



MA PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

(1st SEMESTER)

Batch

2022 - 2024

ENROLMENT NO: 2022-580-0

SUBJECT

THEORIE OF DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARISM

PRESENT BY



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CAPABILITY APPROACH

Capability Approach To Welfare And Development

Capability Approach: The Concept

The Idea Of Measuring Well-Being Has Been Deeply Rooted To Measuring Of Utility And Resources, But As Per Sen (1985) This Could Be Misleading. Rather Well-Being Must Be Understood In Terms Of People's Freedom And The Choices That They Make. Sen's Capability Approach Recognizes The Fact That, People Have Different Capacities To Translate Goods And Services Into Valuable Achievements Because Of Personal, Social And Locational Arrangements In Their Lives.

The Capability

The Capabilities Approach Goes Directly To The Quality Of Life That People Can Actually Achieve. This Quality Of Life Is Analyzed In Terms Of The Central Concepts Of "Functioning" And "Capability". Sen Argues That The Correct Approach To Assessing How Well People Are Doing Is Their Ability To Live A Life That We Have Reason To Value, Not Their Wealth Of Resources Or Subjective Well-Being. But To Begin To Assess How People Perform In Terms Of Capacity, We First Need To Determine Which Functions Are Important To The Good Life And How Much, Or At Least We Need To Specify An Assessment Procedure To Determine This.

Assessing Capability Is More Information-Demanding Than Other Accounts Of Advantage Because It Not Only Has A Much Broader View Of What Constitutes The Achievement Of Well-Being, But Also Attempts To Assess The Freedom People Actually Have To Make High-Quality Choices. Because The Value Of A Set Of Capabilities Represents An Individual's Effective Freedom To Live A Life That Is Valuable In Terms Of The Value Of The Functionings Available To That Individual, When Available Functionings Are Enhanced, So Is The Individual's Effective Freedom.

Interpersonal Variations

The Diagnosis Of Capacity Failures Or Significant Interpersonal Variations In Capacity Leads The Attention To The Relevant Responsible Causative Pathways. These Are: Individual Physiology, Local Environmental Diversities, Variations In Social Conditions, Differences In Relational Perspectives And Distribution Within The Family. Many Of These Interpersonal Variations Also Influence People's Abilities To Access Resources In The First Place. For Example, People With Physical Disabilities Often Have More Expensive Requirements For Achieving The Same Capabilities, Such As Mobility. While At The Same Time They Also Have Greater Difficulty Obtaining Income.



THE APPROACHES

Amartya Sen's Capability Approach

- The Sen Capability Approach Is A Moral Framework. It Proposes That Social Arrangements Should Be Evaluated Primarily According To The Extent Of Freedom People Have To Promote As Well As Achieving Functions They Value. Amartya Sen's Capability Theory Approach Is A Theoretical Framework That Involves Two Core Normative Claims.
- First, The Assumption That Freedom To Achieve Well-Being Is Of Primary Moral Importance. And Second, That Freedom To Achieve Well-Being Must Be Understood In Terms Of People With Capabilities. In Other Words, Their Real Opportunities To Do And Be What They Value. The Approach Has Been Developed Into A Variety Of More Specific Normative Theories. Such As Those Of Social Justice Or The Narratives Of Development Ethics. It Has Also Given Rise To A New Highly Interdisciplinary Literature In The Social Sciences Resulting In New Social Statistics And Indicators. And To A New Policy Paradigm Used Mainly In Developing Studies, The So-Called "Human Development Approach" Or Human Well-Being.
- According Amartya sen's to Capability Deprivation is Capability deprivation indicates a weak state of capability or some form of capability suffering. Those without adequate capabilities cannot function as healthy and creative human beings and thus are considered to be capability deprived. Capability in this sense is the "inner strength" of an individual that enables converting commodities or characteristics into resources which are useful to maintain some form of living standard or quality of life. The idea is highly subjective with the relative importance of the different aspects of inner strength depending on the specific context. What is more fundamental, however, is whether or not one has the capability to function as a fully participating member of society with a lack of it severely constraining the degree of choice or freedom to lead a desired lifestyle. The measurement of this abstract concept has.

DEPRIVATION INDICATED ARE

- Lack of education
- Lack of financial resources
- Ignorance
- Gender Inequality
- inequality

ON THE SAY THAT WHAT IS FREEDOM IS MEANS TO ACHIEVE:

- Good Healthcare
- Good Education
- Right to decent
- Economic Market
- Equality
- Social Disparities
- Lack of facilities

- The capability approach claims that freedom to achieve well-being is a matter of what people can do and be. And therefore, the kind of life they can effectively lead. As Sen argues, people's commodities or wealth or their mental reactions (utility) are an inappropriate angle because they provide limited or indirect information about how life is going. Sen illustrates his point with the example of a standard bicycle.
- The Capability Approach is defined by its choice of focus upon the moral significance of individuals' capability of achieving the kind of lives they have reason to value. This distinguishes it from more established approaches to ethical evaluation, such as utilitarianism or resourcism, which focus exclusively on subjective well-being or the availability of means to the good life, respectively. A person's capability to live a good life is defined in terms of the set of valuable 'beings and doings' like being in good health or having loving relationships with others to which they have real access.
- Capabilities are the real freedoms that people have to achieve their potential doings and beings. Real freedom in this sense means that one has all the required means necessary to achieve that doing or being if one wishes to. That is, it is not merely the formal freedom to do or be something, but the substantial opportunity to achieve it.
- This has the characteristics of "transportation", but whether it will actually provide transportation will depend on the characteristics of those trying to use it. It could be considered a generally useful tool for most people to extend their mobility. Even if that person by some quirk, finds the bicycle charming, we should be able to notice within our assessment system that it still lacks transportation. This mental reaction also does not show that the same person would not appreciate transportation if it were actually available to them.



BACKGROUND

Origin of Capability Approach Theory

The Capability Approach was first articulated by the Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen in the 1980s, and remains most closely associated with him. It has been employed extensively in the context of human development, for example, by the United Nations Development Programme, as a broader, deeper alternative to narrowly economic metrics such as growth in GDP per capita. Here 'poverty' is understood as deprivation in the capability to live a good life, and 'development' is understood as capability expansion.

- The capability approach has its origins in a number of articles in which Sen (1974, 1979a, 1979b) criticizes the limited informational bases of the traditional economic models and evaluative accounts (i.e., utilitarianism and resourcism). Sen argues, is a notion of what activities we are able to undertake ('doings') and the kinds of persons we are able to be ('beings'). Sen calls this notion capabilities.
- This focuses on the philosophical aspects of the Capability Approach and its foundations in the work of Amartya Sen. It discusses the development and structure of Sen's account, how it relates to other ethical approaches, and its main contributions and criticisms. It also outlines various capability theories developed within the Capability Approach, with particular attention to that of Martha Nussbaum.

One of the most prominent illustrations within the capability literature of the need to move beyond a focus on goods and resources is found in Sen's (1979a) "Equality of What?" Tanner lectures. Here, Sen asks us to consider two persons with the same set of resources. Yet, one person suffers from a disability. This disability makes her unequal to the able-bodied person in two regards, which cannot be captured by a sole focus on resources. First of all, the disabled person is unequal in terms of what she can do or be with her resources compared with the physically able person. She may, for example, be confined to a wheelchair and thus restricted to places that are wheelchair-accessible. Secondly, the disabled person may even be doubly worse off because she only gets the same amount of resources even though she has more expenses in order to correct for her disability. That is, because the disabled person needs to spend a considerable amount of her resources on a wheelchair merely to move around, she has fewer resources available to pursue other goals than the able-bodied person who can spend all her resources on pursuing her valued ends. Thus, in order to evaluate people's well-being, we need to not only consider the amount of resources they have, but also what they are able to do and be with those resources.



CAPABILITY FRAMEWORKS

Capability Frameworks

- The capability approach is generally conceived as a flexible and multi-purpose framework, rather than a precise theory of well-being (Qizilbash 2008; Robeyns 2005, 94-96; Sen 1992; 2009). This open-ended and underspecified nature partly explains why the term 'capability approach' was chosen and is now used in the philosophical literature rather than, say, 'capability theory'. The terms 'capability approach' and 'capabilities approach' are both used in the literature to refer to the same thing, though the latter is often considered to refer more specifically to Nussbaum's partial theory of justice. Some philosophers have started to use the term 'capabilitarianism' (Robeyns 2016; Nielsen and Axelsen 2017). The proliferation of literature on the capability approach has engendered a discussion about how to exactly define and understand it.
- The capability approach often provides one element in the development of an account of justice, social progress, development, or something else. For example, Crocker (2008) has extended the capability approach with accounts of agency and participation into a more detailed account of development ethics, but discusses at length that not all versions of the capability approach are embracing agency so explicitly. Similarly, the capability approach can be developed into an alternative evaluative tool that can replace traditional social cost-benefit analysis (Alkire 2002). Or it can be used as a normative framework within which to evaluate and design policies and social institutions, ranging from welfare-state design in relatively affluent societies (Wolff and de-Shalit 2007), to governmental and nongovernmental development policies in poor countries, to policies that affluent countries and international institutions employ (or are advised to employ) in their efforts to aid poor countries, such as the UNDP's Human Development Reports.

Sen's capability approach highlighted some issues in the conventional evaluation approach for development framework, which are as follows:

- 1) Individuals can have different abilities to change similar resources into valuable functioning's. Evaluation focussing on means without acknowledging what different people can do with them will be misleading.
- 2) Individuals can internalize the deprivation in order to stop desiring, what they can never achieve. This is called adaptive preferences e.g. a chronic-sick person may develop a defence system of declaring his/her health fine. Hence evaluation which focus on the subjective mental metrics without taking into account, the perspective of a neutral observer in an objective situation, will be insufficient.
- 3) Individuals may or may not take up the option that they possess, while they have valuable options. It's a function of Choice (functioning) and Capability (effective freedom)

- 4) Every individual's reality is complex and multi-dimensional hence every evaluation should acknowledge this complexity and consider its multidimensional aspect into its parameters.

Capability Approach tries to address all these concerns and hence lends us a multidimensional lens to look at the concept of human well-being. It is not a theory to understand poverty or human well-being, rather it is an evaluation tool to conceptualize and then analyse such social derangements. •According to Sen, it is very important to understand what people are actually able to be and do. This approach focuses directly on the Quality of Life that an individual is able to achieve. This quality of life is defined in terms of 'functioning' and 'capability'.

- ✓ Functionings are states of 'being and doing', "it is an achievement of a person: what he or she manages to do or be, and any such functioning reflects, as it were, a part of the state of that person"
- ✓ Capabilities denotes the set of valuable functions that an individual have effective access to. This refers to the freedom that people possess in order to achieve the lifestyle that they have reason to value.

Hence the evaluation of well-being must be measured within the boundaries of capabilities and not just functionings, it should consider opportunities and not achievements. E.g. Person who starves because of fasting versus a person starving because of no access to food, their functioning's would be same as level of deprivation but by focusing on their capabilities i.e. access to food, will give us a realistic picture. (The Human Development and Capability Approach, 2009)

Sen has focused on the relevance of both well-being and agency in order to understand the concept of Freedom. Well-being freedom refers to all the objectives that an individual value for his/her well-being. While, agency freedom refers to a person's freedom to choose whatever he/she values. Agency freedom can be further broken down into three parts such as personal characteristics, social characteristics and environmental characteristics. Therefore, any evaluation should not be just focused on the well-being but also cover the process through which individuals asserts his/her ability to realise the valued choices.

Capability Approach strays from the conventional method of evaluation to a more multi-dimensional and holistic system of understanding poverty and deprivations.



CORE CONCEPT

Capability Space

- In order to use capability approach in formulating a developmental framework, one needs more concrete understanding of capabilities. Listing the dimension of well-being to generate concrete indicators and examine individuals' freedom of choice, would have again limited the scope of infusing personal and structural factors into the evaluation process. To circumvent this, few authors have shifted Capabilities to Capability Space. This includes Individual's Choice, Ability and Opportunity to convert resources into valuable functionings. Capability Space also acknowledges personal, local and structural factors in the evaluation process.
- Although Capability Approach is highly information-demanding method and it requires an intensive agreement on what all capabilities are considered to be valuable, it's possible to use for evaluation of basic capabilities as well. Since 1990's United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) started publishing annual Human Development Reports, which are partly based on Capability Approach. Also, a lot of countries publish their country-specific Human Development Reports using the same technical framework but they contextualize the tools with local and political factors of the country. Hence Capability Approach besides being a part of curriculums across disciplines such as developmental studies, welfare economics and alike, is also a popular evaluation tool for a lot of researchers, public actors and policy-makers across the world.

Capability Approach in Practice

- The capability approach need not be completely based on the empirical research methods. It can also be based on the analytical or critical reasoning.
- For qualitative research methods, people have used participatory methods to decide upon the functionings and its impact on their well-being. E.g. Alkire assessed three development projects in Pakistan and its impact on the community. Capability Approach has been used in various research process, now let's see has the application of capability approach offered anything novel to the conventional techniques of assessments, evaluations, or policy recommendations



CAPABILITY APPROACH APPLICATIONS

Application

Currently there are Eight major types of capability approach applications:

- 1) Assessment of Human Development in a Country
- 2) Identification of poor people in a developing economy.
- 3) Assessment of Poverty and Well-being in advanced economies
- 4) Deprivation-analysis of PWDs in a Society
- 5) Gender-inequality Assessment
- 6) Public Policy Analysis
- 7) Critiques of Social Practices, Norms and Discourse
- 8) Use of Capabilities and Functioning as a concept in a non-normative research framework

We will briefly discuss these relevance of capability approach in each of them.

1) Assessment of Human Development in a Country

A lot of countries use capability approach in analysing and calculating the HDI for their nation. The use of capability approach started when Sen ranked a couple of countries first on the basis of GNP per capita and then added parameters such as life expectancy and literacy rate. The results of both the analysis were strikingly different.

2) Identification of poor people in developing economies

Capability approach is used to analyse and identify poverty in any society. It is proven that income-led parameters often fail to identify poverty and its various dimensions. Few researchers tried understanding the correlation between income and some basic functioning to human well-being such as education, health and child nutrition. It was found that income was an inadequate factor to capture the deficit of above mentioned wellbeing functioning. Rather all these basic functioning were not found to be linearly associated with income but were dependent on various factors such as household, social structure and regional characteristics.

3) Assessment of Poverty and Well-being in advanced economies

Capability approach is not only used in developing economies to devise poverty reduction strategies, but also in advanced economies to understand the demographic profile of the poor. Alessandro Balestrino analysed whether official-poor were actually functioning poor or not. In his work he also included a sample size who were not officially poor. He analysed both the poor and non-poor groups against the functionings and found a large portion of officially non-poor to be functioning poor e.g. no access to education or health. Hence in such cases the government can increase the composition of kind-transfer instead of cash transfer to remove deprivation of officially non-poor.

4) Deprivation-analysis of PWDs in a Society

People with Disability (PWD) suffer from twin issue of being income poor as well as functioning-poor. They not only earn less than what people without disability earn but also their special needs require more than what an average person consumes, to survive. In this regard, income-led evaluation can take care of the first part of the monetary deprivation but it would require a deeper analysis such capability approach to understand the deprivation, a PWD feels owing to his/her disability.

5) Gender-inequality Assessment

Capability approach can be used to highlight the relative vulnerability of certain groups in a society. In his initial illustration, Sen had examined discrimination based on gender in India. He had accounted for few functionings such as health, mortality and morbidity and found women to be worse-off than men in terms of personal well-being, owing to social and political factors of the society. This approach was further refined by a number of feminist researchers who added on to the list of the capabilities to be analysed for gender-inequality assessment. This list included "life and physical health, mental well-being, bodily integrity and safety, social relations, political empowerment, education and knowledge, domestic work and nonmarket work, paid work, shelter and environment, mobility, leisure activities, time- autonomy, respect and religion". Owing to such research work we were able to find out that the biggest gap still predominantly remains in the area of paid work along with domestic work/care. Such research help in advocating for women rights and develop policies and strategies to minimise this gap between men and women in a society.

6) Public Policy Analysis

Capability approach is not only focussed on providing leads to build social policy strategies rather it is also useful in debating policies and finding its relevance for the targeted population. It is also helpful in assessing the basic principles governing the welfare system of the nation.

7) Critique of Social Practices, Norms and Discourse

Various scholars have used capability approach in analysing and critiquing numerous social practices, norms and discourses. Social norms may promote certain practices which deprives certain sections or groups. Their capability sets are reduced owing to such practices in the society e.g. the difference of freedom between men and women to choose from labour or care work. These area a by-product of cultural legacy and social norms which overturned by feminist welfare state theorists to ensure these aspects of society does not impair the well- being of a person on the basis of gender.

8) Use of Capabilities and Functioning as a concept in a non-normative research framework

Lastly, capability approach has also been used for non-normative research e.g. ethnographic research or explanatory analysis.



Human Development Index

Define

The HDI is a summary composite measure of a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: health, knowledge and standard of living. It is a measure of a country's average achievements in three dimensions of human development:

- ✓ A long and healthy life, as measured by life expectancy at birth;
- ✓ knowledge, as measured by mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling; and
- ✓ a decent standard of living, as measured by GNI per capita in PPP terms in US\$.

✓
The HDI sets a minimum and a maximum for each dimension, called "goalposts", then shows where each country stands in relation to these goalposts. This is expressed as a value between 0 and 1. The higher a country's human development, the higher its HDI value.

- The Human Development Index (HDI) is a statistical tool used to measure a country's overall achievement in its social and economic dimensions. The social and economic dimensions of a country are based on the health of people, their level of education attainment and their standard of living.
- The HDI was established to place emphasis on individuals—or, more precisely, on their opportunities to realize satisfying work and lives. Evaluating a country's potential for individual human development provides a supplementary metric for evaluating a country's level of development besides considering standard economic growth statistics, such as gross domestic product (GDP).



BACKGROUND

Description

Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq created HDI in 1990 which was further used to measure the country's development by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Calculation of the index combines four major indicators: life expectancy for health, expected years of schooling, mean of years of schooling for education and Gross National Income per capita for standard of living. Every year UNDP ranks countries based on the HDI report released in their annual report. HDI is one of the best tools to keep track of the level of development of a country, as it combines all major social and economic indicators that are responsible for economic development.

In 1990, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) transformed the landscape of development theory, measurement, and policy with the publication of its first annual Human Development Report (HDR) and the introduction of the Human Development Index. HDR 1990 presented the concept of "human development" as progress towards greater human well-being, and provided country-level data for a wide range of well-being indicators. The UNDP's establishment of the HDR expanded both the availability of measurement and comparison tools used by governments, NGOs, and researchers, and our common understanding of development itself.

- The Human Development Index, or HDI, embodies Amartya Sen's "capabilities" approach to understanding human well-being, which emphasizes the importance of ends (like a decent standard of living) over means (like income per capita) (Sen 1985). Key capabilities are instrumentalized in HDI by the inclusion of proxies for three important ends of development: access to health, education, and goods. Empowered by these, and other, capabilities, individuals can achieve their desired state of being.
- HDI has been the centerpiece of the HDRs for 17 years, and the latest edition, HDR 2006, includes HDI rankings for 177 countries. In HDI, component indices for life expectancy, literacy, school enrollment, and income are combined together into a single index that can be used to compare the level of human well-being among countries or to monitor one country's progress over time. HDI provides an

alternative to the still common practice of evaluating a country's progress in development based on per capita national income.

- What follows is the story of the development of the HDI, beginning with the early intellectual history of welfare economics and following this field through three successive revolutions in thought culminating in the theory of human development. In the first section, I trace this history from the origins of economic "utility" theory to Sen's human capabilities approach. The second section is a chronicle of past and present measures of social welfare used in the fields of economics and development, including national income and a variety of composite measures up to and including HDI. Since HDI's first introduction in 1990, many scholars have offered critiques of its underlying data and its method of calculation. In many cases, the UNDP has responded by improving HDI based on these critiques. In the third, and final, section of this chapter I summarize these critiques and the UNDP's adjustments to HDI over time.

Human Development Index (HDI): India ranks 132 out of 191 countries

A report on the 2021 Human Development Index (HDI) is part of the Human Development Report 2021-2022 released by the United Nations Development Programme.

Human Development Index- Indian Scenario

India ranked 132nd among 191 countries and territories on the 2021 Human Development Index (HDI). In the 2020 report, India had ranked 131st among 189 countries and territories. The decline in the country's performance from its previous level was on account of a fall in life expectancy.

Human Development Index- Key points

- India's latest HDI value of 0.633 places the country in the medium human development category, lower than its value of 0.645 in the 2020 report. The report attributes the drop in HDI from 0.645 in 2019

to 0.633 in 2021 to India's falling life expectancy — from 69.7 years to 67.2 years during the survey period.

- India's expected years of schooling stand at 11.9 years, down from 12.2 years in the 2020 report, although the mean years of schooling is up at 6.7 years from 6.5 years in the 2020 report.
- Although India retained its 132nd position in the Gender Development Index, the female life expectancy dropped from 71 years in the 2020 report to 68.8 years in the 2021 report.
- The mean years of schooling for females declined from 12.6 to 11.9 years in the corresponding period.
- India scored 0.123 in the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) with a headcount ratio of 27.9 per cent, with 8.8 per cent population reeling under severe multidimensional poverty. Over the last decade, India has lifted a staggering 271 million out of multidimensional poverty, the report noted.



The Challenges

➤ **The Challenges of Human Development Index**

Challenges which come in the way of progress of human development according to Human Development Index are:

- (1). Health
- (2) Sex Ratio
- (3) Women Empowerment.

(1) Health:

(a) Diseases and malnutrition: Water borne diseases, diseases and malnutrition have raised problems for people. As the ladies, children and poor people are not getting nutritious food, suffering from lack of nutrients, basic minerals, many vitamins and proteins, their development has either stopped or their development is in-complete.

(b) Environmental pollution and poisonous gases are another challenge in our daily life.

(c) Increasing urbanization, crowded habitats have created more problems for newly raised health facility.

(2) Sex ratio:

The ratio of the female population to the male population is unfavourable. As per the Census of 2011. Female population was 48.46% to 51.54% male population. The proportion of female illiteracy is larger, their per capita income is lower, fewer women have employment opportunities. Gender-based discrimination and inequality in economic, political, social-cultural and religious fields poses a huge challenge to human development

(3) Women empowerment:

women empowerment is expanding from working as a labourer to work in business and commerce, communication and many other jobs because of increasing education, training and skilled programmers. Still there is a lot of scope for development. So for extending it, we have to make a lot of efforts.



CONCLUSIES

CONCLUSION

- In conclusion, the capabilities approach is defined by its choice of focus on the moral significance of individuals' ability to achieve the kind of life they have reason to value. This distinguishes it from more established approaches to ethical evaluation. They focus exclusively on subjective well-being or the availability of means for good living, respectively. A person's ability to live a good life is defined in terms of the set of valuable "beings and actions". Like having good health or having loving relationships with other people to whom they have real accessibility.
- Capability Approach is a holistic tool which infuses a 'sociological turn' in economics. Capability approach is an inter-disciplinary method to study social issues such as well-being, justice, inequality and public policies. However, many scholars often criticize capability approach for being too individual-centric creating a void for the collective capabilities.
- This approach also promulgates participation of the people in the process, however participatory tools often suffer from deliberative democracy or let's say 'tyranny of the majority'. It becomes a critical task while encouraging participation, one must also ensure equal participation by all in the process.
- Thirdly, the capability approach is often used on the data which was not collected originally to measure functionings or capabilities. Hence the results are likely to be limited owing to the pre-conceived biases in the data. Capability Approach though being a wonderful tool must not supplant other established approaches rather it should be used to compliment them to produce more holistic and humanistic insights to the analysis and findings.
- In conclusion, the Human Development Index (HDI) is an important tool for measuring human development across countries. It takes into account factors such as health, education, and income, and provides a comprehensive measure of a country's development status.

- The HDI has been used by governments, policymakers, and international organizations to assess progress in achieving human development goals and to identify areas where improvements are needed. It has also been used to compare different countries and regions, and to track changes in development over time.
- While the HDI is a useful tool, it is not without its limitations. It is based on aggregate data and may not accurately reflect differences within a country or region. It also does not take into account other important factors such as gender equality, political freedom, and environmental sustainability.
- Despite these limitations, the HDI remains a valuable tool for assessing human development and progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It provides a common language and framework for discussing development issues, and can help to identify priorities for policy and action.
- Overall, the HDI is an important contribution to our understanding of human development, and will continue to play a key role in shaping development policies and strategies in the years to come.

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