

Book Review

Des Gasper. *The Ethics of Development: From Economism to Human Development*, New Delhi, Vistaar Publications, 2004, pages: 255, Price: Rs. 295.

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In this book, Gasper criticises the mainstream development, as it deals blindly with the human destitution and social injustice and tries to analyse and evaluate alternative development which contains and deals with economic growth, efficiency, equity, poverty, violence, basic human needs and human development. As its title itself reflect shifting from economic growth to more dynamic concept of human development during this process in order to achieve development, ethics should be kept in mind. Economism is an intrinsic part of present development strategy which basically refers to growth mania irrespective of human development issue, and most of the life is valued and managed by the economic calculation or related factors. It can be seen as field of attention, question on rational choice and value choice in social and economic process. It also talks about the success of development along with a large part of the field of human welfare which is neglected and the alternative strategies of development. Development ethics must proceed to design better process for moral decision-making in development policy and cooperation and challenging the living style of privileged. In the present era of development, paradoxes of globalisation (generating wealth and simultaneously creating impoverishment and inequality) have been a common phenomenon throughout the different continents, nations and regions. In the context of Africans and Americans, inequity in consumption and excessive military expenditure of the United States over its development assistance are some of the common indicators

to reflect the paradoxes. The profit-oriented pharmaceutical company of the United States curbs the accessibility of poor to health facilities of sub-Saharan nations due to excessive price. He nicely uses the term *calculus of pain*, which focuses on varieties of planned and unplanned sufferings and violence to poor people from economic to social and political. The development policies largely cost on the weak and marginalised people like displacement and land acquisition for dam construction, famine due to speculative hoarding, restriction on trade and distribution, which resulted in hike in price and caused the poor to suffer. Debt and structural adjustment also depress the poor people in both economic and non-economic factors. Development ethics is largely about choices which are concerned with values and strategies. It includes societal improvement, human cost and best alternative identification.

The concept of development contains the ideas of necessity, influenceable change and fundamental improvement. The positive meaning of development does not share ethical values, but evaluative meaning shares ethical value while achieving its goal. In technical terms, development means unveiling and fulfilment of inner potential or opposite to envelopment. A historical definition of development focuses on industrialisation. He refers to Martin de Graaf who argued that development is about growth of capacities and capabilities. John Maynard Keynes reserved the term development for improvement which economic development allows but does not guarantee.

Mainstream development evaluation is done by the two tools named efficiency and effectiveness. Effectiveness mainly consists of managerial approaches, market based approaches and focuses on whenever a development programme is launched, its necessary to know about the stakeholders especially while efficiency constitute economic cost. The development aspect is identified with growth in economic activity while equity is often objectively treated. It has been a common phenomenon in most of the development issues from the construction of dam to land acquisition, where its cost is supposed to be borne by those who do not share in the benefit.

The term need is normatively stronger than want. The basic needs approach argues that basic needs are the prerequisites for other normative criteria and development perspectives to become relevant. Development in normative way is sometimes defined as whatever economic growth and social change fulfil human needs or basic needs. Subsistence refers to more than mere survival: people may survive by loss in body weight and lowered activity levels and with malnutrition, which is reflected in poor morbidity status. In a situation of pressure of population on land, there are some families who, to survive, will accept a market below subsistence level as they are compensated by access to common property resources or other assets. Other families without equivalent access to assets or resources can not

compensate. If they accept market wage, they will work but remain in poor health, like malnourished, and further lose the physical strength to do work and forced to do scavenge or beg, which also make their children suffer (forced their children to suffer). He divides needs into three versions or modes; *first*, need as a descriptive and explanatory category or want which are felt earlier than other needs, whose non-fulfilment results in significant suffering and which require a political claim for priority use of publicly managed resources. *Second*, need as a prerequisite for doing something or instrumental analyses for meeting a given end which includes requisite for survival, maintenance of human capital, to avoid suffering, lowering tension, participating in a given way of life, fulfilling the human essence and for meeting a law. *Third*, need as a prerequisite which has special normative priority and constituted by requisite for approved wants, survival when justified, avoiding unjustified suffering, desirable satisfactions, minimal decency, justified way of life, fulfilment of desirable human potentials and normative agreed entitlements. Maslow proposed five types of basic needs which are arranged in a hierarchy. These five basic needs are physiological needs, security or safety needs, affective needs (love, friendship and belongings), esteem needs (autonomy, respect from others and self respect) and self actualisation needs.

Gasper also refers to Amartya Sen in human development context who stresses not only on negative freedom, meaning the formal absence of interference or restriction but especially positive freedom, capacity to achieve things which one has reason to value. Human development considers human as centre of development and as product to mean human well-being. Economic growth is just a mean together with health and education towards human development. Human development can be expressed as a process of enlarging people's choices. HDI (Human Development Index) is an indicator to measure human development. Some of the indicators to measure other aspects of human development are like human poverty index introduced in 1997 to measure poverty and Gender Development Index for gender inequality which is more reliable than aggregate GDP (Gross Domestic Product). Human development report 2000 leads to an agenda to investigate and establish instruments and systems for the respect and implementation of human rights. Amartya Sen backs the role of freedom in development of linking freedom and democracy as direct importance which creates a space for exercise of free choices. Freedom has instrumental and constructive role as well, which circulate and test necessary information and try to build desirable ends. He also talks about some aspect of capability approach like functions and informal ranking of the normative priority. Culture is one which views development fundamentally different, as culture forms communities which share and follow consensual criteria. Some time any development issue which is not favourable to them turns into tension and violence. From the relativist point of view communitarian ethics which says that culture

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must be judged by their own internal criteria, including extreme versions in which cultures never make mistakes in their own terms.

Overall the book reflects an important argument and challenges the mainstream development perspective and try to build an alternative strategy which can contain ethics into focal and bring equity, well-being of human and away from violence. It also deals with wide range of views from different perspective from social policy, economics and political science to anthropology.