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Elements on the concept of development in Mahbub ul Haq

(online paper)



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Introduction (1)

In my text, I would like to analyse some aspects of the thought of Mahbub ul Haq. These aspects are relevant both for the life of individuals, in general, and for the conditions of old people, in particular.

For my exposition, I shall refer to the books of ul Haq *Reflections on Human Development: How the focus of development economics shifted from national income accounting to people-centred policies, told by one of the chief architects of the new paradigm* and *The Poverty Curtain: Choices for the Third World*. The main points of my inquiry will be the following:

- National priorities determine the way in which income expansion is distributed: therefore, income expansion does not lead necessarily to the improvement of people's life conditions.
- The authentic aim of development is the enlargement of people's choices.

I shall begin my analysis with a passage in which ul Haq differentiates between the development and growth of GNP.

It can be seen that to the growth of GNP does not necessarily correspond the growth of development of the life conditions of the population:

Introduction (2)

‘The lack of recognition given to people as an end of development is even more glaring. Only in the past two decades have we started focussing on who development is for, looking beyond growth in gross national product (GNP). For the first time, we have begun to acknowledge – still with a curious reluctance – that in many societies GNP can increase while human lives shrivel. We have begun to focus on human needs, the compilation of poverty profiles, and the situation of the bottom 40% of society often bypassed by development. We have started to measure the costs of adjustment not only in lost output, but also in lost lives and lost human potential. We have finally begun to accept the axiom that human welfare – not GNP – is the true end of development.’
(Reflections on Human Development, p. 4)

Introduction (3)

People and human welfare are the goals of development: the mistake in the previous economic analyses and strategies has consisted in concentrating the attention exclusively on GNP and on its growth.

As a consequence of this orientation, people have not been considered and recognised in most of the economic analyses as the authentic end of development: development has usually been reduced to growth in the gross national product without consideration for the actual life conditions of the individuals.

Only in a later phase, the notion of development has been connected to people as the authentic end of economic development: it has been acknowledged that people are the authentic target of development.

Introduction (4)

Development cannot be interpreted correctly if it is not referred to the life conditions of people. Life conditions of people have, therefore, to be regarded as the criterion on the basis of which development has to be assessed. Ul Haq directs the reader's attention to the fact that there is no necessary correspondence between the increase of GNP and the improvement of the life condition of people. Quite on the contrary, it can happen, and it actually happens, that GNP grows and general life conditions, average life conditions of people become worse.

In ul Haq's view, the attention of the recent economic research has no longer been directed exclusively to output and to the loss of output, but also to lost lives and lost human potential.

The attention of economic research has been directed to human welfare as the end of development. This is the true change in the paradigm of interpretation of economic events: the authentic goal of development is not the GNP but the welfare of people. GNP and its growth are means; they are not the end of development. This implies a complete change of perspective and of point of view from which economic phenomena are analysed and assessed:

Introduction (5)

‘They (the development plans) would start with a human balance sheet. What human resources exist in the country? How educated are its people? What is the inventory of skills? What is the profile of relative income distribution and absolute poverty? How much unemployment and underemployment are there? What are the urban-rural distribution and the level of human development in various regions? Has the country undergone a rapid demographic transition? What are the cultural and social attitudes and the aspirations of the people? In other words, how does the society live and breathe?’ (Reflections on Human Development, p. 5)

Introduction (6)

The essential point is the end of the quotation: the centre of the research consists in determining how society lives and breathes. The subjects that are searched for and investigated are after and thank to the described change of perspective the following ones:

- Determination of the human resources of a country.
- Degree of education of the people of a country.
- Amount of the skills present in a country.
- Profile of relative income distribution.
- Profile of absolute poverty.

Introduction (7)

- Level of unemployment.
- Level of underemployment.
- Relationships between urban and rural distribution.
- Level of human development in the various regions of a country.
- Cultural and social attitudes of people of the country.
- Aspirations of people of the country.

Ul Haq clearly expresses that the purpose of development consists in the enlargement of people's choices:

Introduction (8)

‘The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people’s choice. In principle, 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 a sense of participation in community activities. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives.’ (Reflections on Human Development, p. 14)

Introduction (9)

Despite the importance of the growth figures, they are not sufficient to interpret a society. Ul Haq lists therefore a series of criteria which are essential to understanding and to assessing the conditions of a society. Moreover, ul Haq states that the goal of development consists in building a life environment which enables people to have good conditions of life.

Development ought to have as its aim to give people long, healthy and creative lives. The difference between the research paradigm of economic growth and human development consists in economic growth concentrating on the expansion of income, on the one hand, and in human development aiming at the enlargement of all human choices, on the other hand:

Introduction (10)

'The defining difference between the economic growth and the human development schools is that the first focuses exclusively on the expansion of only one choice – income – while the second embraces the enlargement of all human choices – whether economic, social, cultural or political. It might well be argued that the expansion of income can enlarge all other choices as well. But that is not necessarily so, for a variety of reasons.

To begin with, income may be unevenly distributed within a society. People who have no access to income, or enjoy only limited access, will see their choices fairly constrained. It has often been observed that in many societies, economic growth does not trickle down.

Introduction (11)

But there is an even more fundamental reason why income expansion may fail to enlarge human options. It has to do with the national priorities chosen by the societies or its rulers – guns or butter, an elitist model of development or an egalitarian one, political authoritarianism or political democracy, a command economy or participatory development.

(...) Many human choices extend far beyond economic well-being. Knowledge, health, a clean physical environment, political freedom and simple pleasures of life are not exclusively, or largely, dependent on income. National wealth can expand people's choices in these areas. But it might not. The use that people make of their wealth, not the wealth itself, is decisive. And unless societies recognize that their real wealth is their people, an excessive obsession with creating material wealth can obscure the goal of enriching human lives.' (Reflections on Human Development, pp. 14-15)

Introduction (12)

Growth is necessary, but not sufficient. Growth is necessary to have the resources to be distributed. Growth is not sufficient, though, since it is decisive to see how this growth is distributed within the specific systems. Income alone cannot reach the enlargement of economic, social and political choices, since income can be not regularly distributed in a society.

Moreover, there are profound differences connected to income expansion: income expansion can have different results depending on its being connected to an elitist model of development or to an egalitarian model of development, to political authoritarianism or to political democracy, to a command economy or to participatory development. The priorities which a government chooses are decisive for the use of the resources.

On Mahbub ul Haq (1)

I would like to analyse some elements contained in Mahbub ul Haq's meditation on the concept of development.

Ul Haq endows us with many instruments that enable us today too, more than twenty years after the death of ul Haq, to understand aspects of development, on the one hand, and the limits of all the evaluation of economies based exclusively on GNP and its growth, on the other hand.

For my exposition, I shall take into account two studies of ul Haq, that is,

- "Reflections on Human Development" and
- "The Poverty Curtain".

On Mahbub ul Haq (2)

Most points I am going to analyse are exposed in the “Reflections on Human Development”, but with the help of some passages taken from “The Poverty Curtain”, we shall be able to see that ul Haq had been reflecting on the limits of all evaluations basing on the growth of the GNP for many years.

Ul Haq used therein the experiences he had been accumulating as, among other things, Director of the Policy Planning of the World Bank.

Ul Haq’s work brought to the Human Development Paradigm and to the Human Development Index.

Ul Haq on GNP and human development

“The lack of recognition given to people as an end of development is even more glaring. Only in the past two decades have we started focussing on who development is for, looking beyond growth in gross national product (GNP). For the first time, we have begun to acknowledge – still with a curious reluctance – that in many societies GNP can increase while human lives shrivel. We have begun to focus on human needs, the compilation of poverty profiles, and the situation of the bottom 40% of society often bypassed by development. We have started to measure the costs of adjustment not only in lost output, but also in lost lives and lost human potential. We have finally begun to accept the axiom that human welfare – not GNP – is the true end of development.” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 4)

My notes

The substantial problem for ul Haq is that people have not been considered in most of the economic analyses as the end of development. Development has usually been referred to and reduced to growth in gross national product.

Only in recent times (ul Haq wrote his book in 1995), the notion of development has been connected to people as the end of development. That is, only in recent times it has been acknowledged that people is the target of development.

Development may not be interpreted correctly if development is not referred to the life conditions of people.

Life conditions of people have, therefore, to be regarded as the criterion on the basis of which development should be evaluated.

My notes

Ul Haq directs the reader's attention to the fact that there is no necessary correspondence between the increase of GNP and the improvement of the life condition of people.

Quite on the contrary, it can happen and it actually happens that GNP grows and general life conditions, average life conditions of people became worse.

Ul Haq underlines that researchers have begun to pay attention to the following aspects:

- Human needs;
- Poverty profiles;
- Situation of the bottom 40% of society.

My notes

Moreover, the attention of the research has then not been directed exclusively to output and to the loss of output, but also to lost lives and lost human potential. Finally, yet importantly, the attention of economic research has directed its attention to human welfare as the end of development.

This is the true change in the of interpretation of economic events: the end of development is not the GNP but the welfare of people. GNP and its growth are a means, not the end of development. This implies a complete change of perspective and of point of view from which economic phenomena are analysed and evaluated.



Ul Haq on methods of evaluation of development

“They (the development plans) would start with a human balance sheet. What human resources exist in the country? How educated are its people? What is the inventory of skills? What is the profile of relative income distribution and absolute poverty? How much unemployment and underemployment are there? What are the urban-rural distribution and the level of human development in various regions? Has the country undergone a rapid demographic transition? What are the cultural and social attitudes and the aspirations of the people? In other words, how does the society live and breathe?” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 5)

My notes

You can clearly observe the change of perspective in the plan of research. The subjects that are searched for and investigated are after and thank to the described change of perspective the following ones:

- Determination of the human resources of a country;
- Degree of education of the people of a country;
- Amount of the skills present in a country;
- Profile of relative income distribution;
- Profile of absolute poverty;

My notes

- Level of unemployment;
- Level of underemployment;
- Relationships between urban and rural distribution;
- Level of human development in the various regions of a country;
- Cultural and social attitudes of people of the country;
- Aspirations of people of the country.

This all points can be summarized in the final sentence of ul Haq, that is, the research pattern is to determine how society lives and breathes.

GNP is evidently not the unique theme nor the main theme of the research.

UI Haq on ends and means (1)

“Plan targets must first be expressed in basic human needs and only later translated into physical targets for production and consumption. This means that there will have to be a clear exposition of the targets for average nutrition, education, health, housing and transport – as a very minimum. There must be an open discussion of what level of basic needs a society can afford at its current per capita income and at its projected incomes.

Ul Haq on ends and means (2)

The basic needs targets will then have to be built into detailed planning for production and consumption. In other words, we must proceed from ends to means, not the other way round.” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 5)

My notes

Economic research should be concentrated on nutrition, education, health, housing and transport.

Most important of all is in this context the change of direction between means and ends; first, the ends consisting in the human needs of a society have to be determined. Only thereafter, on the basis of the determination of needs can production be discussed and organized.

The target of the economic research lies in the determination of the needs of human beings. There is no analysis of the economical indexes without a previous determination of the needs.

Ul Haq on development and GNP

“Development plans must contain a human framework for analysing their performance. A comprehensive set of social and human development indicators needs to be developed to monitor plan progress. Besides GNP growth rates, the human story must also be brought out in annual assessments of how many people experienced what growth rates and how the relative and absolute poverty levels changed every year. In some countries, GNP many have stagnated, but a lot of human capital may have been built up, strengthening the potential for future growth and making the measures of actual growth an unfair basis for comparison with other countries.”

(From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 6)

My notes

What is more important is that a comparison between GNPs of different countries cannot say too much about the future of the countries themselves.

If a country has invested in human capital, in education, for instance, it has accumulated a potential for future growth, even though its GNP is equal or inferior to countries that have not invested in education.

The level of wellness of a country cannot be measured only referring to the GNP.

Ul Haq: Development and the enlargement of people's choices

“The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choice. In principle, 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 a sense of participation in community activities. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives.” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 14)

My notes

As you can see, there are elements that constitute development but that are not measured by GNP-criteria:

- Greater access to knowledge,
- Better nutrition,
- Better health services,
- More secure livelihoods,
- Security against crime,
- Security against physical violence,

My notes

- Satisfying leisure hours,
- Political freedoms,
- Cultural freedoms,
- Participation in community activities.

Development ought to have, in the opinion of ul Haq, these targets as its own aims: in general, development must be structured around the aim of giving people long, healthy and creative lives.

Ul Haq on the difference between economic growth and human development – 1 –

“The defining difference between the economic growth and the human development schools is that the first focuses exclusively on the expansion of only one choice – income – while the second embraces the enlargement of all human choices – whether economic, social, cultural or political. It might well be argued that the expansion of income can enlarge all other choices as well. But that is not necessarily so, for a variety of reasons.

Ul Haq on the difference between economic growth and human development – 2 –

To begin with, income may be unevenly distributed within a society. People who have no access to income, or enjoy only limited access, will see their choices fairly constrained. It has often been observed that in many societies, economic growth does not trickle down.

UI Haq on the difference between economic growth and human development – 3–

But there is an even more fundamental reason why income expansion may fail to enlarge human options. It has to do with the national priorities chosen by the societies or its rulers – guns or butter, an elitist model of development or an egalitarian one, political authoritarianism or political democracy, a command economy or participatory development.

Ul Haq on the difference between economic growth and human development – 4 –

(...) Many human choices extend far beyond economic well-being. Knowledge, health, a clean physical environment, political freedom and simple pleasures of life are not exclusively, or largely, dependent on income. National wealth can expand people's choices in these areas. But it might not. The use that people make of their wealth, not the wealth itself, is decisive. And unless societies recognize that their real wealth is their people, an excessive obsession with creating material wealth can obscure the goal of enriching human lives.”
(From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, pp. 14-15)

My notes – 1 –

You can see the following connections:

- Economic growth – income, on the one hand,
- Human development – enlargement of economic, social and political choices, on the other hand.

Income alone cannot reach the enlargement of economic, social and political choices, since income can be not regularly distributed in a society. All those persons not having a sufficient income cannot enlarge their gamut of choices.

My notes – 2 –

Moreover, there are profound differences connected to income expansion: income expansion can have different consequences depending on its being connected to an elitist model of development or to an egalitarian model of development, to political authoritarianism or to political democracy, to a command economy or to a participatory development.

Enlargement of choices cannot happen all the same independently of the political system.

Moreover, knowledge, health, a clean physical environment, political freedom are not necessarily connected to income.

Ul Haq on the necessity of growth

“But we must be careful. Rejecting an automatic link between income expansion and flourishing human lives is not rejecting growth itself. Economic growth is essential in poor societies for reducing or eliminating poverty. But the quality of this growth is just as important as its quantity. Conscious public policy is needed to translate economic growth into people’s lives.” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 15)

Ul Haq on the human development paradigm

“(...) the human development paradigm embraces all of society – not just the economy. The political, cultural and social factors are given as much attention as the economic factors.” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 16)

My notes

Economic growth is necessary, but not sufficient in order to ensure human development.

It is necessary since without economic growth there are no resources in order to guarantee improvements in human well-being.

On the other hand, high economic growth rates will not immediately mean a higher level of human development.

UI Haq on the essential components of human development

- Equity
- Sustainability
- Productivity
- Empowerment

Ul Haq on growth and development

“(...) it is wrong to suggest that economic growth is unnecessary for human development. No sustained improvement in human well-being is possible without growth. But it is also wrong to suggest that high economic growth rates will automatically translate into higher levels of human development They may or they may not. It all depends on the policy choices that countries make.” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 26)

Ul Haq on the components of the Human Development Index

“The HDI has three key components: longevity, knowledge and income. Longevity is measured by life expectancy at birth as the sole unadjusted indicator. Knowledge is measured by two education variables: adult literacy and mean years of schooling, with a weight of two-thirds to literacy and one-third to mean years of schooling. Initially, only adult literacy was in the index. Mean years of schooling were added later because, unlike developing countries, few industrial countries maintain separate figures for adult literacy, and there was a need to differentiate the performance of countries already close to 100% literacy.” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 49)

On the components of the Human Development Index

- Longevity is calculated on the basis of life expectancy at birth.
- Knowledge is based on adult literacy and mean years of schooling.
- The difference between HDI and GNP is important in order to rightly evaluate the condition of a country.

Ul Haq on the myths of friendly markets (1)

“One important point: markets are not very friendly to the poor, to the weak or to the vulnerable, either nationally or internationally. Nor are markets free. They are often the handmaidens of powerful interest groups, and they are greatly affected by the prevailing distribution of income.

(...) The point again is that market do not automatically favour the poor, the weak, the vulnerable. Unless policy steps are taken to enable the poor to compete on an equal footing, they stand to lose much from the workings of the unregulated market system. While policy-makers must accept the logic of the market-place, they must also turn around and make markets work more efficiently in the interests of all people. It is people-friendly markets that are needed. After all, markets are only a means – people, the end.

Ul Haq on the myths of friendly markets (2)

Establishing people-friendly markets – accessible to all the people, encouraging full participation in the mainstream of economic life, extending benefits to everyone rather than to a privileged few – has several preconditions. There must be a more equitable distribution of income, productive assets (particular land) and credit. There must be enough human investment to enable people to compete on an equal footing. There must be open market entry – with no religious, ethnic, gender or other barriers. There must be competitive market conditions and regulation of monopolistic practices – to prevent a powerful few from bending the market rules to serve their narrow interests. There must be regulation to ensure that the pursuit of private greed does not create external “bads” (such as environmental pollution) and that the greedy are made to pay for the bads they create. People-friendly markets thus require a very activist government – not to overregulate economic enterprises but to create conditions of more equitable access to competitive markets.” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 143)

My notes (1)

Ul Haq observations are very rich:

- Markets are not friendly to the poor,
- Markets are not free,
- Markets are dependent on interest groups,
- Markets are affected by the prevailing distribution of income.

If a policy is not adopted that enables the poor to compete, the poor are destined to lose. Unregulated markets are not favourable to the poor. Being faithful to his conception of people representing the end of the development, whereas markets are only a means, ul Haq expresses the aim that markets are transformed from interest-group-markets into people-friendly markets. This transformation cannot happen by alone: it needs a corresponding policy.

My notes (2)

The conditions for friendly markets are the following:


- A more equitable distribution of income,
- Enough human investments for people to compete on equal conditions,
- Open market entry with no discrimination,
- Regulation of monopolistic practices,
- Limitation of private greed.

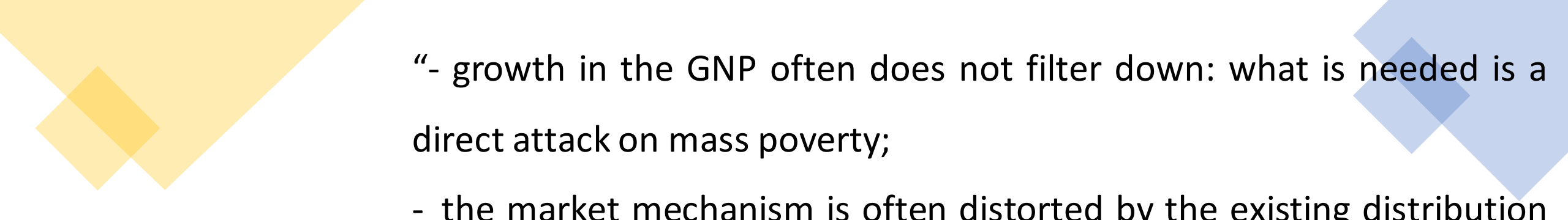
In order that these conditions are established, the government must be active. That is, an active government is needed.




Ul Haq on growth without justice

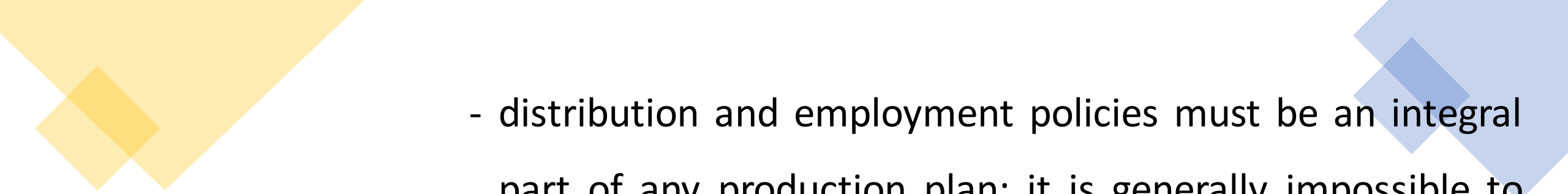
“The most unforgivable sin of development planners is to become mesmerized by high growth rates in Gross National Product and to forget the real objective of development. In country after country, economic growth is being accompanied by rising disparities, in personal as well as in regional incomes. In country after country, the masses are complaining that development has not touched their ordinary lives. Very often, economic growth has meant very little social justice. It has been accompanied by rising unemployment, worsening social services and increasing absolute and relative poverty.” (From: ul Haq, M., “The Poverty Curtain”, pp. 24, 25)






Ul Haq on the limits of GNP growth – 2 –

- “- growth in the GNP often does not filter down: what is needed is a direct attack on mass poverty;
 - the market mechanism is often distorted by the existing distribution of income and wealth: it is generally an unreliable guide to setting national objectives;
 - institutional reforms are generally more decisive than appropriate price signals for fashioning relevant development strategies;
 - new development strategies must be based on the satisfaction of basic human needs rather than on market demand;
 - development styles should be such as to build development around people rather than people around development;
- 



Ul Haq on the limits of GNP growth – 3 –

- distribution and employment policies must be an integral part of any production plan: it is generally impossible to produce first and distribute later;
 - a vital element in the distribution policies is to increase the productivity of the poor by a radical change in the direction of investment toward the poorest sections of society;
 - a drastic restructuring of political and economic power relationships is often required if development is to spread to the vast majority of the population.” (From: ul Haq, M., “The Poverty Curtain”, pp. 27, 28)
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Ul Haq on the limits of GNP approach

– 1 –

“The essential point, however, is that a high growth rate has been, and is, no guarantee against worsening poverty and economic explosions.

What has gone wrong? We were confidently told that if you take care of your GNP, poverty will take care of itself. We were often reminded to keep our eyes focused on a high GNP growth target, as it was the best guarantee for eliminating unemployment and of redistributing incomes later through fiscal means. Then what really happened? Where did the development process go astray?

Ul Haq on the limits of GNP approach

– 2 –

(...) My feeling is that it went astray at least in two directions. First, we conceived our task not as the eradication of the worst forms of poverty but as the pursuit of certain high levels of per capita income. We convinced ourselves that the latter is a necessary condition for the former but we did not, in fact, give much thought to the interconnection. We development economists persuaded the developing countries that life begins at \$ 1,000 and thereby we did them no service. They chased elusive per capita income levels, they fussed about high growth rates in GNP, they constantly worried about “how much was produced and how fast,” they cared much less about “what was produced and how it was distributed.”

Ul Haq on the limits of GNP approach

– 3 –

This hot pursuit of GNP growth was not necessarily wrong; it only blurred our vision. It is no use pretending that it did not, for how else can we explain the worsening poverty in many developing countries? How else can we explain our own preoccupation as economists with endless refinements of statistical series concerning GNP, investment, saving, exports and imports; continuing fascination with growth models; and formulation of evaluation criteria primarily in terms of output increases? If eradication of poverty was the real objective, why did so little professional work go into determining the extent of unemployment, maldistribution of incomes, malnutrition, shelterless population or other forms of poverty?” (From: ul Haq, M., “The Poverty Curtain”, pp. 32, 33)

Ul Haq and environmental ethics

“What we need to sustain is human life. Sustaining the physical environment is a means, not an end, just as GNP growth is only a means towards human development. The environmental debate must be given a human perspective to save it from the excesses of environmental fanatics, who often seem more interested in saving trees than in saving people. A more meaningful concept, therefore, is sustainable human development, putting people at the centre of the environmental debate.” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 78)



Conclusions

Mahbub ul Haq criticises the interpretation of development as increase in GNP.

Economic growth is an instrument.

People and human welfare should be the authentic goal of development.

Furthermore, Ul Haq points out that the increase of GNP does not bring necessarily about an improvement of the life conditions of the individual.

UI Haq on the relationships between HDI and GNP – 1 –

“If a country’s HDI rank is more favourable than its GNP per capita rank, this should reassure policy-makers that their social priorities are headed in the right direction and that the country is building up an adequate base of human capital for accelerated growth. It should also remind them that social progress cannot be sustained for long without an adequate economic base – so they should also correct the imbalance on the economic growth side.

Ul Haq on the relationships between HDI and GNP – 2 –

But if the HDI rank is less favourable than the GNP per capita rank, this should signal to policy-makers that the benefits of national income are not being distributed to the people. It should prompt them to examine whether the problem lies in maldistribution of income or assets, or in wrong development priorities or in lack of public policy attention to social services. Comparison with other countries with similar incomes should reassure them that it is possible to generate greater human welfare at that level of income. So, there should be no tension between the HDI and GNP measures. Both can inform public policy.” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, pp. 53-54)


Mahbub ul Haq's biography – 1 –

- 24th February 1934: Born in Gurdaspur, East Punjab, British India.
- 1953: graduated in Economics at the Government College Lahore.
- 1953 – 1957: BA Economics King's College Cambridge, Ph.D. Economics Yale University.
- 1957: Return to Pakistan; Assistant Chief of the Planning Commission of the first Five-Year-Plan.
- 1960-1969: Chief Economist of the Planning Commission; criticism of the distribution of the growth over the country; support of heavier taxation of the asset owning classes.
- 1970-1982: Director of Policy Planning of the World Bank under Robert McNamara; promoting poverty alleviation programmes and increased allocations for small farm production, nutrition, education, water supply and further social sectors.
- 1982: Return to Pakistan; Director of the Planning Commission.
- 1983: Minister of Planning and Development.



Ul Haq on freedom and human development


“There has been considerable controversy over whether political freedom is an integral part of human development. At a conceptual level, there should be no hesitation. The purpose of human development is to enlarge the range of people’s choices – and the most basic choice is the freedom to make a choice, rather than have someone else make it. (...) freedom cannot be separated from human development.” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 67)



Ul Haq on the methods of evaluation of freedom (1)

“Political participation. Single party or multiparty elections; universal franchise; regularity and fairness of elections; freedom to form political parties; right of peaceful assembly; decentralization of decision-making powers; continuity and sustainability of democratic institutions

Rule of law. No arbitrary arrest, torture or cruel treatment of killings by the state; no disappearance of political opponents; no police brutality; fair and open trials; competent, independent and impartial tribunals; presumption of innocence until proved guilty; judiciary independent from executive control; equality before the law



Ul Haq on the methods of evaluation of freedom (2)

Freedom of expression. No restrictions on public or private speech; no censorship or other limits on media; independent ownership and control of media; recourse to legal institutions to protect freedom of speech.

Non-discrimination. No discrimination based on gender, religion, ethnic group, national or social origin, language or income and wealth, whether by law, by government action or inaction or through actual practice.” (From: ul Haq, M., “Reflections on Human Development”, p. 70)

Ul Haq on poverty and GNP

“(...) the objective of development must be viewed as a selective attack on the worst form of poverty. Development goals must be defined in terms of progressive reduction and eventual elimination of malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, squalor, unemployment, and inequalities. We were taught to take care of our GNP, as this will take care of poverty. Let us reverse this and take care of poverty, as this will take care of the GNP. In other words, let us worry about the content of GNP even more than its rate of increase.” (From: ul Haq, M., “The Poverty Curtain”, p. 35)

Ul Haq on employment as the first aim of political economics

– 1 –

“(…) employment should become a primary objective of planning and no longer be treated as only a secondary objective. Let a society regards its entire labor force as allocable; over this force its limited capital resources must be spread. Let us reverse the present thinking that, since there is only a fixed amount of capital to be allocated at a particular time, it can employ only a certain part of the labor force, leaving the rest unemployed, to subsist on others as dependents or as beggars, without any particular income, often suffering from the worst form of malnutrition and squalor. Instead let us treat the pool of labor as given; at any particular time it must be combined with the existing capital stock irrespective of how low the productivity of labor or capital may be.

Ul Haq on employment as the first aim of political economics

– 2 –

If physical capital is short, skill formation and organization can replace it in the short run. It is only if we proceed from the goal of full employment, with people doing something useful, even with little doses of capital and organization, that we can eradicate some of the worst forms of poverty.” (From: ul Haq, M., “The Poverty Curtain”, p. 36)

Mahbub ul Haq's biography – 2 –

- April 1985 – January 1986: Minister Finance, Planning and Economic Affairs; promoting poverty alleviation.
- June 1988 – December 1988: Minister Finance, Planning and Economic Affairs.
- 1989: appointed as special advisor to the UNDP – United Nations Development Programme – William Draper; work at the first Human Development Report; Project Director of the concept of Human Development and of the Human Development Report.
- 1996: founded the Human Development Center in Islamabad.
- 16th July 1998: died in New York City.

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I thank you very
much for your
interest!

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