

DEV 1150:
Introduction to Development Studies

Moonga H. Mumba, PhD

UNZA

- **Impasse of Development**
- **Alternative Development /
Development Alternatives**

References:

- Matthews, Sally (2004). Post-development theory and the question of alternatives: a view from Africa. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 373-384
- Chambers, Robert (1989). *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*. London: Longman.
- Friedman, John (1992). *Empowerment: Politics of Alternative Development*. Maldon, MA: Blackwell.
- Korten, David C. (1992). *People-Centred Development, Alternatives for a World in Crisis*. In: K. Bauson (ed.) *Development and Democratisation in the Third World: Myths, Hopes and Realities*. Washington: Crane Russak. Pp. 53-77.
- Nederveen-Pieterse, Jan (2000). 'After Post-Development.' *Third World Quarterly*. Vol. 21 (2) pp 175-191.
- Pinter, Harold (2005). 'Art, Truth and Politics' Svenska Akademien. The Nobel Foundation. Notes: Nobel Prize of Literature Lecture.
- Sen, Amartya Kumar (2001). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Impasse of Development

- Development thinking has taken many twists and turns during the last few decades
- Irrespective of how development is defined, it is not difficult to find empirical evidence of a crisis.
- Mainstream development theories have come to be considered as internally inconsistent and inadequate for explaining the increasing diversity and unevenness of developing countries.
- In addition, some common fashions in the name of present development make some people withdraw from development practice.
- This is what has come to be termed as the 'impasse' (Booth, 1994) and this impasse has provided particularly fertile ground upon which civil society debates have flourished.
- There is a need to re-examine development thinking as a way to actually improve on the interventions made by various actors in the South.

ALTERNATIVES TO DEVELOPMENT VS ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Post-development theorists have declared development obsolete and bankrupt and have called for 'alternatives to development'
 - Alternative to development has many versions with one thing in common – disillusionment with development.
 - Disillusionment because:
 1. No matter how the development project is packaged, it always results in increased cultural homogenization, ultimately, Westernisation
 2. No matter how one chooses to evaluate social or economic performance of the PWWII development project in Africa, on average there is failure
- Development seem to be centred on many broken promises and these are highly evident in Africa.

- Mainstream development theories either rooted in capitalist ideology (market-led development) and Marxist ideology (state-led development) have all failed **some by design** **others as unintentional side effects.**
- Development failure is not because governments, institutions and people have implemented it poorly, but rather because it is 'the wrong answer to needs and aspirations of target populations (Rahnema, 1997).
- Therefore, mainstream development theories need to be rejected.

What is Alternative Development?

- Alternative to what? Alternative to whom?
- Alternatives requires analysis of past or present trends in mainstream development thinking.
- It argues for the **rectification of existing imbalances in social, economic, and political power** (Friedman 1992:9)
- It is 'a moral justification **centered in claiming for expansion and defense of human rights, citizens' rights and flourishing of people.**'
- It calls for a different, creative way of constructing development.
- It calls for introducing alternative practices and redefining the goals of development.

- It is about ‘politics of claiming’. It seeks the intellectual voice of the disempowered by trying to put forward in the development agenda their moral claims as a response to the hegemonic powers that oppress them.
- It is ‘the champion of the poor’ in that it advocates for their social and political empowerment.
- Chambers identifies alternative development as a search for ‘**good change**’ which can lead to the expansion and ‘**flourishing of human life**’
- Alternative development is different in three spheres:
 - a) Agents;
 - b) Methods; and
 - c) Objectives or values of development (Pieterse 2001:73-74).
- The state plays a key role in alternative development.

- Interestingly AD scholars at times even reject the concept of 'sustainable development' or 'basic needs approaches' or other improvement.
- Why? Because these just try to reduce negative consequences in development projects without addressing underlying power relations between the North and the South which are central in disadvantaging the South.
- Alternative development scholars thus call for **development to be rejected** rather than reformed.
- People whose lives have often been traumatized by development changes do not refuse to accept change, what they seek is of a quite different nature.
- They want change that would enable them to blossom 'like a flower from the bud' a development that could leave them free to change the rules and the contents of change, according to their own culturally defined ethics and aspirations (Matthews, 2004).
- Call for change that would make people masters of their own destiny

Confusing practices

- Mainstream development industry also incorporates ‘add-on features’ and ‘co-optation of alternative development.’
- Notions of participation, empowerment, Human Development, etc, are now seen as part of the conventional development discourse.
- For instance, governments, international development agencies such as the World Bank are employing the same the concepts,
- Yet make things go much the same way and are not willing to make any meaningful change towards improving the welfare of the disadvantaged.

Critique to Alternative Development:

- It has failed to:
 - Build clear macro-micro relations;
 - Construct a truly macro approach;
 - Develop a coherent theoretical position;
 - Differentiate itself fully from conventional development thought.

How do we proceed?