The Main Landmarks

in

The Evolution

of

The Concept of Development

from

1960 to 1990

# Question 1

# What are the main landmarks in the evolution of concept of development from 1960 to 1990? Identify and discuss each landmark and analyse how they helped transform and enhance the concept of development.

# ⏵ Introduction

The seeds of the development concept were sown as far back as 1950’s. Many Economists and sociologists were concerned of the devastating gap between the rich and poor countries of the Globe. Economists and politicians considered development synonymous with growth of national income. The cause of underdevelopment was seen in the lack of necessary factors of production, especially capital and training. Consequently, capital and technical aid became the instruments of development policy. According to Harrod and Domar the growth rate depends upon the savings rate and, since the latter is insignificant in poor countries, capital aid should cover the shortage of funds. According to this theory, the transition from underdevelopment to development can be described as a series of stages through which all countries must proceed. One of the principal necessities for any take-off is seen in the mobilization of savings in order to generate sufficient investment to accelerate economic growth.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Development seen as Economic Growth

These ideas were culminated in the declaration of the 1960’s as development decade. George D. Woods in his article ‘The development decade in the balance’ says that almost two third of the people live in underdeveloped countries and has only one sixth of the world’s income.

Decalaration of Development Decade

# 1. First Development Decade 1960 - 1970

When UN envisaged development programmes in the year 1960, the concept of development was confined to promote economic growth by saving and investing and promoting industrialisation. But soon there were bitter disappointments. The industrial countries granted less development aid than expected. The first UNCTAD conference showed that the industrial countries were not prepared to make trade concessions to the poor countries. Moreover, during that period, prices for products from developing countries were deteriorated as compared with industrial products.

Developing Countries Neglected

Though social aspects of development were included, the nature of the relationship to economic growth was not clearly defined. Specialised Agencies such as UNICEF, FAO, UNESCO, WHO and UNCTAD had their own mandates to work in the fields, which they found important in the process of Development. These agencies out of passion to alleviate poverty were trying there level best to offer the poor countries the facilities denied to them due to various kinds of atrocities including long periods of colonial rule.

Emergence of Specialised Agencies

During the early 1960s, UNICEF tried to absorb the ideas and chart its own path within them. UNICEF did a special survey into the needs of children. This survey, initiated by UNICEF in 1960, took a year to complete. UNICEF was prepared to consider the needs of children along with those of their parents and nurturers, and would take into account the 'whole' child. Instead of treating the child as a set of parts of which the only ones of concern were those related to physical well-being, UNICEF should be willing to address the child's broader intellectual and psychosocial needs. The immediate outcome was a change of policy whereby UNICEF for the first time -- and to the satisfaction of the countries of the developing world -- was willing to provide funds for formal and non-formal education. The humanitarian agencies, on the other hand, wanted ordinary families to receive tangible benefits. They were not interested in theoretical models derived from Western norms, only in trying to make things happen on the ground. Their vision of development was one in which pride of place went to the needs of the poor -- and in the case of UNICEF, the needs of poor children. These included: [WHO](http://www.unicef.org/sowc96/glossary.htm#who), for the health needs of children; the [Food and Agriculture Organization](http://www.fao.org/) (FAO) and WHO, for the nutritional needs of children; the [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](http://www.unesco.org/) (UNESCO), for the educational needs of children; the UN Bureau of Social Affairs, for the social welfare needs of children; and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), for the work and livelihood needs of children.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Child based development

# 2. Second Development Decade 1970 - 1980

Development through Welfare

Though many developing countries had achieved high rates of economic growth -- increases of 5 per cent or more in [GNP](http://www.unicef.org/sowc96/glossary.htm#gnp) -- but little of this had been passed on to the poor. The gap between rich and poor people and between rich and poor nations had increased. Development analysts attached to universities, governments and international organizations began to diagnose what had gone wrong and set out on the quest for alternatives. This led to a new climate of development thinking. Since economic growth did not automatically sweep poverty away, development analysts decided that the second Development Decade must also include measures deliberately targeted at the poor -- to help them meet their basic needs for food, water, housing, health and education.

Development through meeting needs of the poor

Policy makers began to focus less on economies and more on people. They realized that the humanitarians had actually met the new criteria for success rather well. While the economic planners had focused on dams and factories, the humanitarians had focused on the village, the community, the family and the individual. The concept of development took a turn by having a unified approach to development. New emphasis on the goals of social development, equitable income distribution and social justice were introduced.

People Oriented

development

This task of introducing social justice was not simple as the poverty in most of the developing countries included not only under utilisation of resources but lacked awareness of their birth rights. Democracy has been an alien theory to them and the people were not in a position to speak for them. They were having the mentality of demanding understanding without expressing, as they lacked the skill of self expression. Even the democratic expressions were highly influenced by their local leaders and not of their own free will. This had caused lot of wastage as the need assessments taken by most of the agencies became futile and totally unfit to meet the real needs of the people.

Unified approach to Development

This decade faced complex atrocities due to the stark increase in oil price, and the devaluation of Dollar which disturbed the global economy and demanded a New International Economic Order.

The ILO Conference in 1976 on Employment Income Distribution, Social Progress and the International division of Labour. Basic needs strategy was developed out of the latter.

The World Conference on Population was held in Cairo where gender is seen as the essential dimension of development.

# 3. Third Development Decade 1981 - 1990

In the new international development strategy adopted by the General Assembly for the third UN Development Decade, beginning on 1 January 1981, governments pledged themselves, individually and collectively, to fulfil their commitment to establish a new international economic order based on justice and equity. They agreed to subscribe to the goals and objectives of the strategy and to translate them into reality by adopting a coherent set of interrelated, concrete, and effective policy measures in all sectors of development.

New International Economic Order

The goals and objectives for the developing countries during the decade were:  
(1) a 7% average annual rate of growth of gross domestic product (GDP);  
(2) a 7.5% annual rate of expansion of exports and an 8% annual rate of expansion of imports of goods and services;  
(3) an increase in gross domestic savings to reach about 24% of GDP by 1990;  
(4) a rapid and substantial increase in official development assistance by all developed countries, to reach or surpass the target of 0.7% of GNP of developed countries;  
(5) a 4% average annual rate of expansion of agricultural production; and  
(6) a 9% annual rate of expansion of manufacturing output.  
  
Other goals and objectives of the strategy included the attainment, by the year 2000, of full employment, of universal primary school enrolment, and of life expectancy of 60 years as a minimum, with infant mortality rates no higher than 50 per 1,000 live births.

Goals and Objectives

The 1980s was a terrible decade for the economies of developing countries. By 1990 4.2 billion of the world's 5.3 billion people lived in developing countries. Overall growth in these nations shrank to about 3% annually, and per capita growth to 1%, compared to averages of 5.5% in the 1960s and 3% in the 1970s. Lending by the IMF and World Bank group of institutions often came with requirements for "restructuring" that carried a heavy price in terms of human sacrifice. Debt-laden developing countries found themselves spending vastly more on debt service than on social services.

Downward Trend

By 1990, the gap between developed and developing countries continued to widen. Living conditions and prospects for growth in developing countries deteriorated and their position in international trade and finance weakened substantially. It was against this worsening background that the Assembly, at its special session in 1990, adopted the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the revitalization of economic growth and development of developing countries, which, it stated, was the most important challenge of the 1990s for those countries. It also proclaimed the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (1991-2000) and adopted the International Development Strategy for the Decade, which sought to ensure that the 1990s would witness the accelerated development of developing countries. The number of countries designated by the General Assembly as "least developed" had grown from 24 in 1972 to 47 in 1991

“..***enhancement of human freedom is both the main object and the primary means of development.*** The objective of development relates to the valuation of the actual freedoms enjoyed by the people involved. Individual capabilities crucially depend on, among other things, economic, social, and political arrangements. In making appropriate institutional arrangements, the instrumental roles of distinct types of freedom have to be considered, going well beyond the foundational importance of the overall freedom of individuals.

Amartya sen on Development

The instrumental roles of freedom include several distinct but interrelated components, such as economic facilities, political freedoms, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. These instrumental rights, opportunities and entitlements have strong interlinkages, which can go in different directions. The process of development is crucially influenced by these interconnections. Corresponding to multiple interconnected freedoms, there is a need to develop and support a plurality of institutions, including democratic systems, legal mechanisms, market structures, educational and health provisions, media and other communication facilities and so on. The institutions can incorporate private initiative as well as public arrangements and also more mixed structures, such as nongovernmental organizations and cooperative entities….

“…..Amartya sen

These observations are leading the development concept to focus more on the empowerment of the poor rather than alleviation of poverty. In the 1990s many sociologists and economists including Amartya sen and Mohamed yunus who propagated the power of the poor. Amatya sen saw development as freedom. Mohammad Yunus saw the trust in the poor and their potential as a catalyst for development.

Empowerment of the poor.

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1. Concepts for the development of the third world – A review of the changing thoughts between 1945 and 1985 –by Frithjof Kohnen [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 1960s: Decade of Development (website) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)