

## Post-development Theories: Examining the Adequacy of Orthodox Development

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*Abstract: Development is a management of promise for the well being of people which has been faced a numerous changes in its dimensions, contents, objectives, philosophical ideologies, as well as theories since its inception. Despite the various functional differences in its objectives and propositions the focus of this new area is the persistent increase in the Standard of Living of the people bearing their socio-cultural and economic life in mind. This study is a critical appreciation of the existing development theories and models on the basis of secondary evidences. It has been found that the orthodox development theories are inadequate to address the interests of the people. Post development, a new concept for ensuring a healthier world tries to address peoples' welfare irrespective of their status and it encounters the traditional development strategies. The study investigates that post development theories are, so far, best fitted for making a better world for the mankind.*

**Key words: Orthodox Development, Post Development, Anti-development, Beyond Development, Human Development Index**

### 1. Introduction

Development economics, the new area of interest was born after the World War II with a double differentiation and this is the most narrative part of economics having less formal and mathematical model [1]. At the early stage of its introduction it was simply an expression of 'words' and to some extent, it seemed unscientific. According to Escobar (1995, p. 213),

"Development can be described as an apparatus that links forms of knowledge about the Third World with the development of forms of power and interventions, resulting in the mapping and production of the Third World societies."

But at the passage of time the situation has been changed due to the extensive use of household level data and wide-ranging empirical works which are mostly done by the US Economists [2]. The scope of development is open-ended. Do we have any destination to stop? No, there is not. A country may have a specific goal or vision for the time being but there is no decisive point to reach. This

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infinite target makes the area of interest unexplored. Thus the potentiality of development is a boundless beauty for the policy makers.

Since the early days of its beginning, i.e. in 1940s it was defined by the material wellbeing which was mostly denoted by the growth rate. Later on it had been characterised by the per capita income in 1950s to 1960s. It is the 'basic needs' which describes 'development' in 1970s. In 1980s income inequality and poverty reduction has given the emphasis and last but not the least in 1990s the issues that are being considered in determining development are gender discrimination, good governance, environment, empowerment etc.

Since inception, the typical orthodox development theories are likely to address mostly the issues related to developed countries and seriously criticised by some development thinkers for its application in developing countries. It has been found that the orthodox theories are difficult to apply in developing countries [3]. Generally, development economics is supposed to consider all socio-economic variables irrespective of their classification. For instance, population, institutions, technology are extremely important for articulating the development strategy but neoclassical theories failed to incorporate those variables considering them as exogenous. More importantly, the orthodox theories are very general in their nature and application ignoring the local ethnography and culture. The Latin American experiences in 1980s is an illustration of this argument which resultant a disappointment regarding the orthodox theories [4]. In addition, the orthodox development theories are mainly a western concept based on respective culture, philosophy and economic status. Due to the difference in material and cultural life style the western philosophy led development theories, i.e. the orthodox theories failed to deal with developing and least developed countries [5]. Therefore, the post development theories along with the Anti and Beyond Development as a concept have been grown-up in the womb of the orthodox development theories.

Post development is a paradox in development paradigm. It is difficult to define for its wilderness, radicalism and diverse views. However, very precisely, post development is 'subversive', 'people-centered' and 'radical'. Broadly, Escobar (1995, p. 215) describes post-development as a rejection of development paradigm i.e., alternative to development - not alternative development. This area under consideration is more interested in local culture and knowledge. It involves a critical stance towards established scientific discourses and the defence and promotion of localised, pluralistic grassroots movements [4, 6]. These critical approaches have brought a great challenge toward orthodox theories of development. Thus, post development thinkers consider that main stream development theories are orthodox as 'new religion of the west' [7], 'imposition of science as power' [8], growing concern of 'laboratory states' [9], 'does not work' [10] 'Cultural westernization and homogenisation', 'environmental destruction' [5] and setting 'middle class life style' [11].

The analysis of the post development theories allows a wide room for the economics thinkers to come up with a variety of arguments. This is an ongoing



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issue because of the changing nature of the socio-cultural and economic environment. Hence, the new shape of development economics is not unexpected for a betterment of peoples' interest.

In recent years, there has been growing attention to the concept of multiple or parallel modernities, post development, post modernity, decentre to Eurocentric development, anti-ethnocentric development, anti-development, anti-hegemony and so on [5, 12, 13]. Basically, post development is born in the womb of the failure of traditional development theories. According to Pieterse (2001, p.1) says 'everything that development used to represent appears to be in question, in crisis'. This line of reasoning has developed post development thinking, the most recent radical reaction to the problems of post-War [orthodox] development theories both strident criticism and restrained defence [14].

The whole paper is a literature review and a critical appreciation of existing writings and thus no separate literature review is incorporated here. This study makes an attempt to frame a critical analysis how post development theories has been criticised and made influences over the orthodox development theories.

One of the limitations of the study is that it doesn't observe any trend of development on the basis of empirical evidences. More importantly, this analysis is not country specific. Therefore it may create ambiguity if someone plans to relate with any particular economic unit. The excuse of those limitations is that this study is not a quantitative analysis of the development economics rather a general discussion of the dynamics and dimensions of development economics.

The paper proceeds as follows: in Section-1 there is an introductory discussion while Section-2 develops the methodology of the study. Section-3 is added here to provide a comprehensive idea about the development discourse. Section-4 incorporates another dimension of new thinking, anti-development. Section-5 articulates the cause of the inception of post development and its dominance over the conventional development theories. Section-6 critically examines the impacts of post development theories and makes a relationship with the reality. It describes the findings of scholarly comments. Section-6 has the paramount importance because it is the core section of this study. The next section contains the concluding remarks of this paper.

### **2. Methodology**

This paper is completely based on theoretical arguments of different books, journals, websites and intellectual writings (published & unpublished) of different authors. Here we tried to analyze the findings and comments of scholars. In this paper no data are used and no testing of hypothesis is considered. So this is just a theoretical elaboration of the arguments in favour of and in against the government intervention. The conceptual issue regarding development thoughts from different angles are discussed here on the basis of secondary evidences. The whole discussion is nothing but a critical appreciation of our personal views.

**3. Development Discourse**

The term 'development' has labelled with diverse meaning which may be varied into time, place and sphere, such as: 'reconstruction and development', 'economic development', 'economic growth', economic growth and per capita income', 'modernisation', 'redistribution with growth', 'dependent development', 'interdependent development', 'meeting basic needs', 'top-down development', 'bottom-up development', 'another development', 'autochtonous development', 'autarchic development', 'agropolitan development', 'empowerment', and, most recently, 'post-development', 'anti-development' and even 'post-modern development' [15]. However, 'development' is inevitable for understanding the societal process i.e., the ideological tradition of seeing society as an object to be changed by rational, purposive human action and collective intervention that varies 'according to class, culture, historical context and relations of power' [5, 16].

Generally, development theories are problem-driven explanatory frameworks, deeply contextualized by political processes and social imperatives [5] which have ideological, theoretical and methodological differences. The orthodox development theories mainly focus on capital accumulation and industrialisation [6]. It also includes dualism, agriculture centred development and green revolution, open economy development and the neoclassical resurgence and reformist development thinking. However, most of the post War mainstream development theories more or less orthodox development theories, in the view of post development theories, because they have a tendency to view development as westernisation, a hegemonic relation and ignorance to tradition. Let us have at a glance view on major development theories which would help further discussion. Such as:

**Table 1- Changing Architecture of the Concept of Development**

Period	Paradigm	Perspective	Focus	Authority/Figure
<b>Orthodox Theories</b>				
1850s	Colonial Economics	Resource Management	Development through Colonial	
1870s	Latecomer Development	Industrialization	Development through Industrialization	
1940s	Development Economics	Growth + Industrialisation		
1950s	Modernization theory	Growth + Industrialisation + Modernisation	Third World Development from the perspective of First World	Rostow, Parsons, Nurkse, Lewis

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1960s	Dependency Theory	Growth + Industrialisation + Accumulation	Third World Development in relative to First World	Prebisch, Frank, Baran
1970s	Alternative Development	Growth + Human Flourishing		
1980s	Neoliberalism	Growth + Structural Reforms (deregulation, liberalisation, privatisation)		Friedman, Hayek, Lal, Bauer, Belassa, IMF & World Bank
1980s	Development as Freedom	Growth+ freedom of choice	Expansion of Capability	Amartya Sen
1980s	Human Development	Growth+ fulfilment of Basic Needs + Human Development	Human Focused Development	Mahbub UI Haq
<b>Post Development Theories</b>				
1990s	Anti Development	Rejection of Development Theories	Anti western but rarely shows any path	Sachs, Sidaway, Esteva, Illich
1990s	Beyond Development	Rejection but seeking Alternative to Development	Local Tradition, Indigenous Knowledge	Escobar, Nandy, Dasgupta
1990s	Post-development	Deconstruction through Discourse		Foucault, Pieterse

Authors' Compilation adopted from Pieterse J. N., 2001, pp.7-18

**4. Anti-Development**

Anti-development is one of the most radical strands of post development thinking which outright the rejection of development theories. It rejects all of the 'meta -theory' and 'meta-narratives' in the field of development. The 'Anti-development thinkers considered development is itself a flawed and dangerous concept [5] which emphasise westernisation and homogenisation. It examines power relationship as an imbalance and hegemonic. Moreover, it argued that in the name of development, the donors, Multinational Corporations, International Financial Institutions impose neo-colonialism in the third world countries. This strand identified that development is the exploitation of earth resources, destruction of ecology and environment. Finally, the thinkers of the strand criticised 'development' from the point of psycho-social view that



'underdevelopment' and 'poverty' are state of mind. Therefore, they totally reject development theories but rarely show path of solutions – there is no positive programme and contains only critique but no construction.

Nothing is beyond criticism – this idea is basically derived from post development thoughts which eventually attack the post development thoughts. 'Anti-development, is the extreme radical strands which rejects every models, structures and theories of development [5, 13]. On the contrary, post development itself is taking a shape or a model or even a structure in intellectual sphere. Thus, post development is a self contradictory paradox. Similarly, there are many other ways of its self contradictory views i.e., post development attempts to eliminates diversity and looks for homogeneity. On the other hand, it encourages, local tradition, culture and practices. Thus, it is a contradictory view that preserving traditions and eliminating diversity. Post development itself rather goes much with orthodox paradigm because a few of its strands are such extreme radical which is the fatal attack toward expansion of development as well as modern science. Besides, endogenousness, indigenouslyness and localise development approaches are sometimes dangerous because they are properly grounded yet rather something clusters like. Moreover, post development is very much responsible for compartmentalising the intellectual world. It may not be exaggerated that post developments approaches are something like conspiracy to the development thoughts and practice. Post development is something like *cul-de-sac* in the paradigm of development because it criticises existing every approach, model, structure and theory of development but rarely shows the path of addressing the numerous social problems. Thus, it is a matter of question 'the idea of [post] development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape [17]. While science and technological advancement is forwarding, at that moment, post developmental thinkers are pushing towards isolation and fragmentation around the world. In this age, it is difficult to address complex issues without collective efforts across the academic and geographic boundaries. Such as issues like food security, climate change, AIDS etc demands development cooperation between the West and the Orient. Colonial Anthropology was criticised for studying others culture for supporting colonial administration. Post development has been criticising development theories as 'Westernisation' or 'Neo colonisation' but post development is itself looking for 'others' which is in different name only i.e., local tradition and indigenous knowledge.

### **5. Post and Beyond Development**

All critical approaches to development came into being dealing with dark sides of development i.e., 'dependency theory' questions about global inequality, 'alternative development' about participation, and 'human development' about investment in people and 'Post-development' positions include the problem of poverty, seeing development as Westernization, critique of modernism and science, and the difference between Alternative Development and 'alternatives to development' [5]. 'Post-development' means 'an anti-authoritarian sensibility, an aversion to control and perhaps an anarchist streak'. Moreover, Post Development refers to a critique of the standard assumptions about progress,

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which possesses the keys to it and how it may be implemented [18]. Escobar (1995) stated that post development perspective is highly critical of how standard views of development categorise populations and countries in the South in over generalised and deprecating ways. Thus, Post Development conceived a diverse views and waves but there three main strands namely, 'anti-development' 'beyond development' and 'Post-development'. Although they are rooted in the post-modern tradition which rejects modernisation with highlighting diversity, context and alternative voices [19]. However, each of the strands poses a particular view to the developmentalism.

'Beyond Development' is synonymous to 'alternative to development'. It is one of the potential strands in the post development thoughts which mainly focus on best practices of communities, indigenous knowledge system and local culture and traditions. Dependency theory and alternative development focus on endogenous resembles where beyond development goes for local and grassroots economy [5].

'Post Development' approach or 'critical development' thinking is one of the prominent strands of the Post Development School. The main tool of this approach is 'discourse' which deconstructs 'development' and tries to find out the reasons of failure [20]. Post Development thinkers deem that development based on modern science constitutes an 'actively colonising power' [21]. Escobar (1995, p. 213) analysed that development can best be described as an apparatus that links forms of knowledge about the third world with the deployment of forms of power and invention, resulting in the mapping and production of third world societies. Analysis of discourse reveals that development as not natural or universal; west superiority; eliminating diversity; creating identity of third world and continuing colonisation of the mind and soul. Thus, Rehenma states that post development approach intended to look at the issues through the eyes of the poor; be human centre and be radical to return to the fundamentals [22].

#### **6. Impact on Theories and Practices**

Post Development theories have contributed to a lot to reshape the futures trends of orthodox development theories. As a result, modernization theory includes neo-modernization in its current themes which involves a complex understanding of modernity and a revaluation of 'tradition' as resource and considering co-operation between development agencies and NGOs and social groups [5]. Thus, future trends include generation of new modernities and an engagement with postmodernism as a sensibility [20]. It has already been appeared in development practice that donors as well as developed world have been changing their imperialistic and hegemonic views on the development programmes of the third world countries. Moreover, donors are now considered as development partners where hegemonic power relationship, indulgence between the developed world and the third world. Similarly, dependency theory includes the renewal of structural and relativity analysis and innovative historical



revisions [5, 23]. Such as, Millennium Development Goals are designed on the basis of the socio economic and historical context of the developing countries rather than the developed world which could be identified as an outcome the post development thinking. In the context of Neoclassical Economics, earlier, structural adjustment programme has been turning into the new concern to make it country-specific and user-friendly, combined with good governance and state-effectiveness. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) are note worthy example where a post development approach has provided quite good inputs because though they are developed by International Financial Institutions and Development Partners for the developing countries but they are very much more country specific development programmes focusing development local context. Moreover, post development theories have influenced the Neo-liberal ideas. Such as, the Human Development approach now extends to gender (Gender Development Index), political rights (Freedom Development Index), transparency and effectiveness of governments (Corruption Perception Index environment), sustainable human development and regional development and examines the relationship between human capital and social and cultural capital [20]. Post development has already placed some success evidence. Suppose 'Microcredit' is one of the success stories of human development which has empowered the rural poor and women in Bangladesh including many developing countries. This programme has been awarded Noble peace prize for poverty alleviation in Bangladesh. It is one of the case of 'subversive' and 'people centred' development approach. Furthermore, post development poses a strong emphasis on bottom up thinking, non hierarchical growth strategies which consider each situation on its own context specific merits [24]. In this regard, Agrawal (1995) states 'to ignore people's knowledge is almost to ensure failure in development' [25]. Therefore, post development theories contributed alternative to development through local knowledge, indigenous knowledge, and practical knowledge in other cultures [5, 26-28].

## 7. Conclusion

Development Economics plays an interesting role in sketching the development outlines of an economic entity. With passage of time, the definition of development has faced significant changes. Since its inception as a separate discipline 'development' is defined by numerous ways. The arguments sketched in between the period 1940s to 1990s are not mysterious. It is the consequence of the vibrant nature of the changing phenomenon of the society. The technological advancement and the updated information system lead a wide range of participation of the stakeholders in the development process. The changing nature of the peoples' thoughts also plays a vital role in this regard. The changing philosophy of peoples' thoughts is an enduring process which encourages diverse definitions of economic development. As a result the analysis of 'development economics' endows with similar swings in accordance with the various discussions regarding economic development.

It can be commented that still Post Development paradigm is a Pandora's Box in the field of development theory and practice because of its unsettledness,



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radicalism and self contradictory approach. It is a critic without constructive directions and keeping aloof from reality. However, in the context of application and implementation perhaps Post Development theories have not achieved recognition like orthodox development theories but they have ultimately achieved the ability to recognise the failure of the Orthodox development theories i.e., poor remains poor, inequality and inequity becomes more acute. This is why; it is the great success of the post development theories to bring out the major weaknesses of the mainstream development theories to the academics, professionals, development partners and the grass root people. At the same time, it would be the great weakness that post development theories are pushing towards a guideless journey to address these problems.

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