

# Development of Development Thinking

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## I

I have chosen the topic 'Development of Development Thinking' as the theme of my lecture on this occasion. I have chosen this subject for various reasons. This is because, there has been a great deal of debate in recent years on the 'subdiscipline' called 'development economics' creating a great deal of confusion.

Debates have ranged over very broad areas. At one end, the very meaning of development has been subjected to a close scrutiny. Professor A.K. Sen has devoted a great deal of his recent work in directing our attention away from a 'commodity-centered' approach to 'an approach based on 'capabilities' and entitlements. The use of gross national product per capita as an index of development had already been much earlier criticized with great cogency by Dudley Seers, among others. Sen's work carries this line of criticism further. At the other end, debates have also surfaced as to the suitability of development centered analysis as a suitable subject for policy analysis. It has been held that development by its nature has an unpredictable and novel element about it. It cannot be reduced to a unidimensional analysis, with numerically specified coordinates as classical writers had assumed to be the case. If a more comprehensive basis of the development process is adopted, then policy decisions cannot be taken on merely economic considerations. We have to go beyond the scope of economic analysis and theory. This instrumental approach is not suitable. Only an approach based on 'intuition' is possible.

These two fundamentalist lines of criticism apart, there have been several criticisms with a more limited focus. Amongst these 'intermediate range' criticism, there are two which deserve special mention. First, there has been criticism (and to a certain extent legitimate criticism) that much development economics, even within its own defined scope, does not usefully isolate the more important causal forces which are in action. They work through model sequences which are either extrapolations from