



FROM UNDERDEVELOPMENT TO DEVELOPMENT: THE TOUGH ROAD

Mario Corpin Nierras

Faculty of Agriculture

Biliran Province State University-Biliran Campus

Biliran, Biliran, Philippines

marionierras@gmail.com

Abstract

This review is a concise exposition of an important socio-economic issue called development. Development is a unique term. What appears developed in one sector may not be so in the other or vice-versa. Judging development is simplifiable by looking at some elements which could be considered manifestations of success. On the positive note, several components maybe considered as measures of national development, as follows: 1) the economic stability of a country, 2) the overall living and health conditions of the people, 3) the public level of literacy and education, 4) the actual peace and order situation and 5) the functional environmental living index of the county. It would seem very difficult or near improbability to comply all of these blissful requirements of national livability. The role and political will of government leaders in finding the right actions to uplift the people's lot is beyond emphasis. Social menace brings havoc to the peaceful and congenial observance of human existence. Above anything else, a social disease that immensely affect the smoother transition towards development is the truthful sincerity and sustainability of the things that we do. The road to a nation's success is generally a path full of travails and tribulations. The wise choice and use of resources may create a simple change that could lead to developmental change. Development emanates from every individual member of society. We ourselves are the truer determinants of development. Development comes from within us and its failure also comes from ourselves. Putting our hands together to come up with the development of useful tools, equipment, and processes may cater to spur a productive nation. Today, we cannot afford living without the influence of science and technology. If we want to prosper as a nation, we need to develop and cope along the trends of scientific advances and positively reorient our attitudes for a grandiose good.

Keywords

Developing countries, economic development, Human Development Index (HDI), industrialized nations, globalization, national economy, progress, scientific advancement, third world economies

Background

The main purpose of this paper is to provide awareness to the reader about a significant issue which affects every citizen in whatever part of the world. This writing may also create some degree of influence to ordinary people and those working in the public service.

Positive influence could change attitude that may translate to increased productivity. This article is a result of putting together the ideas taken from various literatures cited in the succeeding sections.

This paper made use of a combination of multiple sources such as but not limited to personal observations, readings from relevant materials, press releases, and social media account. It aims to meet the following expectations:

1. Develop awareness on the general public the pressing issues of socio-economic, political and environmental development;
2. Challenge government leaders of all nations to find ways and means to uplift their socio-economic, environment and political condition; and
3. Make education a gateway to improving the human habitability of every country.

Main Text

Development is an inclusive term. It covers practically all areas of human endeavor and even beyond. It involves satisfying the very basic biological needs of the people living in a particular area or country up to meeting most of their economic, social, political, aesthetic and spiritual demands. It may be marked by the presence of high-quality public services for the people. The availability of advanced infrastructures and scientifically-competitive tools and equipment also marked a country's development. At the same time, development means curbing the great economic disparity among people [1]. It is conceptualized that national development is significantly determined by the level of overall satisfaction of the citizens residing in a particular place, state, country or region. National development is closely connected to economic development. An old concept of economic development looks at it as an economy which is converted from rural and agricultural to urban, industrial, and service-oriented [2]. However, a newer and better view describes economic development by integrating rural and urban development. It aims to effectively conserve and sustain the habitability of the environment along with agriculture. The world of nations must integrate social, political, environmental, and cultural aspects as they grow to modernity [3].

Economic development is now conceived as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, national institutions, acceleration of economic growth, reduction of inequality, and eradication of poverty [4]. Thus, in the context of true national development, the creation of a welfare state maybe found desirable for most citizens. A welfare state is a kind of governance where the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of its citizens. It is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth, and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life [5].

Discussion of Issues

Several important topics or issues are identified and discussed below. The author believes though that there could still be other important things or issues that may have been missed or inadvertently failed to include.

What is Underdevelopment

There are attributes of underdevelopment which a reader has to look into. Undoubtedly, underdevelopment is a subjective term. But it appears that any human being in his simplest thought could readily say that underdevelopment is akin to poverty, inadequacies or powerlessness. It may be coined also with the inability of a country to cope with the existing pace or trends in science and technology. The lack or absence of opportunities, tools, equipment, apparatus and the like, which are needed in discharging desirable public services are also signs of underdevelopment. These important public services particularly include but not limited to education, health and livelihood support.

Underdevelopment could be referred to as an economy where the living conditions are extremely low due to the very low levels of per capita income. These results from the low levels of productivity and high growth rates of population [6]. Other authors define underdevelopment as a mass of poverty which is chronic, resulting from the use of obsolete methods of production and social organization. It is characterized by the co-existence of unutilized or under-utilized manpower on the one hand and of the unexploited natural resources on the other. In other words, an underdeveloped economy is one in which the levels of living are low because of low per capita income. Hence, there is absolute poverty, low consumption levels, poor health services, high death rates, high birth rates and dependence from foreign aids [7].

Developing Nation: A Perspective

Countries on the verge of underdevelopment toward development may fall as developing nations. They belong to that level of national category which is neither underdeveloped nor developed. But with the steadfast implementation of practical designs for the building and rebuilding of the nation, a silver lining is ahead.

Any rich or poor country has always the responsibility of maintaining the proper balance of their own surroundings. A country that does not care about preserving the natural beauty of its environment is one which does not care about posterity. A good country no matter how simple or scarce are its resources should be sincere in taking care of its people and nature. Human being needs to live in tandem with his surroundings. Happy living means preserving and taking care of our environment. In a related article, Nierras stressed that extending to the community needed tools and knowhow especially to small farmers, may contribute at improving the life and living of the people [8].

Developed Country

Developed countries are often judged by the amount of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. Though some economists measure the level of a country's development by looking at its Human Development Index (HDI) value [9] [10]. A getting-higher value for both of these measures indicate something favorable to development. As a dimension, HDI is based on the people's level of education, their condition of health, and amount of income.

High level of education and income plus a longer lifespan of most of a country's citizens means higher HDI. Of course, these do not preclude other important determinants such as the ability to generate new technologies and utilize high-tech machines, the presence of competitive industries and the existence of habitable and peaceful surroundings. It may be pointed out that HDI was created to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country and not economic growth alone [11].

Strong Research Base

Most if not all developed countries in the world have a very strong and determined focus on research. Research is the social fiber which could bring about an unlimited effect or change towards the progress of a nation. What an underdeveloped or developing countries could do is to seriously reorient its policies, programs, projects, activities, and more importantly, its people. In doing so their local needs and problems maybe outrightly responded to and given immediate or outright solution.

Making a satisfactory plan of action to local issues/problems without depending from external assistance/support is the essence of development. And this scenario is unlikely to occur if a country does not consider itself putting up a strong research base. In other words, doing timely and relevant research might gradually change a nation from underdeveloped to developing and finally to developed nation status [12]. If this happens, a country maybe considered already an independent and socio-economically progressive.

Tough Road to Development

Progress is analogous to a dream which every citizen always wishes to happen to their country. Perhaps this is everyone else aspiration for the sake of posterity and patrimony. It is a difficult process yet a fulfilling endeavor. Progress does not only focus on one aspect of humanity but rather embraces a holistic exercise of mental, physical and spiritual utilization of man's prowess and wit. Development necessarily means the intelligent use of resources such that those available may not be put to jeopardy or wasted, and those absent be developed or procured in time. For many innumerable instances the limited government resources of a number of countries were subjects of controversies involving unwise utilization of supplies, tools and equipment. Akin to this, it is popularly known that "developing nations do not need more handouts, they need roads" [13]. Supposed to be, for every centavo of spending there should be a corresponding return in terms of output and good service. Year after year of spending without demanding a good return to the investment is a draining exercise of resources. If this overall behavior continues, development is very hard to be found. A tough overhaul of the people's orientation plus the presence of a determined leader maybe necessary to trigger development.

Realistically, national development requires a very tedious, sincere and utmost utilization or pouring out of multiple government resources. The will to change or develop on the side of our political leaders plus the positive attitude of the stakeholders is an unprecedented requisite.

Welfare State

Is it good for a country to dream of becoming a welfare state? A welfare state is a type of government in which the state or a well-founded system of social organizations play a

crucial role in the security and advancement of the economic and social well-being of citizens. This system is anchored on the principles of parity of opportunity, fair distribution of resources, and public responsibility for those incapable to provide themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life [14].

It is fundamental in a welfare state for the citizens to be provided with the so-called social insurance. These may include but not limited to the provision of free housing, free education and medical services plus the non-levying of taxes from its citizens especially those ordinary ones.

Conclusion

A magic wand is off-limits to economic and social development. The road to developmental progress is a tough lest a very painstaking sustainable endurance on the part of sincere and dedicated government leaders. But this super goal is unlikely to happen if the populace is lukewarmly cooperating. Worse if they are only thinking to bring down what have been rightly started by their leaders. As the popular adage says, the undesirable behavior of a crab is an everlasting evil to the developmental progress of any community or nation. What the world needs today is a truly renewed mental and psychological orientation of the citizenry whose aim is not only focused on selfish interests and individual glorification. This means that development is a phenomenon that is not created by happenstance. It is one that truly involves a combination of the right skills, technology, tools, equipment, cooperation, timing, and continuous financial and moral support.

Today, the active participation of everybody spearheaded by the technical men and women in the scientific field is very needed for a country to truly grow scientifically and economically. If sincerely pursued, then underdevelopment will just become a thing of the past and overall developmental progress sets in. True enough, who determines the success or failure of a certain country are the kind of people and quality of actions that they do. Indolence and idolatry are indisputable enemies of development. Envy and ruination are evil wicks which sow unwanted outcome called underdevelopment. A welfare state situation seems to be a welcome scenario for everybody's sake.

Recommendation

On the whole, the following items may serve as guideposts for government leaders and populace to start a more active countryside development effort:

1. Developing practical and doable policies aimed at improving the plight of the people
e.g., implementing poverty reduction programs and projects, creating long-term livelihood opportunities, etc.
2. Enhancing science and technology through research and using results thereof to solve
actual needs and problems of the communities;
3. Boosting the educational system to be at par with the rest of the world, e.g., providing
competitive learning facilities and teachers;
4. Focusing on improving the quality of health services and facilities for the people;
5. Aiming to make one's country a better place to live in by considering the various aspects of human needs.

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