

# **SELF-RELIANT DEVELOPMENT: CONCEPTS, IMPEDIMENTS, and STRATEGIES**

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"There is no road to self-reliance. Self reliance is the road."

Gandhi

"The ideal we need is a harmonized cooperative world in which each part is a center, living at the expense of nobody else, in partnership with nature and in solidarity with future generations.. There is an international power structure that will resist moves in this direction. Its methods are well known: the purposive maintenance of the built-in bias of the existing international market mechanisms, other forms of economic manipulation, withdrawal and withholding credits, embargoes, economic sanctions, subversive use of intelligence agencies, repression including torture, counter insurgency operation, even full scale intervention."

(Cocoyoc Declaration (1974) adopted by 32 social and natural scientists in 1974, later circulated as a UN document.)

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

With increased division of labour the world is becoming simultaneously more interdependent and unequal. This inequality and interdependence is penetrating and diffusing through various level of social organisations such as small groups, communities, regions, nations and continents. As a result, the area of self-reliance, autonomy, and self-determination for these organisations is shrinking. The process is affecting the self-reliance and autonomy of the individual as well who is becoming a small cog in large social machines that exert conflicting and crosscutting pressures on him.

Division of labour and interdependence often lead to dependence and exploitation of the weak when they occur within a framework of inequality and when they are imposed by the strong on the weak. In such a framework self-reliant development becomes difficult, if not impossible and interests of the strong and weak become mutually antagonistic. It generates dependent development for the weak. Can the patterns of unequal interdependence leading to dependent development for most of the people of the Third

World be changed? Can the science and technology be so harnessed and concentration of economic and political power at present concentrated in a few hands and countries be so structured that instead of generating dependent development they foster self-reliant development of most people, communities, regions, countries and continents? How can the pattern of dependent development which has become the lot of the most of the poor and weak people particularly of the Third World since the advent of capitalism and expansion of colonialism in the Third World be changed so that these people can enjoy the fruits of their labour, have dignity, autonomy, self respect and self-reliance and fully control and benefit from their community and national resources? This constitutes a major challenge to contemporary man and society.

This paper is an attempt to analyse and possibly answer these questions by undertaking the following four tasks:

1. Delineate the differentiating characteristics of self-reliant and dependent development.
2. Briefly discuss how dependent development came to be the fate of the Third World.
3. Identify the structural and cultural mechanisms through which dependent development is maintained.
4. Suggest strategies for achieving self-reliant development.

The paper makes three departures from the established and orthodox assumptions about development in general and self-reliant development in particular. They are:

1. Self-reliant development should be infused in the total fabric of a society and not in national economies alone as self-reliance is usually conceived by economists. They define self-reliance in terms of self-sufficiency in essential goods and services needed, maintaining favourable balance of payments, reducing external debt burden, preserving a certain ratio between international obligations and increasing import substitution, etc. Achieving a self-reliant economy, though an essential requisite for attaining a self-reliant society, is not equivalent to it. A self-reliant economy cannot coexist and cannot be achieved within the framework of a dependent society.
2. Self-reliant development aims at creating self-reliant individuals, communities and regions and self-regulating institutions. National self-reliance achieved at the cost of self-reliance of these sub-units is weak, hollow and without real internal strength. Similarly, a society cannot become self-reliant without self-regulating institutions. If every time an institution facing crises requires intervention from another institution, it cannot develop internal strength. In fact it cannot become an institution in the true sense and cannot contribute toward making the society self-reliant.
3. Self-reliant development can be achieved by reducing the level of exchange with the dominant world system to a level where national exploitation becomes impossible and national resources can be used for the betterment of all the people without cutting off

necessary and beneficial contacts with the world. Having a high level of exchange with the world and becoming a specialised part of a larger system does not make a society more developed as the so-called law of comparative advantage of classical economics suggests. Higher level of division of labour between societies leads to greater development only if every society is more or less equal in power. Otherwise it leads to exploitation and vulnerability of the weak societies. Under such circumstances lowering the level of exchange with the dominant and unequal world system may increase the level of development of such societies.

Development is and can be defined in different ways depending upon one's basic perspective. Certain elements, however, are common to many approaches. They include realisation of human potentialities to the maximum, creating favourable conditions for it and removing fundamentally antagonistic interests between individual, classes, and societies.

## II. SELF-RELIANT VIS-A-VIS DEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT

Self-reliant and dependent development as concepts and patterns of development have emerged as a result of a certain historical developments in the 19th and 20th centuries and critique of the established theories of development in post Second World War period particularly in seventies. While causes of their emergence will be discussed in a later section, their differentiating characteristics are listed and then discussed in detail below.

**TABLE 1**

### **Comparison of Self-reliant and Dependent Developments**

Self-reliant Development	Dependent Development
1. Man-centered; production mainly for meeting vital human needs and not merely for profit and exchange or for meeting the superfluous needs of the elite.	1. Things-centered; production mainly for exchange with other societies and profit regardless whether needs of the members of the society are met or not.
2. Mainly endogenous moved by internal propulsion and rooted in local culture and material resources.	2. Determined and stimulated by exogenous and outside forces and primarily in their own interests.
3. multidimensional, balanced and even.	3. Predominantly one dimensional and usually economic.
4. Creative process based on flourishing of creativity of individual and societal institutions.	4. Imitative and emulative without the use or development of creativity of individual and groups.
5. Based on self-reliance of sub-national	5. Centrally directed and implemented;

units including the individual.

aims at creating uniformity in the society.

6. Occurs in democratic framework ensuring peoples participation and maximization of their potentialities. National power structure is relatively autonomous and mainly serves national interests. No dependency relations with external power centers.

6. Usually occurs within an authoritarian framework. Internal power structure lacks autonomy and partly serves its own interests and partly that of the outside forces.

### **1. self-reliant Development is Man-centered**

Development centered on man goes beyond the "economistic" conception of man only as a factor of production or "human capital" which if developed is supposed to improve and raise the efficiency and productivity of the economy, regardless who benefits from such productivity and in what proportion. It also goes beyond making man an agent of mythical ends of history or serving merely the goals of institutions, structures and social processes regardless of the nature of these institutions and their goals. Self-reliant development places man at the center of development process and assumes him to be having unlimited potentialities contained and constricted by the existing social order which can be brought to full fruition if constrictive character of this order is changed. Moreover, such development requires that all humans should acquire intellectual capacity and practical skills necessary for understanding the social system in which they function, change it if necessary, and for making useful contributions to the society as well their own self-realisation. In man-centered development every human becomes an active participant in the development process not leaving it to the elite to determine and direct the development policies and processes and share of different members of the society in the benefits and costs of it.

In man-centered development productive process is designed to meet the vital needs of man rather than for producing goods and services merely for profit and to exchange them with other societies for serving their needs regardless whether the needs of its own members are met or not. Man-centered development aims at being self-sufficient at least in food, energy and health requirements and ensures that all members of the society benefit from it.

Against this, dependent development is "things -centered" mostly producing goods and services to meet the requirements of other societies and to earn foreign exchange some of which is used to cater to the superfluous needs of the local elite. Such development focuses on building infrastructures linking the peripheries with the internal and external economic and political centers rather than internally linking the peripheries and raising monuments for glorifying the elite.

Man-centered development is not based on the assumed innate greed of man and his drive for accumulation and possession of goods but to restrain it. By gearing production to serving the basic material needs of all, man-centered development creates

conditions to enable man to actualize his potentialities for altruistic action and harmonize the interests of different humans. This also creates positive conditions for the realization of "higher needs" of man for self-growth, harmonious relations with nature, as opposed to domination and occasionally destruction of it.

Being oriented to the needs of other societies for the sake of profit and to the needs of the local and foreign elite, dependent development is insensitive to the need of man to be in harmony with nature and requirement of ecological balance. Thus it leads to rapacious destruction and depletion of local resources leading to local misery and impoverishment.

Ultimately, capacity for self-reliance of a society is rooted in the self-reliance of the individual. A society which does not promote self-reliant and developed individuals by creating opportunities for them to realize their potentialities, become active participant in the social processes, develop their initiative, resourcefulness, creativity, organizational and associative capabilities cannot expect to become self-reliant. National self-reliant development cannot be founded on dependent, conformist, unthinking, passive, fatalist and security seeking individuals.

## **2. Self-reliant Development is Endogenous and Self-sustaining**

It is endogenous in the sense that it is based on natural endowments, historical accomplishments, and cultural heritage of each society without unsubstantiated and exaggerated glorification of such heritage and without letting pride in past accomplishments become an obstacle to development and evolving of new solutions of contemporary problems. Becoming man-centered and endogenous makes self-reliant development also self-sustaining as it is moved by its own internal dynamics and propulsion, its potentialities and resources, its stock of knowledge, its institutional strength and internalized values without external props. Endogenous nature of development protects a society from external shocks and insulates it from pathologies of the world system.

The dependent development is predominantly exogenous. Its character and contents are determined by interests and forces located outside the society generally in a dominant society. The main benefits of such development accrue not to its own people but to other societies, with which it is caught into a web of unequal relations and exchange.

## **3. Self-reliant Development is a Creative Process**

It is a creative process in several sense. It strike out new routes to development, evolves new solutions to society's problems, promotes creativity in all members of the society and not merely in the elite. Reliance on creativity, however, does not prevent a society from benefiting from the experience, scientific knowledge and technical stock of other societies. It only eschews the path of unthinking and mindless pursuit of goals, styles and patterns of development followed by other societies just because they appear

to have "succeeded" without understanding the causes of their success and the nature and extent of pathologies which this success produced.

Dependent development is an imitative and emulative process, in which a "less" developed society, overawed and overwhelmed by the cultural and material superiority of a powerful society chooses the easy option of imitating it or accepting the "technical" (which is usually political) advice of external experts for determining what development policies and patterns are best for it.

#### **4. Self-reliant Development is a Multidimensional and Balanced**

It is multidimensional in the sense that it does not focus on economic development alone, regardless whether it is growth-oriented or "growth with distribution-oriented", but seeks comprehensive development of man and society in their totality. Economic development is sought together with political, social, and cultural development including that of science and technology and not at their cost. Particularly it does not sacrifice political development for achieving economic growth, as sometimes happens in military regimes, which through greater mobilization of resources through force, single-minded pursuit of "efficiency" and by creating an artificial stability are able to achieve higher level of economic growth, but in the process weaken the self-reliant and self-sustaining character of development in the long run. This unbalanced and coercive development may occasionally produce higher per capita income and GNP, but is very likely to undermine the people's capacity for self reliance. Material goods and services may grow as man shrivels.

The dependent development is an unbalanced and one-dimensional process in which development of one sector of society is pursued, usually in the interest of local and foreign elite, at the cost of other sectors of the society and its people.

#### **5. Self-reliant Development Promotes Self-reliance of Sub-units**

Self-reliant development is even and balanced in another sense also. The self-reliance of nation is achieved and rooted in the self-reliance of sub-national units and communities without which national self-reliance remains weak and rootless. Not that there is no division of labour and coordination of these units by the central national institutions. What distinguishes self-reliant development from dependent development is that it positively promotes self-reliance in these units and restricts their division of labour with higher units to a level where it helps the development of both. Second, the central rulers abstain from using coercion to extract resources and "loyalty" from these units in the name of national development and national integration; resources of sub-units are developed and used in a way that they simultaneously promote national development and development of these units; loyalty to the nation and national solidarity is secured through mutually beneficial exchanges and what some psychologists call "positive re-enforcement."

Dependent development is a highly centralised process that destroys the

self-reliance and identity of the sub-units to extract surplus from them, if necessary, by coercion. As a result development of the center occurs at the cost of the periphery.

## **6. Self-reliant Development and Democracy**

Self-reliant development cannot occur other than in a democratic framework and without the active participation of the people. Self-reliant development needs the institutionalisation of accountability of the elite without which it cannot be ensured that development would serve the interest of people and fruits of development will be equitably distributed. Without this active support for the policies of development by the people and their willing and genuine support and participation necessary for self-reliant development cannot be achieved. Besides, only through such participation and equitable distribution of fruits of development the individual and national capabilities can be developed; voluntary compliance of individual for his social obligations can be generated and finally people can determine the direction of development of their society. This in turn raises the self-reliant capacity of the society enabling it to dispense with the unequal dependence on the world system and external props.

Dependent development usually occurs in an authoritarian and non-democratic framework as only within such framework local and foreign elite can exploit a society keeping the people deprived of fruits of their labour and submitting to their directives and will. Dependent development is centrally directed by a minority of those claiming to have special knowledge about the technicalities and complexities of development process. The elite directing the dependent development usually seeks to legitimize it with the help of "trickle down and functional inequality theories."

## **III. MECHANISMS OF MAINTAINING DEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT**

### **A. External Dimension of Dependence**

The nature of external dependence of a country need to be understood in broad perspective and not limiting it merely to its economic dimensions. Moreover, the mechanisms through which it is maintained and exercised need to be fully understood.

The dependent development is the consequence of the expansion of world capitalism in the Third World fostered by Western colonialism. Both imposed a division of labour on the world system favorable to them converting the Third World into their periphery and colonies. This character of development in the Third World did not change after formal decolonisation as most of the former colonies remained integrated and therefore dependent on the world capitalism and metropolitan countries. Such integration was also helped by the institutional legacy of colonialism and what is called "mental colonisation " which persisted even after the end of colonialism. This institutional legacy and cultural outlook was further strengthened as some of the institutions overdeveloped during period assumed political power in the post-colonial era.

Besides, the concept and practice of dependent development has taken deep roots

both in established development theory evolved in the West as well as development policies of the governments and International organizations. This development theory emphasized that existing division of labour stimulated development in the Third World by providing the "missing components" of financial and technical assistance and technology without which these countries cannot develop on their own. These assumptions of the established theory, diffused throughout the Third World through the training of their intellectual elite, remained unchallenged for long and indirectly influenced the development policies and contributed to the persistence of dependent development. Only recently has the "Dependency Theory" offered a potent critique of its theoretical bases and challenged its ideological biases. Thus self-reliant development as a concept is gaining certain degree of academic respectability and viability though without much effect on development policies. The emergence of the concept of self-reliant development is partly the result of this critique and the consequence of changes in the world power structure particularly the political assertion of the Third World. It is also the result of culmination of the process of formal decolonisation, empirical evidence of doubtful efficacy of aid to the Third World, increasing decline in the quantum of it and finally some realization that it was being used to establish and strengthen the political hegemony of the West and to fortify the world capitalism.

The dependent pattern of development produced by colonialism is sustained and reinforced by the contemporary international system in which the relations between different parts of the world are characterized by a polarisation and unequal development. Some countries are much ahead in industrial development, military power, and technology while others lag behind. The mutual relations between these two sets of countries are becoming more unequal as they become more interdependent. The industrially developed countries export finished products to other countries and import raw material or semi-processed raw material for, which the terms of trade originally unfavorable to the less developed countries are becoming more unfavourable. The "aid" from the rich countries not only raises the level of indebtedness which often cripples local economies but also makes the poor countries vulnerable to dictation of economic policies by rich countries and international financial institutions controlled by them. This further integrates the poor countries into the dominant and unequal world economic system making pursuit of self-reliant development more difficult. The operation of multinational corporations in the Third World and widening technological gap further strengthens these dependent relations.

The unequal economic relations between the North and the South buttress unequal political and cultural relations. "Aid" has its political quid pro quo sometimes in the form of unequal military pacts. It is frequently used to reinforce economic and political domination and cultural penetration. The cultural penetration takes various forms; the most effective being the training of the elite from some of the significant institutions of the poor countries such as military, bureaucracy, and universities in the rich countries. Such training is usually structured to shape the outlook and attitudes of this elite to make them consistent with the requirements of the dependent development and disable them to see the true nature of the relations between the rich and the poor countries.

External dependence and exploitation of a country is usually supported by changes in the internal structural relations and penetration of the dependent society. The core developed societies tend to create or strengthen groups, classes, and institutions in the poor countries that support and perpetuate the dependent character of their development. This either reinforces the already existing internal dependencies and inequalities or creates new ones. This is often achieved by cooption of the elite in the dependent societies into the world elite structure which turns the coopted elite at best into allies of the elite of the dominant countries and at worst their pawns. In either case the dependent character of the development of the poor countries is strengthened.

#### **IV. IMPEDIMENTS TO SELF-RELIANT DEVELOPMENT**

Above discussion has brought out the nature and strength of cultural and structural mechanisms through which the dependent development became the fate of the Third World countries and the way it is being maintained in the contemporary world. This, in a way, also brings out the impediments in the way of pursuing self-reliant development by the poor countries. However, there is a need for more explicit discussion of impediments arising from the interests of various institutions, classes, and groups in these countries and how the interlocking web of these interests influence the pursuit of self-reliant development.

As noted above the dependent character of development is created and sustained by forces and processes operating at the world level and directed by the elite of the countries at the world center. These forces and processes penetrate the countries at the world periphery through various mechanisms - cultural, economic, political and social - and in turn create a structure of internal dependency supported by ideology and political myths. Centre-periphery relations prevalent at the world level are reproduced within the poor and dependent countries taking the form of what is sometimes called " internal colonialism." When the dependent groups, classes and regions within the poor countries challenge these structures and syndromes, their powerful groups use various means including coercion to maintain the status quo. Such a situation brings into power militaries that have the exclusive control of superior means of coercion as well as superior organizational capabilities that enable them to acquire power without much resistance from the unorganised people. Prevalence of military regimes in large number of countries at the world periphery is, to a great extent, the product of this situation.

Once in power, the military and bureaucracy, which often interchange their power position in the state structure, have several reasons to perpetuate the dependent nature of development. First, they are well-integrated into the world system and are the main beneficiaries of the flow of resources from it in the form of aid, weapons, training and visits abroad including kickbacks from armament industry. Secondly as they consume considerable part of the resources of the state, they have a vested interest in maintaining what is usually called a strong center capable of imposing its writ on the lower units and extracting necessary resources for them. Termination of internal dependency through self-reliant development weakens their power to extract such resources which in turn

undermines their hold over the society. Third, as real power of military and bureaucracy is rooted in their superior organizational capabilities they tend to view the emergence of organisations of people as a threat to their exclusive power and tend to regulate if not totally discourage them. Fourth, in countries where military and bureaucracy are recruited from particular ethnic groups or regions, self-reliant development which requires opening these organisations to the disadvantaged ethnic groups could undermine their homogeneity and their ability to maintain cohesion and exercise effective power over the sub-units. Finally, both military and bureaucracy need conformist individuals for their organisations to ensure discipline and unity of command. Self-reliant individuals capable of thinking beyond the narrow interests of their institutions can undermine their effectiveness. Therefore, these institutions maintain a high degree of internal regimentation of thought.

Such regimentation, however, is not limited to the personnel within militaries alone but is extended to the whole society particularly when they assume political power and find that self-reliant individuals capable of innovative thinking and not sharing their world view could become a threat to their power. With regimentation of thought, creativity in individuals and institutions is stifled sapping the vitality of the society to pursue self-reliant development.

Besides the structure of state and the role of military and bureaucracy in it, two other classes - the capitalist and the feudal - play a crucial role in determining whether self-reliant development becomes a state policy and is vigorously pursued.

In most Third World states the capitalist class does not play a progressive role contributing to self-reliant development. In its pursuit for quick accumulation of wealth it squeezes as much surplus from national economy as it can at the cost of the welfare of labour, national productivity, restricting the circulation of wealth and stifling the internal dynamism of the economy. Besides, it assumes the character of what is called the "comparadore" class draining wealth out of the country for its own sake and for world capitalism. It also supports the emergence and perpetuation of military-bureaucratic state well-equipped to maintain industrial peace and law and order without directly capturing the state power. However, to bend the state apparatus to serve its interests it corrupts it. This character and role of the capitalist class predisposes it to be for the perpetuation of dependent development and status quo and sets it against the pursuit of self-reliant development.

Being itself a dependent class in relation to state and its apparatus and generally producing for the local market, the traditional feudal class is not integrated into the world economy until it starts producing for the world market. When it does, then it develops an interest in the inflow of resources from the world system including import of cheap agricultural machinery, stable and possibly better terms of trade for its products and infra-structural development linking the rural areas. Once it develops these interests then it becomes a supporter of dependent development in its external dimension. However, as its local power and ability to extract surplus from the local economy depends on persistence of the status quo it opposes all measures, particularly land reforms, which can terminate

internal dependencies and help develop the potentialities of the rural classes dependent on it. Thus with the help of the state apparatus and its hold over national political institutions, this class is able to ensure that internal character of dependent development is not changed even though this keeps the larger society weak and underdeveloped.

When forces of change emanating from the center of the society start undermining the status quo and feudal class cannot resist them through its normal channels of influence, then it becomes the advocate of regional and provincial autonomy to contain these changes without committing itself to change the dependent structure of relations with the other rural classes. When forces of change emerge from within the rural areas, the feudal class either controls them through ideological and political manipulation or through repressive measures, if necessary, with the help of local state apparatus.

The role of intellectuals and intelligentsia in sustaining dependent or promoting self-reliant development is rather ambiguous. During anti-colonial struggle a significant number of intellectuals and intelligentsia played a vanguard role. But in post-colonial states their role as creators of new ideas and ideologies providing new vision and offering sound and scientific analysis of the problems of their societies have somewhat diminished. The reasons for it differ in different political and social systems. However, a few factors may be common. First, with ushering in the age of specialization and dominance of positivist approach to knowledge, the intellectuals with broad understanding of human problems and new vision of human destiny are increasingly becoming an extinct specie. In their place have emerged intellectual mandarins trained in the academic centers of the rich countries willing to offer their technical knowledge for material and symbolic rewards to highest bidders. Second, with most of the jobs and facilities for intellectual work located in the state sector, the new intellectual breed has not much scope to act as dissenters, keepers of the conscience of the people and advocates of their causes. Third, with limitation of intellectual freedom under many authoritarian and repressive regimes in the Third World many of them choose to be conformist rather than radical critics of these regimes and not making solid contributions to the understanding of the predicament of their society. With limited political space and a certain degree of intellectual integration with the dominant intellectual ethos prevalent in the rich countries they do not find it quite challenging to become advocates of self-reliant development. The doctrine of value neutrality imported from Western positivist tradition serves a convenient intellectual doctrine to legitimise this role if ever they face an internal conflict concerning their commitment to the cause of the underprivileged.

## **V. STRATEGIES FOR SELF-RELIANT DEVELOPMENT**

Being a comprehensive and multidimensional process requiring basic structural transformation of a society, self-reliant development is not an easy policy option. It requires a long term policy commitment with a clear comprehension of its full implications in terms of struggle, sacrifices and changes in perceptions and attitudes towards the world system and internal on the process of development created by the established order. To be effective, self-reliant development requires end of both external and internal dependence as both are closely related. First we discuss the strategies for overcoming

external dependence.

### **A. Strategies for Terminating External Dependence**

Given the above described structure of unequal and dependent relations between rich and poor countries, the pursuit of self-reliant development is indeed a difficult task. In these environments, a less developed country can pursue one of the four strategies or a combination of them once it makes a serious commitment to realise such development:

1. Participate in a struggle to change the unequal world system;
2. Actively disengage from exchanges with the world system maintaining those relations which are advantageous to it and severing those that are disadvantageous - the strategy called "selective delinking."
3. Totally delink from the world system at least for a certain period until it has strengthened itself internally;
4. Participate in collective self-reliance of the poor countries and reducing the exchanges with the rich countries to the minimum.

These strategies are not mutually exclusive and can be pursued in combination to maximize their impact depending on the specific situation of each country. Each strategy has its short term disadvantages and can work only if a country, as noted earlier, internally transform itself and is willing to bear the short term cost of it. For instance, participation in a struggle for changing the unequal nature of the world may invite punitive measures from the rich countries. Selective delinking may not be viable as the rich countries usually insist on "package deals." Total delinking and self-closure may result in stagnation if not accompanied by vigorous pursuit of appropriate policies of self-reliant development and internal transformation. Collective self-reliance may not be viable when some of the less developed countries seek hegemony over others, or compete for favours from the rich countries or when character and stage of their development is not conducive for useful mutual exchanges.

Successful pursuit of any of these strategies singly or in combination depends on the degree to which a country has already become integrated into the world system and the political orientation and interests of the ruling elite. The cost of pursuing these strategies would be high and options limited for those countries that are highly integrated into the world system through economic, political and cultural linkages. Similarly, the ruling elite of the countries which has narrow political base, is unresponsive to the needs of its people and therefore cannot win their trust or tries to perpetuate itself in power with the help of its patrons abroad thus further eroding its roots in the people, will neither be capable of nor well disposed toward pursuing any of these strategies.

### **B. Strategies for Terminating Internal Dependence**

The above discussion has brought out that self-reliance at national level alone is neither feasible nor desirable. It has to be built into a wider scheme of self-reliance beginning with the individual and culminating at the world level. Difficulties in pursuing self-reliance at only one level have been explained. It has been particularly stressed that given contemporary inequitable world system and concentrated economic and military power at the disposal of the rich countries there is not much room for maneuver for the poor countries to change the existing world system except through high level of internal solidarity which at present does not seem to be developing. Under these circumstances the best option for the poor countries is to seek self-reliance through internal cultural and structural transformation without giving up the struggle to create favourable international environments.

Though highly desirable both as a goal and a strategy, internal cultural and structural transformation is not an easy option either. Our preceding analysis has brought out the obstacles and difficulties involved. The state apparatus, militaries and bureaucracies, planning agencies, foreign trained technocrats structurally and culturally integrated into the existing world system have vested interest in pursuing dependent development. The capitalist and feudal classes have also similar interests. Given this configuration of interests against self-reliant development the question arises whether a poor country highly dependent on the world system has any other option except to struggle for internal transformation. If it cannot change itself internally it cannot hope to change the whole world. Only alternative to self-reliant development through internal transformation is perpetual dependence and subordination to the world system and maldevelopment and stagnation.

## **VI. ELEMENTS IN STRATEGY FOR INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION**

Though it may appear utopian to social scientists trained in the positivist tradition and impractical to the dominant classes in a poor country, a rudimentary strategy for internal transformation for self-reliant development is suggested below. Such a strategy cannot be applied to all the countries of the Third World uniformly. Each country has to take into account its specific circumstances in implementing it. Five basic elements of this strategy are discussed here.

### **1. Raising the Social Consciousness of the Individual**

As noted earlier, self-reliance development can be based only on self-reliant individual who is the basic, concrete, active and conscious unit on which the structure of various organisations including that of a nation is built. An individual can be considered self-reliant when he can develop and utilize his potentialities fully, harmonize his personal interests with that of larger social groups without surrendering his autonomy, achieve a level of maturity enabling him to be himself in a hostile and restrictive environments. Such individual though may have developed specialised skills and may be performing a specialised role in his society can achieve a considerable degree of self-sufficiency and self-determination by acquiring skills necessary for his adequate functioning and by

jettisoning the burden of superfluous needs. Finally, a self-reliant individual is self-aware and creative human being capable of self-analysis through access to his deeper level of consciousness and can act creatively in performing any role he chooses for himself.

Development of such individuals requires a supportive culture and transformation of those social, political and economic structures that constrict such development. But few cultures in the Third World can support the development of such individuals. Most of them place high stress on imitation, social conformity and dependence on those in position of authority and power. Many penalize dissent and social deviance and suppress inborn creativity of the individual. Thus one of the first step toward producing self-reliant individuals and eventually self-reliant society is to subject these cultures to critical scrutiny retaining their those elements which support the development of self-reliant individual and changing those which inhibit it.

Urged by rich countries and the international organisation the Third World countries place high stress on education to bring about cultural change. However, education and literacy can be instrument of such change only when they have built-in contents and methods to produce self-reliant individuals by raising their social and political consciousness and impart them useful skills. Otherwise education becomes a device for indoctrination and manipulation to ensure social conformity, political impotence and powerlessness as happens with many educational systems in the Third World countries. Thus first element in the strategy for internal transformation is introduction of an educational system which can foster above-described qualities in the individual. Such education does not have to be formal. In the absence of adequate educational facilities, extension education through mass media, use of video devices combined with group discussion and education through political process can become an adequate substitute in the Third World countries until these countries are able to develop an appropriate and adequate formal educational system.

## **2. Creativity in Sciences**

Another important element in strategy for internal transformation is encouraging local creativity in sciences. Such creativity must occur in several spheres and at several hierarchical levels in a society. Most important area for creativity is cultural, that is, in science, technology, social knowledge and values. If a society remains sterile in cultural sphere, it cannot break through the shackles of stagnation and cannot meet new challenges. Creativity in science does not necessarily mean that every society has to invent science afresh. It may mean that depending on its size and resources, a society should be creative in basic sciences and should not be totally dependent for basic scientific knowledge on scientifically advanced countries. Indeed, research in basic sciences is expensive in terms of expenditure of resources and infrastructure needed for it. But, there are scientific fields, such as theoretical physics, in which greater results can be produced with limited expenditure. Noble Laureate Abdus Salam has argued that "for a minority of Third World countries there is the need for basic scientists to help their colleagues in applied research work." If basic sciences have to provide such assistance to applied sciences, a certain degree of creative work need to be done in the basic sciences,

particularly those which are closely linked to the solution of problems of development of a society.

While role of creativity may be somewhat limited in basic sciences and considerable knowledge in this area may be acquired from the scientifically advanced countries, there is much greater scope and need for creativity to apply this knowledge for the solution of local problems. Using laws of science for solving a problem is neither a simple nor an automatic process. The applied scientists have to fully comprehend the relevant laws of science, the nature of the problem to which they are to be applied, and socio-cultural constraints in which a given solution is to work. This doubtlessly requires considerable degree of creativity and imagination by local applied scientists. Solutions of problems evolved in one society cannot be automatically applied to similar problems in a different socio-cultural context.

Somewhat similar and analogous situation arises with regard to transfer of technology from the technologically advanced countries. In the hey days of importing development models, the basic principle advocated by intellectuals and policy makers of the rich countries was that the poor countries have to adjust their cultures and social systems to the newly imported technology as a necessary cost of development. Now the position has swung to the other extreme advocating that imported technology should be adjusted to the existing social and cultural realities or new technologies should be evolved with the development of society and its culture. Therefore, the need for "appropriate" technology harmonizing with social structure and culture of a society is stressed.

Whether an imported technology is to be harmonized with the socio-cultural conditions or local technology is to be evolved which is in harmony with its environments, the role of creativity in this process cannot be overstressed. Local scientists, engineers, doctors have to creatively apply or adjust the imported technology to promote self-reliant development.

A third area of creativity needed for internal transformation for self-reliant development is social sciences which can enable the intellectuals in a society to comprehend the forces, internal and external, which shape or determine social structural and cultural characteristics of their society and thus, in favourable circumstances, enable the policy-makers to develop policies which foster self-reliant development.

In the first quarter century of "development era" ( 1945 - 70) the major tool for conceptualising, planning, monitoring and evaluation of development in most of the Third World countries were the social sciences developed and imported from the West. During this period, the western governments and international organisations, with the cooperation of the Third World governments, encouraged the transfer of these sciences as part of development assistance. Consequently they shaped the intellectual outlook and world view of the educated power elite. This was further facilitated by the fact that transfer of western social sciences somewhat undermined the hold of indigenous knowledge on this elite. Indeed, transfer of western social sciences in some ways broadened the outlook of this elite, gave a degree of objectivity to their thought as western social sciences oriented

them to confront reality more pragmatically and somewhat weakened romantic and utopian elements in their thinking. Still, capacity of western social sciences to impart objectivity to this elite remained limited as western social sciences grew out from a tradition peculiar to western intellectual development and during a period when western colonialism was expanding into the Third World. As a result, these sciences got embedded in ideological stances legitimizing the interest of colonialism, imperialism or contemporary Western world's dominance. Sometimes they reflected the ethnocentric biases of the European history and culture and its distinctive economic, political, social and cultural development. This somewhat limited their relevance to the development of the Third World. Besides, dynamics of internal growth of Western social sciences pushed them in the direction of universalisation and sectorialisation. This limited their capacity to help the Third World intellectuals to develop an objective and truly scientific view of their situation and a broader world view. In some cases they created a rather naive belief among them that Western development model was an adequate or even the only appropriate prescription for development of their societies.

The traditional elite in the Third World was brought up on indigenous and classical intellectual tradition and was only marginally exposed to western social sciences. This included, besides the religious elite and the landed elite, traders and occasionally even the capitalists. The world view of masses was mostly rooted in the folk knowledge. The conception of development derived from such a knowledge was either revivalist seeking to resurrect cultural outlook, identity and institutional structure of an earlier era in history or seeking status-quo or occasionally both. The self-reliant development neither can be developed with the assistance of western social sciences with their present orientation and biases nor with the help of purely indigenous classical or folk knowledge. A truly self-reliant development would require local creativity in social sciences. This creativity may have to be simultaneously develop in the following areas:-

1. While retaining their scientific and objective spirit and employing their methodology, western social sciences should be cleaned from their ethnocentric and ideological biases. Their tendency towards exaggerated universalisation and specialization should be restrained;

2. The classical and indigenous, traditional and folk knowledge should be subjected to rigorous scientific scrutiny and cleansed from romantic, utopian and self-glorifying as well as status-quo maintaining elements;

3. The knowledge of thus reconstructed social sciences should be carried to the masses to impart them the capacity to scientifically and objectively analyse their problems, examine their folk knowledge, retain what stands the test of objectivity and scientific standards and discard superstitions and myths. In this way they themselves will become creators of scientific knowledge. Such knowledge then will enable them to become effective participants in the affairs of the society and contribute to the formulation of national development goals. This may provide self-reliant development roots in scientific knowledge. The movement towards "Participatory Action Research" seems to be attempting to execute this task.

In many cultures and societies in the Third World, creativity when permitted, is limited to intellectual elite; the remaining actors, groups, classes and institutions are expected to perform their roles within the established traditional framework. In fact, many of the cultures in the Third World frown upon creativity and innovation as elements that presumably would subvert their social cohesion and equilibrium. However, if self-reliant development is to succeed, creativity must diffuse through the whole society including masses enabling them to innovate new solutions of their problems.

While creativity in culture is essential requisite for the success of self-reliant development, it has certain degree of tension with other elements of it. First, some cultures put narrow limits on creativity. Second, if cultural specific values are to be promoted as part of such development, some of these values may stifle or restrict creativity. Similarly, while the need for self-reliance may spur creativity in some institutional spheres, when interpreted to mean total delinking from other cultures and societies, such delinking may not be conducive for creativity. Creativity is less likely to occur in isolated societies than those which are exposed to other cultures and societies, although excessive external cultural penetration and over-integration with other cultures and societies may promote anomie and imitation and thus retard creativity.

True and authentic popular participation seems to be conducive for creativity as such participation empowers individual and collectivities, thus helping them break the shackles of over-conformity and enabling them to use their innate human potentialities and become creative actors in their society. However, when popular participation is essentially manipulative, mobilizing individuals and collectivities for ends and goals established by the elite in authoritarian political and social systems, it may not promote individual and social creativity.

### **3. Decentralization of Administrative and Political Power**

A third strategy for self-reliant development is decentralization of power and organisation of the people. As has been noted above, under the impact of colonialism in many Third World countries political power is highly centralised at the national level and is vested with the militaries and bureaucracies which have developed a vested interest in consolidating the centralised system and keeping the units below the nation without political and administrative power. As their exclusive monopoly of power is based on their superior organizational capacity, they also have a vested interest in keeping the people unorganized, if not disorganized. As a result organisation of lower administrative and political units became weak, unorganised, powerless and dependent on the national center and the institutions which wielded central power. For serious implementation of self-reliant development this distribution of power need to be reversed and lower units need to be empowered. This may require dismantling or reorganizing the existing structure of administrative and political power - not a very easy task for any Third World society to undertake.

### **4. Organisation of the People**

A fourth strategy needed for achieving self-reliant development and for decentralizing power to lower units is to create, nurture and foster people's organisations which ensure their participation in political and administrative processes as well as reduce their dependence on the central institutions. In many Third World societies, however, it is not an easy task to organise people and ensure their genuine participation in the political and administrative process. Difficulties and obstacles, as briefly analysed below, are formidable.

Genuine people's participation encounters several problems in most Third World societies. First, traditional cultures, social structures and political systems of some of these societies lack conception of people's participation and institutionalize and legitimize exclusion of people from public affairs. The colonial rule further strengthened these characteristics. Second, even in post-independence period the people's participation remained limited and frequently ineffective as groups opposed or at least unsympathetic to such participation captured the post-colonial state structures. These structures manipulated and engineered participation by keeping it under their direct control or restricted it to less important local issues insulating national political institutions from people's participation.

Genuine popular participation was also undermined by the rise of authoritarian civilian regimes sometimes led by so called charismatic leaders who mobilized people for sustaining them in power rather than allow genuine participation. Third, participation is usually ritualistic in the form of attendance of meeting of formal political institutions devoid of effective decision making power. People's participant becomes authentic only when three minimum conditions are met;

a. The people have the right to organize themselves into groups and formal organizations to protect their interests, without interference from the vested interests and state apparatus and can freely articulate these interests;

b. The people can participate in the state institutions that make and enforce state policies at various levels and influence these processes effectively through their organizations and regular elections in the country.

c. The people have access to productive assets, employment and education which ensures that their basic needs are met. Without diffusion and deconcentration of economic power participation in political process does not become effective and meaningful.

## **5. Reorganizing Power Structure**

Though all the elements of strategy for internal transformation are important and interdependent, reorganization of the power structure is the most crucial element in this strategy. Such reorganization should aim at reducing the power of the groups and classes that have vested interest in dependent development and therefore constitute an impediment to the realisation of self-reliant development. Raising of social consciousness

of the individual, creativity in sciences, decentralization of power, and organisation of the people can partly achieve this objective. However, effectiveness of these measures depends on whether power is restructured and transferred to the people interested in promoting self-reliant development. Such transfer of power is not easy to achieve in many societies of the Third World where power structure has been ossified and congealed. It is possible that left to itself the power structure will become further solidified. Therefore, to change it in the desired direction it will be necessary to undertake certain desired reforms, the most important being the land reforms in the countryside as the existing land distribution system in many countries constitutes a major obstacle to the development of the majority of the people. This, however, does not mean that reforms should be limited only to this field. Depending upon the configuration of power in every society, appropriate reform measures need to be taken to break the monopolies of social, economic and political power to facilitate the implementation of other measures proposed for internal transformation for achieving self-reliant development.