

Human Development & Education: An Exploratory Study of the Crossroads of Economics, Ethics & Politics

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Abstract: This paper explores and characterizes the relationships between human development and education using critical literature review to engage the strands of argument for basic social justice and quality of life at the crossroads of economics, ethics and politics. The oversold conventional approach to development as an income line, people as a means and markets as a focus of concern has long lost its shine on account of the rise of the Human Development Paradigm which accords education a fundamental role in equipping people with competencies and capabilities to enlarge their choices and enhance their well-being. Accordingly, education offers a new language of hope and possibility about what people can actually acquire overtime to choose their kind of life they value; brings into its orbit social justice and equity by training people not just as an economic enterprise but as an attribute of power relations in the structure of any society; and measures learner evaluation not just in terms of literacy tests but people's ability to express their views. As education constitutes both a foundation and a vehicle for building and extending people's capabilities, the risk is great that the manner in which it is organised and transacted could always be politically manipulated by the elite and economically deployed as a means to produce an under-class. This paper, therefore, tempers optimism with realism and notes that any given education system is a manifestation of the society that embraces it. Notwithstanding this proclivity, the human development paradigm provides the best chance yet for a life people have reason to value because it offers an ethical-political guide to the imperative of social change and economic growth, using education as a compass; and disproving pay as an exact index of merit.

Keywords: Human development, education, human capital, capability approach, ethics, economics, politics.

INTRODUCTION

This essay explores the relationship between human development and education as it obtains in the context of interaction of factors such as economics, ethics and politics. It is an attempt to capture the often elusive concepts of education and development and how they extend to 'humans'.

Understanding human development is still work in progress because of its complexity in spite of being at the core of human thought for ages. It is branded as an alternative development paradigm to the conventional definition of development in terms of economic growth measured in increasing income and Gross National Productⁱ [1]. The thrust of this essay is, therefore, to explore the rise of the human development paradigm and how it is measured according to the Human Development Indexⁱⁱ on the one hand.

On the other hand, it is to examine how educating people to acquire competencies and capabilities is fundamental to the paradigm. This is so

in the sense that education "constitutes the foundations for building all other capabilities by which human choices are enlarged and human well-being enhanced" [1].

The essay is structured into two main parts. The first part consists of three sections and offers an introduction and overview of definitions and notions of education and human development; followed by a historical and conceptual perspective of how the human development story has evolved and permeated the discourse about people's capacity to choose and lead a life they have a reason to value.

The second part is made up of three sections and presents the paradigm itself as it has emerged and discusses its aspects to give a better insight into the place of education in human development. The multiple facets of education and human development will be dwelt upon and critiqued at length. The essay will then conclude with a few remarks about the direction this relationship may take in the future.

STUDY METHODS

This study is exploratory in nature, centred on defining and clarifying the common associations between education and human development. It uses an angle of critical literature review to question assumptions about education and the Human Development Approach, sometimes referred to as the Capability Approach, working at the crossroads of economics, ethics and politics [2-4].

Because of the emancipatory nature of the Human Development Approach in interpreting the politics of needs, there is a raging debate as to whether the corresponding discourse should be one of capabilities (as is the case with the Approach) or one of rights as contested by others [5]. At any rate, the approach has induced ethics alongside economics and politics in looking for “desirable alternatives” [6] for explaining basic social justice and assessing quality of life comparatively [3].

In presenting the strands of argument hereafter, an attempt is made to reflect all these dimensions of the debate starting “from explanations rather than value positions”; so that the political philosopher, social scientist, mainstream economist and heterodox economistⁱⁱⁱ can have respite while critique “gives an emancipatory character” to the debate [6].

Human Development & Education: Definitions & Notions

Development could be one thing or the other for different people. Although it appeals for its seeming simplicity, development is not a straightforward term. In fact, it has been quite a task to pin down its definition theoretically and practically [7].

It could mean being in possession of great material riches and corresponding status symbols. It could also mean being free from all forms of oppression. A third view of development is that it is a comprehensive package of “personal, social and spiritual progress” [8]. The term “human development” points to the manner in which people widen their choices and the stage at which their well-being stands. In other words, the first part is about the process of forming human capabilities. These could be capabilities such as accessing knowledge and improving one’s health.

The second part is the level of the acquisition and application of those capabilities [9]. One geographical location may be perceived as “developed” because it attracts huge investments and its people are better employed and paid, enjoy good health and have access to quality education. Its people could also be living their lives with a sense of value. All these are understandings of development [8]. Development,

therefore, “refers to both human development and economic growth” [10].

Human development is even more interesting. The fields of economics, social sciences and moral philosophy have had different views on what constitutes wellbeing and how to measure it as a notion. It is the UNDP’s definition of 1990, however, that has come to change the way human development is perceived [7]. Human development, according to Mahbub ul Haq, is “a process of enlargement of the capacity of people’s choices. The choices can be in various fields: political freedom and participation in community life, to survive and to have a healthy life and to enjoy a decent standard of living” [11].

Human development as an approach deals with what Amartya Sen regards as the essence of the development idea, which is: “advancing the richness of human life, rather than the richness of the economy in which human beings live” [1].

A person is said to be educated not because he or she has attained mastery of a skill (though this is vital as such), but because the person is not restricted to one pattern of thinking, working or living such as aspiring for employment alone. Instead, an educated person uses his or her knowledge and knack to seek other purposes other than those that are vocational. “An educated person is one whose form of life-as exhibited in his [or her] conduct, the activities to which he [or she] is committed, his [or her] judgments and feelings-is thought to be desirable” [12]. “Education must be available, of acceptable quality, relevant, non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate, and adaptable to suit local context.....Education is not only a right: it is key to human development through improving health, reducing poverty and fostering peace, democracy and economic growth” [13].

This is a role that education in particular plays that makes it a main driver of human development like no other. It equips people of all walks of life with capabilities that determine the direction of their social and economic development [14]. Institutions of education in general and higher education in particular often play a major role in producing and disseminating knowledge, skills and attitudes which are contributing one way or the other to social change.

More importantly, Thomson notes, development as such is not the exclusive province of macroeconomic considerations (notwithstanding their importance), but is fundamentally embracing the notions of choice and participation for individuals and groups where wellbeing, social justice, equality, and engagement matter all the more. “Development is not a stage to be attained or a goal to aim for. Rather it is a constant process of improvement in which education,

research, and service play prominent roles in creating positive change in the self, the people around us, our communities and the institutions and structures that support us” [14].

The current blueprint for universal action, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), commits all nations to an equity approach to human development in which everyone has the right to a life of dignity and opportunity. That includes a healthy life and decent living. It also includes the right to access quality education that does not discriminate or exclude [13]. Impressive performance by the so-called Asian Tigers^{iv} is an enduring example of this philosophy of human development. The incredible rise of East Asia bears testimony to the vitality of robust education and health systems to economic growth and prosperity [15]. The focus of education should be on children who play a role in creating and becoming mature human beings [16].

Different international bodies emphasize different aspects of measuring nations’ educational achievements. There are two major types of indicators: inputs and outputs. The first type relates to the resources and time invested in education and the second type is about the direct outcomes of the process [15]. Global actors in the field of education have different interests in highlighting either of these types. UNESCO, for instance, focuses on data to do with enrolment, repetition and pupil-teacher ratio in terms of inputs; and literacy rates and education stocks in terms of outputs.

Whereas, the OECD and IAEEA^v are mainly given to collecting “other output data on average years of schooling and test scores in mathematics, science and reading” [15]. It is, however, clear that greater numbers of people accessing education do not automatically translate into some magic bullet for human development. In fact, human development is too complex a process that a number of factors have to interact to bring it about. Bloom [15] notes that “in addition to health and education, the most important drivers of development include governance and other political factors, geography and climate, cultural and historical legacies, a careful openness to trade and foreign investment, labour policies that promotes productive employment, good macroeconomic management, some protection against the effects of environmental shocks, overall economic orientation, and the actions of the other countries and international organisations”.

In summing up these sketchy definitions and notions about education and human development, it is useful to state that a common thread among them is how they reinforce each other to help human beings sustain the benefits of capabilities over time. For humans to develop meaningfully, it has to be

sustainable, too. That is, both education and human development should cater not only for people and their prosperity but also for their planet [17].

Historical & Conceptual Perspectives

There has been a close association of development with a concern for human welfare throughout the course of history. Of a particular note in this regard are economists, philosophers and political scientists who considered humans as central to development and its ends. “References to and emphases on “human good”, “flourishing lives” and human beings as the “real ends” of all activities were made and are found in the writings of various philosophers from Aristotle to Emmanuel Kant and among the leading political economists from Adam Smith to David Ricardo, Thomas Malthus, Karl Marx and John Stuart Mill. That was why Aristotle, in ancient Greece, asserted that ‘wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking, for it is merely useful for the sake of something else’ ” [1].

The historical root of the current interest in the role of education in developing and under-developed nations is in the post-colonial bid to “modernise”, spur economic growth and instil civics for nation building [14].

This post-colonial drive to modernise has accorded more attention to higher education as an avenue for skills training required in all spheres of economic activity. The focus has tilted in favour of the academic stream of higher education, seen as “pure education”. In the process a great many developing and under-developed countries have at some point sacrificed the direct relevance of their higher education to their grassroots. The vocational stream has by and large been handled with reluctance by governments. That said, the United Nations (UN) is particular of the fact that “higher education is integral to all aspects of development such as environmental awareness and sustainability, post-conflict resolution, poverty alleviation, cultivating values such as human rights, health care issues, and cultural preservation or change” [14].

There are a number of perspectives on the place of education in general and that of higher education in particular and its institutions in contributing to human development. First, the conventional conceptual note on this is the role of higher education in building and developing human capacity through imparting the foundational knowledge and skills for performing specialised tasks. This utilitarian view of education speaks to the value attached to economic productivity through more competent man-power planning and training [14].

Second, this role is also conceptualised in terms of focusing learning on the self and individual growth, as espoused by the liberals in this age of globalisation. Higher education is considered as key in fostering critical inquiry and methodological learning^{vi} in today's "knowledge societies". These "liberal approaches to education also include innovative curricula and pedagogies as well as providing opportunities for lifelong learning and learning for life" [14].

Third, it is about social values, too. In that, there is no better channel for transforming and preserving society's culture and values other than higher education. This particular conceptual perspective has come down from Newman's work, *Idea of a University*. It is further embellished by Robert Putnam's idea of social capital and civic community^{vii}.

Fourth, higher education is treated as a force for liberation or conscientization in the sense that it goes beyond conventions to question and challenge discourses and concepts of human development itself. Paulo Freire [18], O'Sullivan [19] and Mezirow [20] are proponents of this call for "shifts of consciousness" through person-centred approaches to learning^{viii} [14].

This transformative education theory has informed UNESCO's mantra for its work on higher education, and education in general^{ix}. In sum, higher education provides research which in turn drives knowledge and understanding and economic growth, and generates practical solutions to social, political and legal issues in human development. But more importantly, research questions the very paradigms of the knowledge, innovation and application that inform policies impacting millions of lives. It is in this regard that the critical and transformative nature of the fourth conceptualisation of higher education pays off [14].

Prior to 1990, the only yardstick for nations' progress was increasing income and the Gross National Product. This had persisted in spite of its limitations such as being unable to provide information on people's quality of life, and pursuing economic growth to the detriment of equity concerns [1].

The World Bank particularly adopted this kind of conception to guide its analyses and strategies as early as 1970s. The Bank was interested in linking growth in per capita income^x to arranged assistance for the poor through packages such as "a distribution with growth" and "the basic needs strategy". In spite of shifting its focus to restoring macro-economic balance and structural adjustment in the 1980s and to a growth pattern for the "poor and resource-weak groups" alongside aggregate growth in the 1990s, the World Bank's overall conception undergirding development had not changed much. "Indicators and measures

remained limited to income and growth and in real incomes remained the target" [1].

Economic development was conceptualised as a process whereby real per capita income of a country increases over a long period of time while simultaneously poverty is reduced and inequality in society is generally diminished-or at least not increased" [1].

A rethink of the concept of development gathered speed in the 1940s in the aftermath of a decade-long progress in the economic growth theory in the 1930s. This theory would dominate the global stage for over sixty years, precisely till the last 10 years of the 20th century. The theory espoused overcoming underdevelopment through economic growth and increasing GNP. It considered poor countries as countries with categorically low income [1]. The economics of education, itself a new comer to the scene in the 1960s, essentially drew connections between labour productivity and output growth. This was in line with the main thrust of development back in the 1950s and 1960s which was to maximise aggregate rates of output growth. Thus, the equity-driven impact of education in the form of fairly distributing income and combating abject poverty was sidelined in the process.

A turning point in the intersection of education with human development was the World Declaration on Education for All, inked at Jomtein, Thailand, in March 1990. The declaration garnered UNESCO member-states' political commitment to address the basic learning needs of all people. Its strategic objective was two-fold: agreeing a new action plan for all to go to school and encouraging a kind of development that is humanistic at heart in the face of a market-based economic outlook. "Education has the role of providing humanity with the capacity to control its own development based on the responsible participation of individuals and communities" [21].

Thus began a new thought for a human development action that is sustainable. This element of sustainability has come to be the ethical-political guide to understanding the imperative to reduce, if not abolish altogether, the yawning gap between nations' Gross Domestic Product^{xi} (GDP) and the Human Development Index (HDI). This task is considered by many as the "great historical and social task of this generation" [21]. UNESCO's report, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, was published 20 years after Edgar Faure's *Learning to Be*, to show the path to education in the 21st century by playing the role of a "pedagogical compass".

That compass, so to speak, points to the Four Education Pillars for constructing a new ideal of the human person for the new millennium. These pillars are

Learning to Be, Learning to Live Together, Learning to Do, and Learning to Know^{xii} [21]. The basic idea behind this is to create a new proposal for education based on the human development paradigm that has been taking roots deeply.

Literature Review Lens: Emergence of the Human Development Paradigm

A number of factors had given rise to the human development paradigm. The conventional approach to development back in the 1980s had lost its shine because the oversold World Bank’s “Structural Adjustment Programmes^{xiii}” were inflicting unforeseen human costs that ranged from an elusive poverty to combat, market forces that excluded the masses from reaping any tangible benefits down the chain, to heightened crime and weak social fabric in the face of economic growth. The masses pinned their hopes on democratization as an alternative and wanted to see better days ahead [22].

Amartya Sen, Paul Streaten, Mahbub ul Haq and other leading economists were critical of the idea of development that considered increased income as an end rather than a means to enhancing people’s welfare. This was mainly because such development had not translated into substantive improvements in health, education and life expectancy, and so forth. Things changed when in 1990 the UNDP published its first ever Human Development Report (HDR) under the guidance of renowned Pakistani economist, Mahbub ul Haq^{xiv} [23, 10].

That first report spelled out the departure from the conventional narrative of development as economic growth: “while growth in national production...is absolutely necessary to meet essential human objectives, what is important is to study how this growth translates-or fails to translate-into human development in various societies” [1]. Alkire [9] argues that the literature on human development considers the

capability approach as its strong conceptual and theoretical basis.

The question of human development became a pressing one and Sen’s scholarly piece “*Equality of What?*” was the starting point for this quest to relieve the acutely poor from their woes [24]. Sen forcefully fronted two important arguments in favour of redefining the notion of well-being in welfare economics.

First, in order to address inequality, he said that primary goods^{xv} could not alone be sufficient as a basis on which well-being is measured. Second, Sen asserted that “human capability or the extent of people’s freedom has a direct role, the most important indeed, in the achievement of well-being” [24].

Thus, the paradigm has shifted. It is now imperative to distinguish between equality in terms of primary goods and equality in the sense of capabilities. According to Sen, “evaluations regarding equality should not solely be based on people’s command of resources, sense of happiness or desire fulfilment, but should include features of the way people actually live” [24].

What this means is that the view of poverty as the lack of income is ill-defined and short-sighted. This simply discredits welfare economics by introducing a new kind of freedom to realise the goals an individual may cherish to do and to be. Human development shot up from this shift as a moral imperative to be achieved under a democratic dispensation that empowers people’s capability to claim their rights to a life of worth. Sen sees equality of capability as fitting the bill of human development rightly.

He argues that “development requires the dismantling of the major sources of “unfreedom”: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities, as well as intolerance or over-activity of repressive states” [24].

Table-1: Human Development & Neoliberalism Compared

Human Development	Neoliberalism
Expansion of human freedoms as objective	Maximization of economic welfare as objective
Freedom of choice-understood as human capabilities and functionings	Freedom of choice-understood as utility and satisfaction of preferences
Emphasizes all human rights	Emphasizes political and civil rights
Is guided by concern of equity and justice	Is guided by a concern for economic efficiency
Health & education are intrinsically valuable	Health and education are seen as investment
Important state functions	Minimal state
People as ends and as focus of concern, economic growth is only a means to an end	People as means and markets/economic growth as a focus of concern
Poverty is multidimensional deprivation	Poverty defined as below income line
Multidisciplinary and pragmatic	Economic and dogmatic
The non-monetary and economic focus leads to weak data	Good quality data but neglect of non-economic issues.

Deneulin & Shahani [8]

This paradigm-shifting claim was later seconded by Martha Nussbaum who did some collaborative work with Sen in the 1980s, resulting into a landmark publication, *The Quality of Life*, published by Oxford in 1993 [25]. Martha Nussbaum's book, *Women & Human Development: the Capabilities Approach* [26], is steeped in the capability approach but offers little else about human development in general [9].

Nussbaum's view of the capability approach argues that there are basic human capabilities that must be provided to every person by the government as a "threshold". The idea is to safeguard the bare fundamentals for a life "worthy of the dignity of a human being" [24]. True to her conviction, Nussbaum has come up with a list of those capabilities^{xvi}. She says that it is a failure of basic justice should people be below the threshold on any one of the capabilities, notwithstanding the fact that they might be high up on the other capabilities.

The human development paradigm is "based on the view that each human being is born with a potential and has the right to develop it. In regards to their role, education and rights went from being a purpose to being what they truly are: valid and effective means for the attainment of human development" [21].

The UNDP has since been disseminating this new brand of development thinking. It has profoundly equipped supporters of global justice with facts and figures that "cut through the rhetoric of neoliberalism" and, indeed, going against the Washington Consensus^{xvii} [1]. The grain of the new brand of development is to widen people's choices and improve their lot. "These choices can be infinite and can change over time. People often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities" [1].

There is a lot in common between human development and human rights. Freedom is at the heart of this commonality because people have to be free if they are to make decisions and choose among options for their own good. These are reinforcing. That is, "in pursuing capabilities and realising rights, human freedom is a *sine qua non*" [1]. People are regarded, therefore, as the real wealth of nations and their well-being^{xviii} is of paramount importance. Mahbub ul Haq's clarity as to the purpose of the HDR is interesting. He saw the HDR as bent on shifting "the focus of

development economics from national income accounting to people-centred choices" [1].

The idea of education for human development is, thus, one which sees the process of educating people as transforming their potential into capabilities to live well, be productive, and grow in knowledge. This is based on opportunities provided for people to fully realise their potential. Some of these opportunities, as in the case of education, safeguard people's lives and ensure their integrity. Others focus on health, nutrition, housing, sanitation, work, income and so forth.

Aspects of Human Development

As with any shift, the human development paradigm has particular aspects worth highlighting. These are as follows:

1. "The emphasis that development must put people at the centre of its concerns. It sees people as ends and not means;
2. That the purpose of development is the enlargement of human choices;
3. The paradigm is concerned with both building up human capabilities (through investment in people and skill acquisition) and with using those human capabilities fully (through an enabling framework for growth and empowerment);
4. The human development paradigm defines the ends of development and analyzes sensible options for achieving these ends" [1].

The paradigm is new, complex and multidimensional^{xix}. It guides how linkages can be drawn between economic growth and human development. These could be actions like investing in people's education, health and skills, distributing income and assets equitably, improving people's development through targeted social spending and empowering people in general and women in particular [1].

This makes it useful to understand how development policies should look like. Equally important, development scholars, practitioners and advocates should know how to analyse policies in light of the considerations put forward by the paradigm.

There are three kinds of analyses for development policies. First, they are *normative* in the sense that they dictate how people or entities should behave if they are to realise a particular potential. Value judgements inform conduct or practice, in other words. Second, development policies are deemed *positive* when they prompt a reflection on past experience and build an empirical basis for action to improve the lot of people. Third, they are *predictive* in the sense that they enhance policy-makers' chances of predicting how a particular condition or event could unfold in the future [8].

Measuring Human Development

But perhaps the most important aspect of human development is how to measure it. This is a tricky terrain because any measure has to account for which aspects to cover, and how to measure or weigh them on a scale. With regard to human development, Pakistani Mahbub ul Haq developed the Human Development Index (HDI) as a measure geared towards comparatively weighing life expectancy, literacy, and living standards for nations on a global rating. This index has been used by UNDP in its yearly Human Development Reports (HDR) since 1993 as a standard measurement of wellbeing across developed, developing and underdeveloped countries [1].

The HDI gauges three essential aspects in each country on the basis of average achievements. These aspects are as follows:

1. “ A long and healthy life, as measured by life expectancy at birth;
2. Knowledge as measured by adult literacy rate (with two-thirds weight) and combined primary,

secondary, and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (with one-third weight);

3. A decent standard of living, as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita at Purchasing Power Parity^{xx} (PPP) in US Dollars” [1].

Countries are arranged in a ranking order annually on a range from 0 to 1, greater levels of human development shown by higher values in reverse. The index equally indicates similar measures for different geographical and social entities within individual countries [1].

In 2015 Norway ranked the first nation^{xxi} with a value of HDI 0,943, a gross national income of \$47, 557 per capita, a life expectancy of 81,1 years and 17.3 years of schooling. At the bottom is the Democratic Republic of Congo with just 280 dollars gross national income per capita and a life expectancy of 48, 4 years [11].

Table-2: Some Human Development Indicators, 2007/08

Indicators	Saudi Arabia	Uruguay	Russia	Costa Rica	Vietnam	Morocco
GDP Per Capita (PPPUS\$)	15, 711	9962	10, 845	9481	3071	4555
Adult literacy rate (%)	82.9	96.9	99.4	94.9	90.3	52.3
Female Literacy (%)	76.3	97.3	99.2	95.1	86.9	39.6
Life Expectancy (Years)	72.2	75.9	65	78.5	73.7	70.4
Under 5 Mortality (0/00)	26	15	18	12	19	40
Political rights/civil Liberties*	7/6	1/1	6/5	1/1	7/5	5/4
Human Development Index	0.812	0.852	0.802	0.846	0.733	0.646

*1 being most free and 7 less free
Deneulin & Shahani [8]

As elaborate and practical as it is, the HDI is undergoing improvement in some important respects such as gender and poverty. The Capability Poverty Measure (CPM) came into being in 1996 to measure human deprivation^{xxii}. Other indexes have been developed as suggestions to be incorporated into the HDI. Gender-related Development Index (GDI) is intended to gauge the average of achievements of each country in basic capabilities with a focus on inequality between men and women.

Another important measure is the Gender Empowerment Measure^{xxiii} (GEM) meant to measure the active participation of both men and women in politics and economics. However, in 1997 the GEM was substituted by the Human Poverty Index (HPI) as a measure of deprivation in terms of “people expected to die before age 40; adults who are illiterate; people without access to health services; people without access to safe water; and underweight children under five. A lower value of HPI indicates improvement against poverty.While the HDI measures national progress; the HPI measures the deprivations of those who are left out of the progress” [1].

DISCUSSION

Democracy, Education & Human Development

Recent empirical and theoretical literature is abuzz with interests in trying to establish or disapprove a relationship between human development and economic growth; and a great part of that literature points to democratization as more crucial for human development than economic growth^{xxiv} [10]. There is also an acknowledgement that democracy and education “cannot directly improve human development in a country or globally, but can contribute to human development through public policies” [10].

The consensus is, however, that human development is an outcome of more comprehensive structural changes in education and socio-economic spheres. This interaction is best captured by the example of countries in East and Southeast Asia during the last decade of 20th century. This is as follows:

1. “Changes in democratization were due to structural changes in the countries;
2. Rapid socioeconomic structural change through industrialisation and urbanisation in East and

Southeast Asian growth since 1990, were due to success of the institutions of public policies;

3. If the institutions and public policies are weak and not inclusive, it might lead to a poor progress in democracy and human development” [10].

Studies have shown that it is important to institutionalise people power democratically so that it can act as a check on the excesses of elites. For example, elites may choose not to relinquish power or give it away nominally because people are not in a better position to make choices about their interests. It is, therefore, vital that democratisation is embraced as a “process of institutionalisation of people power through civic freedoms in order to make their political preferences count in governing public life” [10]. In fact, it is observed that those nations with robust democracy share similar trends in GNI per capita^{xxv} since 1990 when the first HDR was published [10]. Democracy is found to contribute to human development in a study on many countries by Harding & Wantchekon [27].

Conversely, education has a role to play in sustaining democracy overtime, according to Lipset [28]. It does so by being instrumental in all kinds of human development outcomes. Education here is in a broader sense of general education and specific training and its capacity to distribute its quality to large sections of a population. Ranis and Stewart [29] argue that “if countries have moderate educational enrolment ratios, they have moderate improvement at HDI; or good enrolment ratios, and they have good improvement at HDI; and also their success is reflected in GDP per capita with the same pattern” [10]. What is clear is that both democracy and education help determine stability in the long run by ensuring fairly functioning governments like Norway whose rankings in democracy and HDI are among the top in the whole world [10].

There are examples of how empowering education can be to individuals and groups alike. One way that manifests itself is through confronting abuses whether individually or collectively. An educated woman is better informed to make choices that will address patriarchal tendencies coming from her partner, for example. Poor farmers who are educated can likewise use legal resources and rise up against the powerful who might want to dispossess them of their land [8].

Education provides the means to realise these capabilities and gives people the scope of thinking and doing things differently. It goes beyond the recognition given to it by the Human Development Report^{xxvi} (HDR) and stands as an important part of human development. This role took shape as a concern in the 1960s during which education was regarded as a catalyst of economic productivity.

This has persisted to date as the human capital approach. But the role of education is not complete without mentioning another approach-the capability approach-which is a new way of appreciating that role [8]. These two approaches will be contrasted and discussed as sub-sections.

The Human Capital Approach

The basic tenet of the human capital approach is that investing in human capital will yield an upturn in economic growth through enhancing productivity just as infusion of physical capital does. This tenet is, therefore, an appealing one because it offers governments around the world the vantage point of bringing together what individuals, families and nations could achieve through their aspirations for social and economic growth [8].

People are considered as a means of production and therefore deserving of investment. The end game is a calculable return based on the resources put into this investment. This is evident in Gary Becker’s seminal work, *Human Capital* [30], according to Deneulin & Shahani [8]. Becker calculated the rate of this envisaged return in the case of college and high school in the United States of America. His key finding was that education was crucial for promoting economic growth and increasingly important for further acquisition of science and technology. The findings were warmly received by many in the then Eastern and Western Blocs respectively as well as elsewhere in the world [8].

A slightly different but significant study was undertaken by Theodore Schultz targeting rates of return from education in nations with varied income levels. The verdict was almost the same: education has a value in economic growth and nations could only ignore this fact at their own peril [8]. A more in-depth study into the same area of interest was, however, carried out by George Psacharopoulos in the 1970s and 1980s, according to Deneulin & Shahani [8]. Psacharopoulos put it together in his work, *Returns to Education* (1973), littered it with data from many nations on the role of education in economic growth, and compared its worth with that of investment in physical capital.

This brief historical overview is vital to understand the assumptions of the human capital approach to human development and its shortcomings that have paved the way for a new approach. A key assumption is that the labour market is rational and efficient in its own accord and that, once education has imparted attributes considered as “capital”, the market will assign humans to roles and jobs commensurate with their skill levels [8].

However, this view of schooling is mechanical in the sense that people come in and go out saddled with the “human capital”. The human capital approach as a factor of the relationship between education and human development falls short in this regard. It does again in another regard when it fails to account for the diversity of learners’ backgrounds and how that could affect the output of the impartation of human capital. Again, the human capital approach glosses over the multiple ways in which education can team up with gender, race, caste and religion to generate inequalities. In the words of Deneulin & Shahani [8], the human capital approach, thus, “does not take into account segregated labour markets where people, irrespective of their level of education, are allocated to particular jobs on the grounds of race, gender, or assumptions about class or caste.”

The Capability Approach

As seen in the preceding sub-section, the human capital approach dwells on people as agents of boosting production through their skills and efforts. But there is a different approach to seeing people as more than just agents or means of production. This is known as the capability approach.

It sees people as ends in their own right and their education is to give them the ability to lead worthwhile lives based on their choices beyond mere, increased economic productivity [8]. “Core in the capability approach are a person’s functionings (what they do) and their capabilities (their freedom to realise specific functionings)” [31]. This is illustrated as follows:

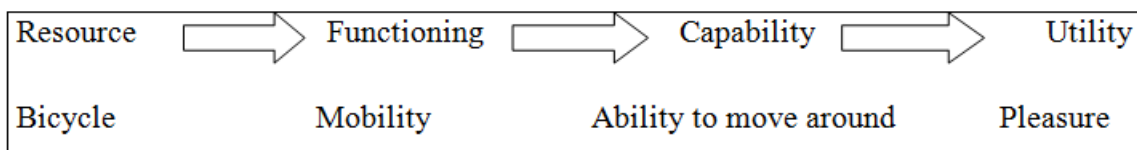


Fig-1: Functionings & Capabilities
Deneulin & Shahani [8]

This example gives an idea about how an individual can convert an input (bicycle) into a capability (ability to move around and deriving utility). There are conversion factors that make this possible or impossible for different sets of people such as that of the bicycle in the above example [32]. Personally, factors such as one’s physical condition, level of literacy and other abilities can determine how one could convert a given resource like a bicycle into a functioning such as mobility. Socio-culturally, norms and practices can facilitate or inhibit conversion. For example, religion may stand in the way of women’s use of a bicycle. Institutionally, social welfare programming at the larger scale can prove a factor in converting resources into functionings and capabilities [32].

Education acts as a means to convert those resources into capabilities. Education, thus, increases people’s chances of having freedom, including freedom and ability to participate in rectifying past injustices or inequalities. That is, “the capability approach is a formula for interpersonal comparisons of welfare” [2]. According to Deneulin & Shahani [8], Sen [33] has spelled out three ways in which education widens people’s freedom and ability to lead a meaningful life.

These are as follows:

1. “Education fulfils an instrumental social role. For example, literacy can foster public debate and dialogue about social and political arrangements;
2. Education has an instrumental process role in facilitating people’s capacity to participate in decision-making processes at the household, community, and national level;
3. Education has an empowering and distributive role in facilitating the ability of disadvantaged, marginalised and excluded groups to organise politically since without education, these group would be unable to gain access to centres of power and make a case for redistribution to begin with” [8].

Examples abound of this thrust. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA), the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and the Beijing Declaration on Women are some manifestations of the link between education and human development according to the capability approach. All these frameworks have targeted not only access and its indicators but have in addition called for gender equality in access, income and participation in political life, and better health provision as holistically as possible [8].

Table-3: Income Poor vs. Capability Deprived

Poverty	Countries	Education		Nutrition/Health	
		Children	Adults	Children	Adults
% of people who are not <i>income poor</i> but are <i>capability deprived</i>	India	43	60	53	63
	Peru	32	37	21	55
% of people who are <i>not income poor</i> but are <i>not capability deprived</i>	India	65	38	53	91
	Peru	93	73	66	94

Deneulin & Shahani [8]

In sum, the capability approach augments the human capital approach through bringing in the element of social justice. Here, “education nurtures processes of critical reflection and connection with others that are intrinsically ethical and not merely instrumental” [8].

The Capability Approach, Education & Human Development

According to Deneulin & Shahani [8], there are three important intersections between education and human development in accordance with the capability approach. First, the approach offers a *new language* of hope and possibility about the value of education and the learning process itself. The emphasis is not on inputs (such as cost and qualification) or outputs (like tests, grades attained), but on the measure of what actual people acquire overtime to choose their kind of life of value^{xxvii}.

Second, the capability approach induces a view of education that brings into its orbit wider issues of *social justice and equity*. This forces a rethink of critical education areas such as curriculum, pedagogy, and learner needs which altogether point to the fact that educating people is not solely an economic enterprise but an attribute of power relations in the structure of any society.

Third, education meets human development at the crossroads of *learner evaluation* and the value attached to its measurement. The capability approach allows for, say, measuring literacy not just literacy tests but people’s ability to express their views.

Education is seen as a form of functioning and exercising agency. This becomes all too clear if we consider, for example, the role of adult education and gender inequality as an area where to demonstrate the capability approach [34].

Table-4: Mapping the Capability Approach onto Education in the Case of Gender

Aspects of Capabilities	Aspects of Education
Wellbeing Achievement	Passing Year 1 in adult literacy class; this may secure the chance of better health, inclusion in local decision-making bodies, esteem of one’s peers, etc.
Wellbeing Freedom	The conditions to pass Year 1, for example, lack of discrimination or harassment in the classroom from the teacher or other learners; freedom to walk safely to and from class; freedom from discrimination or violence because one has attended class (and may not have time to complete all tasks normally assigned in a family or work setting); being able to concentrate in class (not too hungry, too tired, too anxious); being able to access the content of the lesson through appropriate pedagogies and learning materials that take account of gendered styles of learning; being able to study in a well managed program with sufficient resources (skill of teacher, time for classes, money for teacher, materials, buildings as appropriate)
Agency Achievement	Exercising individual agency, that is, choosing to go to adult education classes as part of an informed consideration regarding passing Year 1 as an outcome to be valued
Agency Freedom	Having the conditions to exercise agency, that is, access to information; the chance for discussion and evaluation; the freedom to make up one’s mind without violence or shame

Unterhalter [34]

In sum, the role of education in human development is “the translation of the focus that all children and adolescents, without exception, have the potential and the right to become individuals fully capable of facing the challenges presented by their lives and current times” [21].

Issues & Criticisms

There are a number of issues worth highlighting in wrapping up this essay. First, ground-

breaking as it is in terms of concretizing human development, the Human Development Index is not immune to criticism. Number one, it does not account for ecological quality^{xxviii}. Number two, it does not capture the “social and cultural components” of human freedom well [10].

Second, it is equally important that “over zeal” on the part of those embracing the capability approach to human development does not shape a view of the

Human Poverty Index (HPI) as a replacement of the Human Development Index (HDI). The reason is simple: both have different perspectives that are hugely complementary. For example, while lack of literacy can be considered as a deprivation on account of the poverty index, it is important to remember that the development index gives two slots of its indicators to people's survival and *education*. If this kind of subtlety is borne in mind, illiteracy rates could measure both people's poverty specifically as well as their development generally [33].

Third, an account needs to be given of the process of human development that does not reduce the disadvantageous conditions of deprived people. No amount of massive progress by the advantaged section of society will undo the harm of a lopsided human development [33]. Deneulin and Shahani [8] contend that "at a very basic level, the lives and successes of everyone should count, and that it would be a mistake to make our understanding of the process of development completely insensitive to the gains and losses of those who happen to fare better than others".

Fourth, powerful institutions of education such as Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) would increasingly be called upon to continually review their curricula and pedagogies with regard to objectives targeting people's development at the individual, social and economic levels.

This is particularly critical because these institutions serve the triple purpose of education, research and service that work better with effective structures and incentives [14]. The transformative education theory of Paulo Freire and others is a forceful one in the intersections between education and human development. It has huge potential in bringing about far-reaching social and developmental change through critically highlighting perspectives and transforming people. However, "it is sometimes unclear how specific personal transformations or educational experiences can directly and systematically contribute to development" [14].

Fifth, while it is correct to assert that humans are the ultimate initiators of change in terms of raising capital and harnessing resources to develop their societies^{xxix}, acquiring educational credentials may not always be a stimulus. It could also be a drag on human development. Formal school education will remain the main institutional channel for constructing and imparting human knowledge and skills.

But the manner in which it is organised and conducted could fluctuate between being politically manipulated by the elites and economically rendered as a means to produce an under-class. This underscores the

"problematic nature of the public realm and the exploitative nature of capitalism" [5].

Any given education system is a manifestation of the society that embraces it. Bias may creep in and bedevil the system to the extent of determining who has access to what kind of education and who makes it through.

CONCLUSION

When Alfred Binet came up with a list of test items at the request of Paris City authorities around 1900 to predict which children would succeed or fail, the idea was to establish a single "standard test". Later on, more *pluralistic* views of intelligence and facets of cognition surfaced in what was a big departure from the Binet convention [35]. In the same vein, the capability approach has ushered in a radically different alternative of looking at human development.

It is a *holistic and pluralistic* one, to echo Mahbub ul Haq and Amartya Sen. In this regard, education is crucial for human development because it gives that holistic insight into the processes of change, changes values and attitudes and fosters constructive exercise of rights and obligations at local and global levels [36].

The human development paradigm has brought together strange bedfellows (economics, ethics and politics) and made them "The Three Musketeers": One for All, All for One! Therefore, it is fair to conclude that the relationship between human development and education will continue to be underpinned by equity and social justice and integrally link the education system with the economic and social structures of society on the basis of people's capabilities to choose a life they have reason to value.

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ⁱ Gross National Product (GNP) is an estimate of total value of all the final products and services produced in a given period by the means of production owned by a country's residents. GNP is related to another important economic measure called Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which takes into account all output produced within a country's borders regardless of who owns the means of production (Investopedia, 2016: <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/gnp.asp>).

ⁱⁱ The Human Development Index (HDI) was developed by the United Nations as a metric to assess the social and economic development levels of countries (Investopedia, 2016: <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/h/human-development-index-hdi.asp>).

ⁱⁱⁱ “While an Anglo-American political philosopher will want to investigate the robustness of the use of the term ‘freedom’ by Amartya Sen, the applied social scientist will not bother but instead worry about how the capability approach can be applied to study poverty or inequality. Similarly, a mainstream economist will wonder how the capability approach differs from axiomatic welfare economics, whereas the heterodox economist will instead be worried that the capability approach will not suffer from the criticisms that he has on the core of mainstream economics such as exaggerated attention to formalism or oversimplified assumptions” (Robeyns, 2003:3).

^{iv} The Four Asian Tigers, Four Little Dragons or Four Asian Dragons, are the economies of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, which underwent rapid industrialization and maintained exceptionally high growth rates (in excess of 7 percent a year) between the early 1960s (mid-1950s for Hong Kong) and 1990s (Wikipedia, 2016: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Asian_Tigers).

^v United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation, Organisation of Economic Cooperation & Development, Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

^{vi} Learning how to learn

^{vii} The idea is that civil society will interact with government and others in a manner that makes it easy for governments to run properly and accountably, on the one hand. On the other hand, it is the role of higher education in enshrining democratic values and the idea of global citizenship (Thomson, 2008:5).

^{viii} The idea is to help individuals to understand themselves, arrive at a point in life where they are agents for change in wider structural contexts, while continually engaging in self-reflection (Thomson, 2008).

^{ix} The explicit foundation of UNESCO’s work in higher education is Faure’s (1972) “concept of learning to be, learning to live together, learning to do, and learning to know” (Thomson, 2008:6).

^x Per capita income or average income measures the average income earned per person in a given area (city, region, country, etc.) in a specified year. It is calculated by dividing the area’s total income by its total population (Wikipedia, 2016: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Per_capita_income).

^{xi} *Gross domestic product (GDP)* is the monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country’s borders in a specific time period. Though *GDP* is usually calculated on an annual basis, it can be calculated on a quarterly basis as well

(Investopedia, 2016: www.investopedia.com/terms/g/gdp.asp).

^{xii} From the perspective of developing people’s potential, these pillars stand for how to be yourself and create your own project in life, how to live with differences and create new forms of social participation, how to claim knowledge tools and use them for the common good, and how to act productively (UNESCO, 2005).

^{xiii} Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) consist of loans provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) to countries that experienced economic crises. ... The bank from which a borrowing country receives its loan depends upon the type of necessity. (Wikipedia, 2016: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Structural_adjustment).

^{xiv} Mahbul ul Haq worked tirelessly at grounding the shift in reporting and measuring human development until his death in 1998

^{xv} “Which he explains are general purpose means that help anyone to promote his or her ends” (Maboloc, 2008:8).

^{xvi} She is of the mind that a meaningful human life is only a possibility if these “central capabilities” are guaranteed for all by law.

^{xvii} A synonym of neoliberalism and a phrase coined in 1989 by John Williamson to “describe a set of policies believed to be the formula for promoting economic growth in Latin America” (Edewor, 2014:382-3).

^{xviii} Well-being is “a state of human existence in which a person’s basic needs are adequately met and satisfied” (Edewor, 2014:384).

^{xix} It is holistic to Mahbul and pluralist, as Sen sees it (Edewor, 2014).

^{xx} Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) compares different countries’ currencies through a market “basket of goods” approach. Two currencies are in PPP when a market basket of goods (taking into account the exchange rate) is priced the same in both countries (Investopedia, 2016: www.investopedia.com/video/play/purchasing-power-parity-ppp/).

^{xxi} Followed by Australia and the Netherlands, and US got the 4th slot.

^{xxii} Its variables include “births unattended by trained health personnel, underweight children under five, and female illiteracy rate” (Edewor, 2014:386).

^{xxiii} GDI focuses on improving women’s basic capabilities while GEM emphasizes the application of those capabilities in making choices about life and benefiting from opportunities as they arise.

^{xxiv} Development counts more than prosperity by extending its focus onto life expectancy, educational attainment and income (Yakisik, 2014).

^{xxv} The GNI per capita is the dollar value of a country’s final income in a year, divided by its population. It reflects the average income of a country’s citizens (Wikipedia, 2016:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/.../List_of_countries_by_GNI_\(nominal,_Atlas_method\)_per_ca..](https://en.wikipedia.org/.../List_of_countries_by_GNI_(nominal,_Atlas_method)_per_ca..))

^{xxvi} Acknowledging the place of education in human development by including literacy rates as an indicator in the first Human Development Index, 1990 (Deneulin & Shahani, 2009).

^{xxvii} “For example, being literate and numerate or well-regarded as an educated person, being knowledgeable about history, being able to take part in a discussion with other learners and being respected by teachers and peers in school are important achievements that the capability approach stresses” (Deneulin & Shahani, 2009:217).

^{xxviii} Ecological indicators are used to communicate information about ecosystems and the impact human activity has on ecosystems to groups such as the public or government policy makers (Wikipedia, 2016: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecological_indicator)

^{xxix} That is, they determine to a large extent the character and pace of their own development and that of their societies or countries.