking for over a century. The fundamental rights resolution of the Indian National Congress in 1931 adopted gender equality as a guiding principle. The idea that women are in no way inferior to their male counterparts and that the uplift of the nation is conditioned on the up-gradation of the status of women and their active participation in various spheres of the economy, have always run through the main stream of Indian planning procedures since the dawn of independence. The sympathetic and mutually complementary relationship among government, women's movement and non government organisations bear enough testimony to the growing concern about the amelioration of the position of Indian female folk and this also did not escape attention of the international community. In this context it merits mention that in response to a request of the United Nations, the Government of India set up a committee on the status of women in India (CSWI) in 1971 in the context of changing social and economic
circumstances. According to the main tenets of the report, women should no longer be viewed as target of welfare policies, rather should be regarded as critical group in the development efforts. All efforts of the government have been directed towards mainstreaming of women into the national development process by raising their overall status—social, economic and political. Some improvements have as a result been recorded regarding the upgradation of life expectancy and literacy. The sex differential in infant mortality has been perceptively narrowed and women work participation rate has risen.

1.3 Statement of the problem chosen for examination:

Despite these aforesaid positive aspects, there still remain a number of adverse elements which run counter to the overall amelioration of socio economic position of women folk along side their male counter parts. Growth in economic activities over the years has inevitably led to rise in GNP and even percapita national income. But the way of organisation of diverse economic activities and distribution of fruits of enhanced income in a sexually asymmetric society like ours leaves enough concern about the evening of gender disparities with regard to attainment of various indicators of standard of living. The avowed worldwide objective being sustainable human development, it is expected that both males and females would have equal opportunity to participate in work, acquire knowledge and skill, live and share various interests in a mutually complimentary way. The prior notion of undesirability of income inequality is now a days replaced by a broad notion of removal of sexual and class inequality in the endowment of various socio economic opportunities that are manifest in diverse levels of functioning achievement. This functioning or actual level of living is considered to be the major dimension in the concept of standard of living. Asymmetric distribution of the functioning opportunity across the sexes is also supposed to have been affected by the structural adjustment programme. Launching of the programme of liberalisation in the 1980’s and its subsequent stretching to the following decades through initiation of structural adjustment programme (SAP) are likely to have far-reaching and sometimes unforeseen impact on gender relations. Lifting of food subsidies and other basic commodities,
decreased investment in other social services like health and education, opening up of various industrial sectors for foreign collaboration and export orientation in production are often said to have adverse effect on gender differential with women bearing the brunt of reduced access to education, employment potential, worsening health services and civic amenities. Of course the trend of liberalisation is likely to bring in its wake some liberating and empowering effects for women and so the net impact might be difficult to judge without an in-depth analysis. It is in this backdrop that we propose to study the pattern and changes in gender discrimination in India as well as in its various states with respect to various levels of achievements over the census periods -1961,1971,1981 and 1991 and to some extent 2001. The decade 1951-61 has been kept outside the purview of this analysis since major interest has been taken in analysing the effects of developmental efforts launched by the government of India some time after independence through planning procedures which obviously has taken some time to materialise.

1.4 Broad and Specific Objective of the study.

It is generally expected that in India as well as in its major states, the gender bias in various levels of functioning would be reduced over time in consonance with the avowed objective of bringing about equality and freedom to all, taken in our successive 5-year plans.

**Broad objective** of the study would be to bring about the level of variations in the standard of living and pattern of gender disparity in development across the states in India and to focus on the pattern of changes in this interstate disparity over the census years.

**Specific objectives** would be--

(a) To analyse whether the gap in absolute and relative attainment of females in terms of mortality, life-expectancy etc vis-à-vis their male counterparts has narrowed down over the years across the various states, thus indicating betterment in female's health related functioning achievements.
(b) To analyse whether and to what extent the level of gender-gap in the provision of basic human capability like literacy and education has been reduced in the major states over the last decades.

(c) To study the level of variation of gender-bias in workforce participation across the states over the census years and to find whether there has been any substantial reduction of this bias in the post-reforms period.

(d) To consider whether the conventional approach to study gender inequality as reflected in male-female discrepancy in the attainment of aforesaid indicators (literacy, life expectancy and work force participation) is adequate representative of the real level of gender disparity in the standard of living that warrants for inclusion of non-conventional indicators as well.

1.5 Central issues selected for examination:

In order to study the present level of development as well as the present pattern of development in India, there is needed much attention at the structural changes within the country. There has occurred economic growth, but whether structural changes have taken place to propel the economic development as well as human development is yet questionable. The concept of human development is more inclusive concept than economic development, it includes economic development along with other non economic parameters. At present the concept of human development instead of economic development has been emphasized all over the world as it deals with the real living condition, the actual standard of living of the people of a country etc. Now along with other aspects of structural changes the gender inequality is also very pertinent since the concept of human development puts tremendous importance to gender concern. Social inequality, economic inequalities are still present, but here in this study the gender inequality in various socio economic achievements, e.g. health related achievements, income achievement, educational achievement, have been selected as central issues. Study from various angles has been done to examine its extent, severity, and trend over the period of analysis.
1.6 Research question the study seeks to answer:

The present study aims at finding answers to a number of pertinent questions:
For instance, it seeks to check whether there has been any gender bias in the literacy level after the launching of the planning era and if so how it has changed over the various census years. Besides this, the pattern of interstate variations in gender bias in literacy level really merits a careful study. The less the disparity in gender bias across the states, the more is the uniformity in treatment meted out to both the sexes over the entire country.

The study also seeks to find out the pattern of changes in gender bias in life expectancy as well as work force participation rate across the states over the various census years.

Besides this, overall gender bias reflected in differences in achievement in various functioning is sought to be studied through the interstate variation of gender related development indices (GDI) across the states over the census years.

The changes in relative ranking of the states with respect to gender bias in various indicators of standard of living is also a matter of great concern which is sought to be studied by BORDA ranking.

Finally the study also seeks to analyse whether the conventional indicators of standard of living are adequate to explain the observed gender disparity.

1.7 Hypotheses formulated with regard to Gender Bias, Standard of living and their inter relationships:

It is expected that level of gender adjusted income and educational attainment have a positive impact on gender adjusted life expectancy.
The impact of development effort on standard of living, reflected in GDI values, are the same across different states and different census years.

It is also hypothetised that regional disparity in gender bias in various functioning levels (combined together) measured by the Borda ranking method would be leveled up over time with the spread of fruits of development across regions

1.8 Selection of Study Period and States.


Though the intention was to collect the data for all states / Union Territories, unfortunately the required information covering all of them has not been available.

1.9 Sources Of Data.

The entire study is based on secondary data and so the edifice of the study stands on the collection of data from several different sources. The main objective of the study, as already indicated, is to make an interstate comparison of standard of living or well being and to find out the extent of gender discrimination prevailing in Indian states. Now in order to measure well being or standard of living, one may incorporate various functioning achievements related to human lives but here in this study in order to perceive gender discrimination only three types of functioning achievements which reflect the basic necessities of life have been taken into account for both males and females. These are-
(a) Health related functioning achievements
(b) Education related functioning achievements
(c) Income related functioning achievements

Now health related functioning achievements and associated issue of gender discrimination are reflected in female-male ratio, life expectancy, infant mortality, age specific death rate etc. Data on female-male ratio have been obtained from various issues of Census of India. Data on infant mortality, life expectancy, age specific death rate have been obtained from the Office of Registrar General, India, Sample Registration System.

Functioning achievements related to education are reflected in literacy rate, school enrolment, dropout percentage, enrolment in engineering, medicine, agriculture forestry and other professional courses etc. For these data, various issues of Census Reports, Man Power Profile (India Year Book) have been used.

Income related functioning achievements, for both males and females are reflected in work force participation, percentage of workers in various industrial categories, average daily earnings of labourers in various industry and agriculture, estimate of employment in organised public and private sector etc. Data related to male female work force participation have been taken from various issues of Census of India, average daily earnings of labourers in various industries and agriculture have been obtained from Occupational Wage Survey Reports -1995 and various issues of Agricultural Wages In India respectively. Data regarding estimate of employment in organised public and private sector have been obtained from Ministry of Labour. Besides this data on net state domestic product has been obtained from Economic Survey.
1.10 Methodology:

Throughout this study an extensive as well as intensive analysis of various functioning achievements regarding health, education and income has been made. The most easily intelligible way to assess the comparative performance of different states regarding these functioning achievements, and the issue of gender disparity related to it, is the tabular analysis-, which has been frequently used in this study. In order to have a clear picture of gender discrimination (if any) as well as performance of the states, most of the tables have been constructed according to year, gender and states.

Besides this multiple regression equation has also been used for different census years. In this regression analysis, equally distributed index of educational achievement and equally distributed index of income achievement have been taken as independent variables and equally distributed index of life expectancy has been taken as dependent variable. The underlying rationale is that human life span is supposed to be broadened by increase in awareness of people in almost all fronts of life which is reflected in educational attainment as well as increase in income level which reflects widening of the extent of overall grasp on all types of resources including food which is extremely important for human nourishment. This analysis would help us understand the relative importance of the two independent variables in explaining variation in life expectancy in different census years over the states.

Again analysis of variance (ANOVA) method has been applied in order to study the variation of gender related development indices across the states and across the census years.

Moreover BORDA ranking method has been applied in order to have an alternative method of assessing the performance of different states regarding various functioning achievements along with removal of gender bias. In BORDA ranking method each state is provided a rank according to ascending or descending order of magnitude for each indicator separately. Here the states in each year have been ranked in descending order that is the best state is
ranked first while the worst state ranked sixteenth. The ranks associated with the components for any particular state in any particular year when summed together express the corresponding combined index.

Notes and References:

2. Adam Smith: "The Wealth Of Nations"
4. Adam Smith: Op Cit.
5. Adam Smith: Op.Cit