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## UNIT 30 DEVELOPMENT

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### 30.0 OBJECTIVES

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The purpose of this unit is to familiarise you with different aspects of the idea of development. Like all concepts, development has some meanings attached to it. These meanings manifest the manner in which the concept has been understood historically, as well as the dominant or prevalent ways of understanding it in a specific historical context. In this unit, we shall try to understand the idea of development as it evolved over time, and the diverse ways in which it is understood in the contemporary world. Towards the end of the unit, a brief list of readings is provided to enhance your understanding of the theme.

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### 30.1 INTRODUCTION

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The idea of development is commonly understood as a process of economic growth and changes or improvements in the lives of people. If one were to ask people what, according to them was development, the most frequently mentioned elements would in all probability pertain to economic institutions and indicators of economic growth, viz., industrialisation, technological advancement, urbanisation, increase in wealth and standards of living, etc. It is quite likely that ‘westernisation’ would also recur in most responses, if not explicitly, then in all probability as a reference point for comparison. The identification of development with characteristics associated with the ‘west’ or the ‘modern’ is, however, not simply a matter of common perception. The association has roots in the history of the idea of development itself. It is this association which has contributed towards shaping the dominant understanding of the term, and has also generated contradictions, conflicts and debates around the idea in the past several

years. We can, therefore, begin our understanding of the concept by recognising that the idea of development took shape in a specific historical context and has evolved over time.

Human society has always experienced change and moved from simple to complex forms of social and political organisation and economic activities. The idea of development pertains to a specific form of economic growth and social and political structures. This idea took shape in the modern period in the context of the breakdown of feudal socio-economic structures and the growth of capitalism. In the sections, which follow, we shall examine the evolution of the idea as it emerged in modern Europe and spread as a guiding principle determining relationships among peoples and nations. The next section shall take up the specific connotations of the idea of development as an aspect of western modernity. We shall also see how this connotation had important socio-economic and political ramifications for the rest of the world. Finally, we shall devote a section to looking at the ways in which the idea of development has been debated upon in recent years in order to make it more compatible with equality and democracy.

**Check Your Progress 1**

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) How is development commonly understood?

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**30.2 MODERNITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

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**30.2.1 Rise of Capitalism: Genesis of Development**

The concept of development is seen as having emerged with the rise of capitalism. Before the rise of capitalism, there existed agricultural societies regulated by feudal relations. Society was hierarchical and one’s status of birth determined one’s position in the social hierarchy. Feudal property relations lay less emphasis on profit and were guided primarily by self-sufficiency, sustenance and reciprocity. The rise of capitalism with its emphasis on economic growth, production output, profit, freedom of trade etc, provided the material conditions within which the idea of development started taking shape.

**30.2.2 Enlightenment Tradition**

Simultaneously, the intellectual tradition of the time, the ‘Enlightenment Tradition’ as it is generally referred to, redefined the notion of the individual. The individual, within

the new intellectual tradition, came to be thought of as having the faculty of reason, and possessing the capacity to take rational decisions. The fate of this thinking individual was no longer ordained by divine forces, nor was the individual bound therefore, to remain confined to the relationships which were prescribed by feudal society. This rational individual, skeptical of the slow and relatively stagnant socio-economic relationships, as well as the hierarchical basis of social and political organisation, struggled to break free.

Capitalism based on the principle of free enterprise and profit, fed ideas of progress and development. With the emphasis on spectacular material progress and profit making, it was only logical that feudal relationships were undermined, and simultaneously, the corresponding structures of rule, dismantled. This dismantling achieved only after a prolonged political struggle for individual freedom, and autonomy from existing feudal institutions, also gave rise to political ideals of liberty, freedom and a liberal notion of democracy. In its birth alongside capitalism, however, the idea of development was primarily identified with progress, and the first formulations of development as progress were found in the works of classical political economists like David Ricardo and Adam Smith.

### **30.2.3 Views of Jorge Larrain on Development**

Jorge Larrain points out that the concept of development is not only closely bound up with the evolution of capitalism, each phase of capitalism can be seen as having a specific set of notions about development (Jorge Larrain, 'Introduction', *Theories of Development*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989). Larrain sees capitalism as having developed in three main stages from 1700 and identifies the corresponding theories of development for each phase. These three stages are: (i) *Age of Competitive Capitalism* (1700-1860), (ii) *Age of Imperialism* (1860-1945) and (iii) *Late Capitalism* (1945-1980).

### **30.2.4 The Age of Competitive Capitalism**

The age of competitive capitalism was marked by the struggles of the new industrial bourgeoisie to free themselves from the last vestiges of feudalism and to gain political power. This was also the time when capitalism, from its emergence in Britain, started expanding all over the world in search of markets. Karl Marx points out that in its first stages of development, industrial capital sought to secure a market by force i.e., through the colonial system. Classical political economy, represented by Adam Smith and David Ricardo, believed that capitalism was the absolute or the perfect form of production, i.e., it could provide the most conducive conditions for growth. They believed that international trade was important for increasing productivity. The absoluteness and conflict-free conceptualisation of capitalism was, however, subjected to review when working class struggles emerged. It was in the context of these struggles that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels presented their critique of capitalism. Marx and Engels, while admitting that capitalism was a historical necessity as the most advanced mode of production in history, refused to consider it *the* natural and absolute mode of production. They saw in the working class struggles a manifestation of the inner contradictions in capitalism and the possibility of its demise and replacement by a more advanced mode of production.

### **30.2.5 The Age of Imperialism**

The second stage or the age of imperialism (1860-1945) was marked by monopolistic control of the market by huge corporations, the export of capital from industrial centers to the periphery, the latter's control of both raw material production and capital accumulation and, the firm entrenchment of capitalism as the predominant mode of production. The neo-classical theory of development gained primacy during this stage. It worked with the assurance that the capitalist mode of production had

strong roots and an inherent energy to sustain itself. Neo-classical theorists considered the market as perfect, and remained concerned with the processes which sustained it i.e., the microeconomics of ascertaining what was to be produced, how much, and at what price. The Marxists in the meantime sought to enlarge their traditional critique of capitalism. Rosa Luxemburg, Bukharin, Hilferding and Lenin, while believing that the inherent characteristics of capitalism contributed to development, also accommodated the colonised countries in their framework. They emphasised that as long as the colonial bond was not broken, the development of colonised countries would remain arrested. In the context of the series of depressions which culminated in the economic crisis in 1930, the neo-classical theory, was shaken by the thought of John Meynard Keynes who advocated that state intervention was required to ameliorate the effects of depression.

### 30.2.6 The Stage of Late Capitalism

The stage of late capitalism began in 1945 and can be seen as divided into two phases, the earlier ending in 1966 and the later phase continuing till 1980. This stage was marked by the production of modern consumer goods and till 1966, the period was characterised by economic expansion and rising profits. The period was also significant for the process of decolonisation, and the emergence of newly independent countries all over the world, and the subsequent introduction of issues of social progress and economic development on the agenda of the latter. In this context *modernization theories* (Rostow, Hoselitz) sought to explain the process of development as the transition from the traditional (feudal) society to the modern or industrial society. Historically, the transition occurred first in developed societies and the others were expected to follow the same patterns of changes.

The Marxist theories in this phase attempted to understand and explain the reasons for underdevelopment in newly independent countries even after the rupture of colonial bonds. Thus, the theory of imperialism explored the internal effects of the introduction of capitalism in third world societies. Paul Baran argues that in these countries, imperialist powers enter into alliance with the local oligarchies and as a result vital economic resources are partly siphoned off to the metropolis and partly squandered in luxury consumption, preventing accumulation and development. Imperialist countries, the theories propose, are basically opposed to the industrialisation of underdeveloped countries and try to maintain the old ruling class in power. By 1966 the stage of late capitalism enters a new phase, marked by the slowing down of economic growth and a falling rate of profit. In this phase, the *neo-liberals* (e.g., Milton Friedman) launched an attack on the Keynesian policies, accusing the state of excessive intervention and slowing down growth through heavy taxation to support welfare policies.

In Latin American countries, the *theories of dependency* were skeptical about the liberating role of national bourgeoisies and proposed that the processes of industrialisation in the third world are the vehicles of imperialist penetration and generate a dependence on transnational companies. Ander Gunder Frank in particular, questioned the Marxist and liberal theories, both of which claimed that capitalism was a mode of production able to promote development everywhere. Frank rejected this idea and maintained that capitalism is to be blamed for the continuous underdevelopment of Latin American countries since the sixteenth century. Frank conceives of capitalism as a world system within which the metropolitan centers manage to expropriate the economic surpluses from satellite countries through the mechanism of the international market, thus producing development in the former and underdevelopment in the latter. Third world countries are underdeveloped because they are dependent within the world capitalist system. Hence, development can only occur when a country breaks out of the system by means of a socialist revolution.

The development theories, which arose in the 1970s, show the influence of Frank, especially Samir Amin and A.Emmanuel's *Theory of Unequal Exchange* and

**Contemporary Issues**

I.Wallerstein's *World System theory*. For Wallerstein, all the states within the world system could not develop simultaneously by definition because the system functions by virtue of having an unequal core and peripheral regions. An interesting feature, which Wallerstein adds, is that the role of being a peripheral or a semi-peripheral nation is not fixed. Core countries and peripheral countries could become semi-peripheral and so on. What remains definite, however, is the unequal nature of the world system. (for details about the stages of capitalist development and development theories, see Jorge Larrain, 'Introduction' in Larrain's, *Theories of Development*)

**Check Your Progress 2**

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Trace the linkages between the rise of capitalism and the concept of development.

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2) Discuss Jorge Larrin's views on development.

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3) How have A.G.Frank, Samir Amin and I.Wallerstein conceptualised capitalist development?

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## 30.3 REDEFINING DEVELOPMENT

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At the time when scholars in the West were trying to affirm the potential for development (progress) in capitalism, or in the case of Marxist theorists, looking at both the dynamism and contradictions within capitalism, some strands of thought started to redefine the concept of development. We saw in the previous section the theorists of the dependency and world systems schools point out that ‘development’ in the modern world has meant the development of unequal relationships among nations and peoples.

### 30.3.1 Radical Critique of Development

A more radical critique of development started emerging in the 1970s. This critique started from the basic assumption that development in its current usage is inextricably associated with capitalist development and expansion. Capitalist expansion has historically resulted in the concentration of wealth in a few nations and poverty for others. This critique took cognizance of the notion of development, which identified it solely with capitalist development, and the principle that there is a single path to development to be followed by all.

Scholars like Arturo Escobar, Wolfgang Sachs and Gustavo Esteva point out that the association of ‘development’ in the dominant orthodoxy with (capitalist) growth and modernisation, remained an influential ideology of nation building in the newly independent countries after the Second World War. Throughout the post-war period the meanings and purposes of development as understood in these countries could not break free from the notion of development as it had emerged in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Wolfgang Sachs illustrates this lucidly when, writing in the early 1990s, he says that the last forty years can be called the ‘age of development’. Like a towering lighthouse guiding sailors towards the coast, development was *the* idea which oriented the emerging nations in their journey as sovereign nations after they had been freed from colonial subordination (Wolfgang Sachs, *The Development Dictionary*, 1992, p.1). This quest for development by the new nations, however, did nothing to liberate them from the hierarchy of the world order, brought about and sustained by the logic of capital. After independence the idea of development thus continued to mean development so as to fit into a world capitalist economy.

### 30.3.2 Rise of the USA and the Issue of Development

It is significant therefore, that soon after independence, most of these nations, which embarked on the course of development, came to be labeled as ‘underdeveloped’. By the end of World War II, the United States assumed a formidable centrality in the world. To make its position explicit and binding, the United States laid down in precise terms its relationship of domination and benevolence, with the new nations. Thus, on January 20, 1949, President Truman assumed the office of the President of United States and professed ‘a bold new programme for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement of the underdeveloped areas’. Gustavo Esteva points out that with this pronouncement of Truman’s policy, a large mass of humanity, the formerly colonised countries were put under a blanket label of ‘underdeveloped’ (Gustavo Esteva, ‘Development’ in Wolfgang Sachs ed., *Development Dictionary*, pp.8-9). The label not only condemned the newly independent countries to a new subjection, it affirmed the continuation of a hierarchised world system resting on the edifice of capitalist development.

### 30.3.3 Emergence of the Third World and the Concept of Development

With the 1970s, the Third World emerged as a significant political block, which preferred to steer clear of allegiance to any ideological block and subscribing to neither the capitalist, nor the socialist path of development. The new social movements, which emerged all over the world, began questioning the existing policies of development, seeking a more plural path of development, where the needs and aspirations of local regions could be taken into account. The new social movements, e.g., the environment, workers, women's movements etc., sought to draw attention to the manner in which existing development patterns resulted in the marginalisation of large sections of population, or included the various sections of the population in an unequal way. The existing frameworks of development were contested. Democratisation of development patterns were sought at two levels (i) within countries and (ii) among countries in order to promote a more egalitarian economic and political order, where past historical predominance of nations could be checked and the development of each nation and each person could be achieved.

In the following paragraphs, we shall look at some of the strands within development theory, which have sought to redefine the notion of development. Some of these strands have emerged from the changing notion of development in the United Nations culminating in the passage in 1989 by the United Nations General Assembly of a 'right to development'.

### 30.3.4 United Nations and Development

According to Adrian Leftwich, a change in the United Nations thinking on development became perceptible from the 1960s itself, with a shift in the political balance in the organisation with the advent of new nations. These nations succeeded in shifting the focus of development within the United Nations policies from income and growth, to 'social development'.

Social development refers essentially to improvement in fields like education, health care, income distribution, socio-economic and gender equality and rural welfare. Social development also came to signify a much more radical and sweeping conception of development involving the nationalisation of major assets, the redistribution of wealth (as in land reforms) and popular participation in political decision making, both as the means and ends of development (Adrian Leftwich, *States of Development*, 2000, p.41).

By the late 1960s, an influential strand of thinking attempted to combine the necessity of growth with greater concern for both social development and social justice. It was increasingly being realised that growth in developing countries was not reducing inequalities. It rather seemed to sustain and even deepen existing inequalities. Thus combining social development with a just distribution of benefits of growth occupied the energies of concerned academic theorists at this time. British development economist Dudley Seers, for example, in a series of articles from the late 1960s, began questioning the association of development with growth alone. He focussed attention on the 'results' of development, looking for its impact on poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Seers was thus seeking to redefine the meaning and measurement of development to include the reduction of both poverty and inequality and the expansion of employment. Out of such concerns grew the notion that development constituted providing for what has been termed 'basic needs', that development was a process of meeting basic human needs and that it should be measured by the extent to which it met these 'primary needs of communities and individuals'.

### 30.3.5 Basic Needs Approach

The 'basic needs' approach to development is therefore, to provide opportunities for the full physical, mental and social development of the individual. Basic needs, therefore, included 'the need for self-determination, self-reliance, political freedom and security, participation in decision-making, national and cultural identity, and a sense of purpose in life and work'. The definition of basic human needs covered five main areas: basic goods for family consumption (including food, clothing, housing); basic services (including primary and adult education, water, health care and transport); participation in decision making; the fulfillment of basic human rights; and productive employment (to generate sufficient income for a family to meet its consumption needs) (Adrian Leftwich, pp.44-47).

### 30.3.6 Development within the Neo-liberal Framework

In the 1980s, development, both as a process and as a goal, came to be framed in terms of the prevailing neo-liberal ideas. These ideas proposed that economic freedom, free markets, private-sector initiatives and the cutting away of regulations would provide the conditions and incentives for unleashing entrepreneurial energies, rejecting thereby the ideas of the 1960s and 1970s which saw a key role for the state in planning, distribution and the provision of basic human needs. This thinking about development reasserted the 'primacy of economic growth', rather than social development or the elimination of poverty, arguing that in the long run growth would take care of poverty. By the end of the 1980s, however, it became apparent that the withdrawal of the state from social development and distributive role, had imposed heavy costs on the poor with respect to increases in basic food prices as well as medical and educational services.

### 30.3.7 Right to Development

In the meantime, the *right to development*, was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 4th December, 1986. This right, according to Upendra Baxi, not only incorporated the very essence of human rights, it provided a rich starting ground for a new quest of human rights, which would form the basis for an egalitarian world order. The right to development encapsulates the right to self determination and sovereignty, and asserts that all rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural, are equally important and should be promoted and protected equally. It also brings in the important supposition that international peace and security are essential elements for the establishment of conditions conducive to the right to development. While asserting the need for equality of opportunity, the most significant contribution of the declaration is its emphasis on the human person as the source and subject of rights. The individual was the central subject of the development process, and development policy should make him the main participant and the main beneficiary.

The following core ideas which constitute the right to development, signify some radical shifts in the idea of development: (a) The declaration makes the right to development in effect the right of all human persons, everywhere, and of humanity as a whole, to realise their potential. (b) It asserts the certainty of the human person as the source and subject of rights. (c) It aims at the constitution of a just human society by remapping the trajectories of development. (d) Underlying the Declaration is also the notion of duty of all human beings, to struggle to create and maintain conditions where authentic human, social and civilisational development is possible. (e) It is simultaneously then, the duty of the state to provide the conditions in which the human person is able to exercise his/her rights and duties (See Upendra Baxi, 'The Development of the Right to Development' in Janusz Symonides ed., *Human Rights: New Dimensions and Challenges*, Ashgate, Dartmouth, 1998.)



### 30.3.8 World Development Report 1991

Traces of this comprehensive view of development can be seen in the *World Development Report 1991*. The *Report* defined development as both ‘economic development’ constituting a sustainable increase in living standards that encompass material consumption, education, health and environment protection, and in a broader sense as including other important and related attributes as well, like equality of opportunity, political freedom and civil liberties. The overall goal of development was therefore seen as increasing the economic, political, and civil rights of the people across gender, ethnic groups, religions, races, regions, and countries. (*World Bank*, 1991, 31).

In the discussion so far, we have seen that the definition of development has no longer remained narrowly focussed on economic growth. It has been enlarged to include social and human development. It has also included in its scope a notion of development, which is a product of, and also seeks to establish democracy through popular participation. This notion of development has found its most comprehensive theoretical articulation in Amartya Sen’s formulation of ‘development as freedom’ (Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford, 1999).

### 30.3.9 Amartya Sen on Development

For Sen, expansion of freedom is viewed as both the *primary end* and the *principal goal* of development. Development requires, therefore, the removal of major sources of unfreedom i.e., poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities, intolerance or overactivity of repressive states. Amartya Sen also opposes the idea that political freedoms need to be postponed until socio-economic development has been achieved. He argues that political freedoms and such other freedoms, such as the freedom from disease and ignorance are essential components of development. Sen identifies five categories of ‘instrumental freedoms’ which together promote development. These ‘instrumental freedoms’ are: (a) *Political freedoms*: which enable people to participate in forming government and influencing its policies, (b) *Economic facilities*: which constitute the opportunities for people to use resources, (c) *Social opportunities*: which refer to the arrangements within society for health care and education, which facilitate participation in political and economic life, (d) *transparency guarantees*: these guarantees refer to conditions of public trust achieved through transparency in public affairs, (e) *protective security*: this instrumental freedom provides social safety and security which prevents people from becoming poor and destitute.

#### Check Your Progress 3

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) Discuss some of the critical strands within development theory, which have sought to redefine development.

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2) What do you understand by the notion of development as freedom?

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### 30.4 LET US SUM UP

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The idea of development took shape in the context of the breakdown of feudalism and the rise of modern capitalist societies. The rise of capitalism with its emphasis on science, progress, economic growth, production, profit, freedom of trade etc, provided the material conditions within which the idea of development took shape. The intellectual tradition of the time, the Enlightenment tradition, redefined the notion of the individual as having the faculty of reason, and possessing the capacity to take rational decisions. The emphasis on material progress and profit making dismantled feudal relationships. At the same time, the idea of the rational individual, capable of self-determination, became instrumental in the emergence of a conscious political struggle for individual freedom and autonomy.

Jorge Larraín points out that the concept of development is not only closely bound up with the evolution of capitalism, each phase of capitalism can be seen as having a specific set of notions about development. He sees capitalism as having developed in three main stages from 1700 and identifies the corresponding theories of development for each phase. The age of competitive capitalism, marked by the struggles of the new industrial bourgeoisie was also the time when capitalism, from its emergence in Britain, starts expanding all over the world in search of markets or colonies. Classical political economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo, expressed faith in capitalism as the absolute form of production. Marx and Engels, however, refused to see capitalism as the natural and absolute mode of production and saw in the development of inner contradictions in capitalism, the possibility of its demise and replacement by a more advanced mode of production.

The second stage of capitalism, the age of imperialism (1860-1945) saw the firm entrenchment of capitalism as the predominant mode of production. The neo-classical theory of development, working with the assurance that the capitalist mode of production had strong roots and an inherent capacity to maintain equilibrium, took development for granted. Marxists like Rosa Luxemburg, Bukharin, Hilferding and Lenin, pointed out, however, that as long as the colonial bond was not broken, the development of colonised countries would remain arrested.

The stage of late capitalism was marked by the production of modern consumer goods and till 1966, the period was characterised by economic expansion and rising profits, and a process of decolonisation which gave rise to a number of ‘new nations’. These ‘new nations’ embarked on a path of development to build themselves into strong nations.

Modernisation theorists like Rostow and Hoselitz sought to explain the process of development as a transition, which occurs first in developed societies, and the others follow the same patterns of change. The Marxist theories in this phase, geared up

to understand and explain the reasons for underdevelopment in newly independent countries even after the rupture of colonial bonds.

In Latin American countries dependency theories expressed skepticism about the liberating role of national bourgeoisie. They proposed that modernisation and industrialisation in the developing countries promoted a new kind of dependence. Samir Amin and A. Emmanuel's theory of unequal exchange and I. Wallerstein's world system theory outlined the specific frameworks of this dependence and hierarchy, which characterised the modern world system.

Since the 1960s, however, significant strands of development theorists started questioning the association of development with economic progress as well as the idea that there was only one path to this progress, which had already been traversed by the western countries. By the 1960s, the skepticism with a narrow definition of development as economic progress made itself manifest in the form of the 'social development' approach, which combined growth with improvement in health care, education, redistribution of wealth and popular participation in political decision making. The 'basic human needs' similarly emphasised the need to redefine the meaning of development to include reduction of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

The *right to development* adopted by the General Assembly on 4th December 1986, provided the basis for claims to an egalitarian world order. The right to development encapsulates the right to self-determination and the right to sovereignty, and asserts that all rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural are equally important and should be promoted and protected equally. It also brings in the important supposition that international peace and security are essential elements for the establishment of conditions conducive to development. Amartya Sen's enunciation of development as freedom emphasised both the 'constitutive' and 'instrumental' role of freedom in development. Political freedoms, economic opportunities, social security, trust and transparency in public affairs and social opportunities are considered by Sen as certain freedoms which are instrumental in providing conditions which promote development. It may also be emphasised that these freedoms also constitute substantive characteristics of development.

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### 30.5 SOME USEFUL REFERENCES

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## **30.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES**

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### **Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

- 1) See Section 30.1

### **Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

- 1) See sub-sections 30.2.1 and 30.2.2
- 2) See Section 30.2
- 3) See sub-section 30.2.6

### **Check Your Progress Exercise 3**

- 1) See Section 30.3
- 2) See sub-section 30.3.9