

# **SOCIO- CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT:**

**A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

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**DHARAM VIR  
B.P. SHARMA**

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Social thinkers and social scientists have been engaged in identifying and explaining the development of mankind for the last three centuries. Since the later half of the present century, the term 'development' has dominated the scene. The Third World is engrossed in the process of development. But the story of developmental efforts till date is a story of glorious achievements and threatening failures. This is equally true for developed as well as developing societies. The mankind is faced with the crisis of survival. More than half of the world is still a victim of starvation and hunger. Violence and terrorism appear to have taken roots. Wars still erupt here and there and threaten for another World War. Nuclear warheads stand ready to go in action for the destruction of entire human civilization. The scenario raises doubt in the very concept of development conceived so far. The time demands an analysis of the issues connected with the concept and process of development. After all, where we have failed? What strategy should be evolved and adopted for assuring the survival and welfare of human race?

The book examines the above issues critically from interdisciplinary perspective. It also attempts to reformulate the concept of development and propose a guideline for an appropriate strategy from a global and trans-disciplinary perspective. Its major concern is with the emerging world society and to initiate a debate among all those who feel concerned with the crisis of the modern age.

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**Editors**

**DHARAM VIR**

**B. P. SHARMA**

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## PREFACE

This book dwells upon an important dimension of developmental process taking place in almost all the countries of the world, namely, the socio-cultural development. The experiences from various countries have added a strength to the major arguments put forth in this volume. The main emphasis has been to unveil the significance of those issues of development which have so far remained neglected. These issues are concerned with the development of character and welfare of the human beings. Thus, an attempt has been made to offer a holistic view of the development, synthesizing the material development with spiritual development.

Contributors to the theme of this volume have shown new insights in techniques, indices and measurement of development. The editors' main aim has been to maintain the individual contributions linked with each other and keep the stream of central theme running throughout the book. The credit for valuable ideological contributions goes to the respective author(s) who alone is/are responsible for its contents.

We are thankful to the contributors to this volume whose richness of thought and scientific temper have made our efforts worthwhile. If this work is able to draw the attention to the fact that human concerns should get precedence over material concerns, we would deem our efforts fructified.

"Dharam-Kamal"  
169/2, Shastri Nagar  
MEERUT-250 004 (INDIA)

Dharam Vir  
B.P. Sharma



## INTRODUCTION

There is a plethora of writings, both speculative and empirical, available on the theme of development. Then, why another volume on it ? The question is pertinent and deserves an answer. The reasons which have prompted the editors to publish it are many. *First*, it is increasingly agreed that the development has been largely conceived in terms of economic development ; that the economic betterment of the people of a society is not a guarantee of the betterment of the quality of their socio-cultural life ; that the development has missed the socio-cultural dimension both in its conception and strategy ; and that it has been mainly viewed in context of the societies of the Third World only. *Secondly*, on the criterion of human happiness and social welfare, technologically advanced societies' claim to be called developed becomes dubious as we witness an increasing phenomena of restlessness, isolation, alienation, and crime among them. *Thirdly*, there appears to be near consensus on the point that the developmental efforts in the Third World have increased the gap between the haves and the have-nots. The new forces of dissension and conflict have been unleashed. *Lastly*, the world community as a whole faces the threat of a nuclear holocaust. We witness the eruption of inter-national armed conflicts here and there causing loss of thousands of lives.

The whole scenario points out towards the need of reviewing the concept of development in a global perspective. Obviously, it has to be conceived in terms of the quality of socio-cultural life in context of the emerging world community. But, what should be the ideals for the improvement of the social life of mankind ? What should be the components of socio-cultural development in a global context ? What would be the criteria for measuring the progress on the path of socio-cultural development ? What should be an appropriate strategy to achieve the goals of such development ? These are the serious questions which demand concrete and practical answers,



if mankind is to survive. Neither we can evade them, nor can we escape from them. The present volume attempts to address itself to these questions. The contributors have offered certain pointers in the desired direction. There is no magic wand to create a united and prosperous world community in a day. The path is hard and thorny. It demands the dedicated efforts of all those who believe in universal brotherhood and the unity of mankind.

We open our discussion with an illuminating paper of S.L. Sharma. His paper, "Changing Conceptions of Development : An Analytical Search for a Missing Dimension" traces the career of the concept of development and reviews its prevailing four major conceptions, *viz.*, development as economic growth, development as redistribution with growth, development as improvement in life chances, and development as liberation from dependency and exploitation. On the strength of his review he comes to the conclusion that "the social dimension of human existence has virtually succumbed to the material dimension in the wake of development." He has pointed out that as a result of preponderance of economic concerns the socio-cultural dimension of development remains largely a missing dimension. Accordingly, he argues that the existing developmental thinking is based on an erroneous conception of human nature and social order. Development, to be meaningful, should be based on a vision of society with a superior quality of socio-cultural life. Sharma's search clearly implies that, "there is a need to salvage the concept of development from too much of economics and to put it on the pedestal of sound socio-cultural foundations."

Arthur S. Wilke and Raj P. Mohan have highlighted "Political Economic Considerations in Asian Science and Technology Development." The learned authors have themselves stated that they have focussed on some preliminary concerns. Wilke and Mohan have proceeded with the assumption that, "despite the conflict it has fostered, the nationalization of space has created a world cultural system" which means "a shared international ethos based on similar ways of accounting and evaluating activities deemed critical to the operations of the nation-directed society." They have also assumed that "while there are dynamics in evidence among various national



societies which lead to several variations, the centrality of the state in directing social affairs remains a commonality." With these assumptions they have analysed the development of science and technology in five countries : Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Srilanka. This development has been related to eight indicators, namely, population, gross domestic product and its components like agriculture, industry, construction and service sectors, international trade including trade balance and export-import, international oil transactions, per capita food production, the total stock of scientific and technical personnel, the ratio of dollars for research and experimental development and education. Having discussed these socio-economic and scientific-technical indicators, they have advanced the hypothesis, "that as science and technology become increasingly seen as a part of the economic calculus of the developed world, a world which will continue to struggle for its own dynamics as an increasingly international world economic system, countries such as those in the Third World may be faced with political cultural recommendations regarding science and technology which will work against some of the aspirations which are now being focused in the planning for science and technology." In this way, Wilke and Mohan's study reveals the possibility of analysing science and technology development with a world cultural system perspective.

B.C. Muthayya in his brilliant analysis of "Psycho-social Aspects of Economic Development" has provided a proof of our contention that development is a total concept and should be viewed, planned and implemented in a wholistic manner. He has studied the intensive agricultural district programme (IADP) in two states of India-Tamil Nadu and Karnataka-with a view to gauge the consequent changes in the socio-psychological attitudes of the people. Muthayya has tried to measure the impact of the programme on fourteen dimensions, viz., perception of the improvement in the village, change in the caste structure, leadership preferences, caste orientations, incidence of social conflicts, mass media contacts, orientation to work, personal effectiveness, political participation, civic sensitivity, political efficacy, autocratic attitude, fatalistic attitude, and aspirations. He has concluded that "by and large, the study did not reveal much of a variation in the



various social-psychological dimensions studied between the respondents in the IADP and non-IADP districts in two states." His study clearly implies that the traditional structures, the type of feelings and attitudes maintained by people, can't be changed or automatically thought to change due to an economic input. He has wisely pointed out that, "whenever one wants to think of any kind of economic development, it is necessary to conceive the type of social development that should follow so that each one will supplement the other and serve as a driving force for sustaining the benefits of the economic development."

Satish Sharma, in his paper on "Inequality and Development : The Gandhian Perspective," has shown the validity and relevance of Gandhian model of social change and development as an alternative to the capitalistic, communistic, and socialistic alternatives and their numerous shades and blends. Gandhian thought is rich on the issue and sources of inequality in human society. While the other alternatives indicated above have come under serious criticism for their inadequacy for creating a egalitarian society and fulfilling socio-political order, Gandhian path emphasizes the need for changing the human character based on the concept of *Sarvodaya*-the development of all and in all respects. The five-fold development programme suggested, accordingly, is *Antah-Shuddhi* (internal purity), *Bahih-Shuddhi* (external purity), *Shrama* (labour), *Shanti* (peace), and *Samarpanam* (unqualified total dedication). Here is an attempt to define the components of socio-cultural development in terms of quality of life. The mechanism to achieve the above development ideals have been clearly indicated. Gandhian thought has a firm faith in the essential goodness of human nature and seeks to build an ethical, moral and spiritual socio-political order on this. It is, indeed, a revolutionary programme deserving serious thought.

Fred W. Reed in his stimulating paper, "Technology and Social Change : A Social Exchange Perspective," has ably shown that social exchange perspective can be profitably used to assess and predict the interconnection between the adoption of complex technologies and consequent changes in social relationships. The empirical scenario is related to an Indian village in a nothern state, where the introduction of tractor in



agricultural operations has produced changes in social relationships of dependency among higher and lower strata of society. It has brought the cash nexus in the social transactions, besides the need for technically trained help for the repairs etc. The cash nexus had sensitized him to the precise cost of carrying out social obligations. Work, and by inference friendship, that once had no monetary price became monetized and social relationships themselves appear to have become more distant. The support systems, necessary for tractor's use and maintenance have initiated cross-caste relations disturbing the traditional exchanges of benefits and services based on caste system. Thus, Reed has clearly established that exchange theory can illuminate issues in introducing new technologies and that its conceptual frame-work can alert us to social problems that can be anticipated with technology transfer.

The process of development, in almost all the countries of the Thirld World, has been planned and initiated by politico-bureaucratic authority. And in most of them, both the public and the private sectors have been assigned significant roles to play. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah has focused on "Some Problems of the Public and Private Sector" in India from a developmental perspective. He has commented perceptively on the present state of affairs in both these sectors. Their developmental problems have been discussed with reference to the following seven dimensions : the resource crunch (resource needs and gap analysis), modernization of the public sector in terms of turning around the loss making units, modernizing and freeing the private sector, lowering costs, rationalizing tax-burden and saving incentives, export expansion, and the power constraints. He has suggested ways and means in regard to all these issues related to the process of economic development in India. Adiseshiah offers an analytical frame for analysing economic development in the context of the Third World.

Jose Havet has thrown light on a new source of understanding international development. In his interesting article on "Cartoons : A Neglected Source of Insight for understanding International Development", he has hypothesized that cartoons are well suited to deal with the themes and problems of international development. Although a cartoon is a mode of mass communication which conveys a message based on



humour or satire, or both, yet it is a reflection of the social reality. Social scientists have shown an apathy to analyse humour, laughter and satire as social facts and their social functions. Havet is of the opinion that a systematic study of cartoons may provide a good source of information for international development specialists. He admits the limitations of this mode of inquiry because cartoons are but a partial reflection of social reality. He has illustrated his argument by giving an analysis of exhibits of seven cartoons. It opens a new vista for the study of development process.

Erling Berge's article, "Factorial Ecology and Social Development", has stressed the need for correlating environmental factors and social factors. He posits that there is an existence of environmental factors and that such factors and social factors have to intercorrelate in a meaningful way. In support of his proposition, he presents a factorial analysis of data related to 451 Norwegian communes. In environmental factors, he has included population size and land size, whereas, social factors are identified by socio-economic status, familism, deprivation, affluence, manufacturing industry, and female economic activity. On the basis of this analysis, he arrives at the conclusion that these factors correlate and have significance for developmental studies.

Enlightening us on a currently little explored field of human performances, Edward Gross in his paper on "Organized Performances" provides significant data regarding an important type of human activity. Social scientists have devoted a lot of attention to complex organizations. Such organizations have come to be regarded as indicators of development. Recent researches have, however, shown that the complex organizations cannot be fully trusted for carrying out the tasks of socio-cultural development. Gross has pointed out that organized performances, seen as social arrangements wherein persons come together to accomplish some goal, deserve our attention. They offer unique characteristics in their own right. These are seen as the invention of rationales, dealing with unknown futures, improvisations, the suspension of norms, an accustomed division of labour, lack of concern for enduring effects, and continuous uncertainty of success. These structural features of organized performances build up a mood of action characteriz-



ed by a foreshortening of time, the intensification of interaction, the construction of a separate social world, and a pride of performance. As such, organized performances may be suitable for the tasks of socio-cultural development. It needs further probings from a developmental perspective.

Women's development is an essential component of socio-cultural development. Kamlesh Mahajan, in her paper on "Television and Women's Development : The Indian Experience, has emphasized the potentiality of television in accelerating the development of women. She has studied reactions of young Indian Women towards the major issues connected with their development. She has found that the TV is helpful in women's employment, makes them aware about their health, nutrition and the maternity problems, and educates them about the laws protecting their rights. TV inculcates a sense of equality among men and women and motivates women for gaining a just status in society. She has also highlighted certain dysfunctions of TV. It intends to increase family tensions, obstructs children's study and helps in building a lust for sex and romance. On the basis of her observations, she has contended that a rationally planned TV programme can go a long way in helping Indian women to smash their prison and come out to participate in and contribute their share to the development of humanity as a whole. Kamlesh Mahajan has a firm conviction that "the television of tomorrow would definitely depict the story of the victory of womankind for a just social order."

B.P. Sharma and Dharam Vir have emphasized the need of redefining the concept of development in terms of its socio-cultural components in a global perspective. They have designated development as spiritual-materialistic development. From this, they have proceeded to identify the various components of the above conception of development. Truth, love, non-violence and compassion represent the real yearnings of human soul. Hence, the concept of development, to be meaningful, is to be related to these universal yearnings of mankind. They have also shown direction towards the criteria for measuring the development in terms of spiritual-materialism. Reviewing the global models for development, they have also proposed a strategy for development. As concluded by them,



“every nation has to devise ways and means in accordance with its culture to inculcate the sense of world citizenship along with its own citizenship. UNO is to be converted into a real and dynamic parliament of the world community. It has to be vested with certain powers befitting a world government.”

On the whole, the aim of the present exercise has been to draw the attention of all those who feel concerned with the development of mankind towards the need of identifying the goals of socio-cultural development. Its criteria and strategies have to be designed in context of the world community. If the joint effort of the contributors to this volume is able to initiate a meaningful dialogue and debate on the issues, raised by them, they would deem it fully fructified.

**DHARAM VIR  
B. P. SHARMA**

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Dharam Vir represents young generation of sociologists in India. Born in 1948, he was educated at Agra University (M.A. Sociology, 1971) and Meerut University (M. Phil., 1972; Ph.D. 1978). He has successfully directed research projects sponsored by UGC and ICSSR. He has contributed more than 30 papers in various distinguished research journals. He is author of *Education and Polity in Nepal: An Asian Experiment* (1988) and *Political Efficacy in Urban India: A Sociological Exploration* (1989) besides many other Text-books for graduate and post-graduate students in Hindi speaking states in India. He has participated in many national sociological conferences and has the privilege of presenting papers at World Congress of Sociology (Mexico, 1982) and International Conference of IIS (Portugal, 1986). His areas of special interest are: Political Sociology, Sociology of Education, Sociology of Mass Communication and Nation-building.

B.P. Sharma is a triple post-graduate (Economics, Commerce and Sociology). Born in 1935, he is engaged in teaching graduate and post-graduate students in Sociology for the last twenty-six years. He is a creative thinker and a poet. Besides writing many books in Hindi, he has contributed numerous articles in various newspapers and journals. His areas of interest are: Political Sociology, Women' Studies and Radical Humanism.

Dharam Vir and B.P. Sharma are currently engaged in teaching and research in Sociology at N.A.S. Post-graduate College, Meerut (India) and are Editors of an international bi-annual journal, *The Journal of National Development*.

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