

# EDITORIAL

Development is the essence of any nation. It is not a mere concept or a standalone philosophy divorced from the socio-economic and political factors of any given context. In most of the cases, discussion around development is reduced to a mere objective political agenda or at the best a topic to be discussed during policy discourses. There is hardly any subjective outlook from the viewpoint of justice, freedom, equality and human rights. Development of a citizenry is not possible till the issue of social justice is addressed alongside.

Social justice is a complex web of interconnected and interdependent aspects which need to be taken into account and worked to evolve a development agenda based on justice and peace. In such a context development and social justice delve deep into the shared obligation to understand and deliver freedom, liberty, human rights, dignity both as collective and individuals. For a truly just and peace loving society, it is imperative that issues concerning the most marginalised groups are given priority.

Often it is seen that while the juxtaposition of development swells the citadels of the all the sections that are already powerful one – particularly the ones who wield social, economic and political power – to a large majority it leads to marginalisation, oppression, injustice, exclusion, discrimination and disadvantages. This reality is more specific in the case of oppressed sections like Dalits, Adivasis, Blacks, women, ethnic, religious, linguistic and sexual minorities, children, peasants, landless labourers and forest workers. The ethics of freedom, eco-spirituality, geocentric culture, self-rule, social and distributive justice, sharing of values, democratic engagement through free social and cultural means and human rights. As the crisis grows, the role of the state as a unit of deliverance and social system based on power and domination is being challenged through this process.

This could be particularly observed in most of the states once colonised by the European power centres. In many of those states, there are clear mismatch between the idea of development and social justice. Here the development process initiated by the State stands on the pedestal of colonial structure or an hangover of the same, which is invoked over the socially oppressed and marginalised sections. While the developed super power states out rightly dictated the mechanics of development and also that of social justice and human rights, others followed without even raising a 'nay' question. In this game, the state provided a semblance of mitigating problems through 'development' without actually addressing the questions of justice or resolving the impediments of development in fundamental ways.

In countries like India, liberalism is similar to the karmic theory of rebirth: both necessarily lead to social exclusion by postponing the question of injustice and inequality. The karmic theory entertains the hopeful possibility of a Dalit being reborn as a Brahmin, thereby tying Dalits to their 'traditional duties' and reinforcing the status quo. Interestingly, while the structures of injustice, oppression, repression and violence were consolidated and kept intact, in the name of development the system was constantly being legitimised by its actions, which kept the pretensions of development alive. These pretensions were constantly kept alive through concessions either as reservations or as social security, which were often only marginal, however served the vested interest of the vote bank populist politics of the entrenched political system. Such nominal gains were continued in a way that the system innovated sophisticated and efficient methods of further marginalisation and seclusion.

Globally, the neo-liberal doctrines aimed at destroying people's collective structures that stands in the way of unhampered plunder and expropriation of resources. In such a context the idea of development naturally meant the dismantling of community control or even the idea of community's control over resource zones at one end and on the other blocking all possibility to provide rights over land, water and forest to the historically deprived sections. This shifts the pattern of just and rightful access to resources, and therefore development. Fuelled by capitalist, development patterns underwent significant changes; nevertheless, what was apparent was that these changes constituted new ways for the continuance of the same social order globally. In such a circumstance, the reaffirmation of the primacy of the democratic political process in symbolic terms helped the system to command legitimacy.

It is in this context that the debate on 'Development and Social Justice' attains immense prominence and this edition is an attempt to address these questions. This issues of JPS is divided into three sections such as Thematic Articles, Special Articles and Documents. We are thankful to all the contributors who brought forth thought provoking insights through these papers.

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