



NECESSITY OF CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

Social Science

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KEYWORDS

Development being a composite activity of economy in a society involving political and cultural institutions, is often described as a holistic process of changes, which is both qualitative and quantitative. Drewnowski defines development in economics as the per capita income that helps one to assess growth. Boundeville describes development as a holistic process of change, which is both qualitative and quantitative. Drewnowski defines development growth plus favourable change in production techniques as in consumer behaviour. Barkin defines development as a dual process of enrichment and structural change recognising the human component in it. It is one thing to argue that development is a process of change, as forced upon from extraneous sources, while it is important to note that failure of development may be the result of failure to exploit the opportunities provided by the process of change keeping this in view. Rostow observes that nations having frontier technology, high industrialisation, resourceful in raw materials and services are identified as developed nations. While, according to him, availability of infrastructure, industrialisation, modernisation, technological advancement are the standards of measurements to identify development. Therefore, if a complex definition of development is to be offered, then it would include among other things improving the well being of the people, raising the standard of living, their levels of literacy, improving health conditions and also opening out to them new avenues of equal opportunity for a richer and more varied life. Hence, the aim of development seems to be to increase the economic potential while their political and civil rights irrespective of the gender, ethnic and religious, identities are protected and maintained in tact. It may not be justifiable to discuss development in terms of economic aspects of development alone,¹³ apart from retaining its economic content, while the social development, however, includes the rate of social mobility, social freedom as desirable components of development. It may, however, be stated that it is not possible to draw stringent line of demarcation between economic, political and social components of development while one cannot ignore accepting social development as being quite close to economic development. It is, therefore, noticeable that in a politically developed country, both social and economic developments normally go hand in hand to support the political development. In fact, they are accepted to be complementary and contributory to any attempt at holistic development of a society. According to T.K.N.Unnithan, social development may be seen as a process of ushering in a new order of existence.¹⁴ Thus social development means bringing about a change in the quality of life wherein the social relationships indicate the levels of the order of existence. Thus development today means bringing about improvements in a society for the better, not merely in terms of material change devoid of human component but encompassing better standard of life of its citizens covering a wide variety of services such as health, education, housing, cultural amenities, change in the status of women empowering, regulation of labour, improved status for workers and reduction in social evils, etc., keeping these comprehensive explanations if taken on to explain political development and then it will have to be defined as the capacity of a political system to deal with its own fundamental problems, more effectively while responding to the changing political demands of the people¹⁵ as closely defined by Gabriel Almond. According Gabriel Almond, "Political development in terms of performance capabilities envelops 'acquisition of new capabilities' such as the sense of a specialised role structure and differentiated orientation which together give a political system, the possibility of responding efficiently more or less autonomously to a variety of problems". Thus the concept of development is a debate which covers economic, social and political issues that are to read and understand together rather than working on

them independently. Citizen participation has come to mean the direct involvement of citizens in the process of administrative decision-making, policy formulation and implementation. People's participation involves deliberate and systematic mobilisation of citizens around issues and problems of their common concern. In real sense, participation can only be explained when the citizens on their own take part in the process of development initiated in the region being fully conscious of their responsibilities towards its realisation. Citizens association with the development efforts has several advantages; primarily it kindles the interest of local people in imparting new thrust to programmes for which they are the beneficiaries. It is a means of ventilating their feelings and thoughts. It offers them an opportunity to demonstrate their demands for constructive works. People's initiative and participation, therefore, becomes the key element in the process of development.

Citizen's participation in development efforts of a nation takes generally two forms, namely, the institutional form and personal form.¹⁶ This form of participation is once again seen at two levels viz., formal and informal. Formal participation is governed by rules and regulations while the informal participation which is a most common type of participation covers youth and women organisations engaged in general development works including religious, social, cultural associations or clubs (Jaycees, Rotary, Lions, etc.). Professional associations of teachers, doctors, engineers, etc., having no binding of rules and regulations but are voluntary and need based in nature, which takes on developmental tasks in selected areas. In case of formal participation once again both representatives and individuals are covered with the former playing a role through the boards, committees, councils, or commissions, whose membership they attain by virtue of being representatives of the community and gets a platform to speak. In fact, this provides them a greater opportunities to involve themselves in development activities right from an early stage. Unfortunately, much of the research done in this area and participation seem to provide us a gloomy picture of the levels and intensity of representative participation, while there seems to be a wide gap between theory and practice in this regard. The notion of involvement of the people in the development process through informal means has by and large remained a myth especially in the developing countries where states have outgrown all other non-governmental organisations and became omnipotent and omnipresent thereby pushing the citizens to virtually intermittent partners position activating them during only election period. Citizens also are generally passive and thus do not express themselves freely contributing thereby to the causes of underdevelopment.

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