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Impossible Theorem and Possibilities of Development Studies

Abstract

The article evaluates the ‘impossibility theorem’ of development studies. It is imperative to reject the ‘impossibility theorem’ based on essentialist perspectives and performative indicators of economic growth and development. It is necessary to revive the radical promise of Development Studies as a discipline to address the issues and predicaments of people and their societies around the world. A simple rejection of the ‘impossibility theorem’ is not possible unless Development Studies reassert itself as a critical discipline to analyse, understand and guide social, economic and cultural transformations based on historical experiences. The paper argues that Development Studies have to be free from the influences of economics and its model driven logic and revive its emancipatory language of transformation in our society.

Introduction

Development studies as a discipline has evolved from various vacuums created by different traditional disciplines in social science and humanities during and after World War-II. The failure of traditional disciplines i.e. History, Philosophy, Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology and Economics to respond to the crises and predicaments of people and societies led to the growth of development studies as a discipline that borrowed the radical language of the different traditional disciplines. In this way, “Development Studies is an unusual enterprise (Corbridge, 2007: 179)”. This unusual

discipline is facing both subjective and objective challenges from within and outside the discipline.

Subjectively speaking, Development Studies as a discipline has taken a new shape when anti colonial and anti imperial struggles, anti capitalist and nationalistic ideas were fresh in the air in the decolonized countries. The challenge to the discipline was coming from three things i.e. the great depression, the centralized state command economy of the then USSR and the necessity to catch up with developed countries followed by domestic demands in the newly independent countries. These events have shaped Development Studies as a discipline during the post war world economy. It emerged “as a post second world war project of intervention in the ‘third world’ that emerged in the context of decolonisation and the cold war, and ‘little d’ development or the development of capitalism as a geographically uneven, profoundly contradictory set of historical processes (Hart, 2001: 650)”. This has created *objective* conditions for Development Studies as a discipline to address the issues of development, underdevelopment, poverty, inequality, exploitation and many other forms of marginalization in different parts of the world. Historically, Development Studies as a discipline has inherited twin objectives based on necessity and emancipation. There is no contradiction between necessity and emancipation as both are integrated with each other. The fulfillment of necessities depends on the levels of emancipation. Thus, the prospects of Development Studies depend on its uncompromising march towards achieving necessities and emancipation together for individuals and their societies.

This has set the philosophical and practical agendas and issues of concerns for Development Studies which characterized development as “a long-term process of structural transformation” and “a short-to-medium term outcome of desirable targets (Sumner and Tribe, 2008: 11)”. The long-term process of social and structural transformation is necessary for emancipation whereas short-medium term targets are essential to achieve instant necessities of lives and societies. However, both processes need to unravel forces which are undermining the objectives of “necessities and emancipation”. The failure of Development Studies to play its role and achieve its objectives at the present juncture cannot be the basis of the impossibility theorem. The lineages of the impossibility theorem¹ of Development Studies can be traced in the recent works of Ferguson (1994), Escobar (1995) and Corbridge (2007). The “impossible theorem”, its approach and contributions can be discussed amidst the twin objectives of Development Studies and its pathways.

Pathways of Development Studies

The pre-World War period was a divided world with colonial developed countries as centers and colonized underdeveloped countries as peripheries which has set the agenda for Development Studies² during the post-World War-II period. The dependency

¹ The ‘Impossibility Theorem’ is not used here as a theoretical concept as outlined by Arrow (1950) but an approach generally interpreted as proving that no sensible method of aggregating preference exists (Tullock, 1967: 256)”. It has shaped decision making processes within welfare economics for decades now.

² For a detailed history of Development Studies, its origin, growth and different trends and trajectories of the discipline; see; Seers (1968), Mohan and Wilson (2005), Sumner (2006), Jolly (2008), Adler (2016). The IDS Bulletin, Vol. 47 No. 2, May 2016 covers different dimensions of ‘Development Studies’ in terms of its past, present and future (IDS, 2016).

school of thought engulfed Development Studies as a discipline. The uneven development between and among different regions, groups and classes within the developed countries has accelerated the agenda of Development Studies. The decolonized and newly independent countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa and their cry for democratic ideals based on equality, liberty and justice has echoed all over and provided new impetus for development studies during the late 19th century. At the same time, the divided world (Seers and Joy 1971) has also set the challenge for different disciplines.

However, the traditional disciplines in social sciences and humanities have addressed the issues and predicaments but limited in their language to understand and analyse the process that led to uneven development within a region and disparities in development among different countries. The traditional disciplines have also tried to diagnose the problems and prescribed alternatives to recover from the predicaments that people were facing during the late 19th century. The economists are the first to respond to the problems of development and underdevelopment. Scholars like Gerschenkron (1962) and Rostow (1960) have considered the problem of underdevelopment as a natural and innate process of different states of development. This sets the agenda for the liberal and neoliberal school of economic modernisation and considered development as a linear process in which economic growth is the way forward. Economic growth is only possible in an environment of minimal state and free market. The ideas of minimal state and free market were pursued by the developed countries and promoted in developing

countries through aid agencies and different international financial institutions i.e World Bank, IMF and other Bretton Wood institutions. These powerful institutions and policies have influenced and transformed those political, social, economic and cultural systems which were agreed and destroyed and reshaped those which were disagreed (Toussaint, 2008). Attempts were made to rewrite history and made people forget the colonial impact, capitalist exploitation and imperial adventures on their lives and causes of underdevelopment in their society; for example, Joshi and Little (1994) start the macro economic history of India from 1961 without any reference to conditions that led to the formation of the Indian economy during 1961. Similarly, economic and historical ideas were developed by Oxbridge intellectuals to support such an agenda to profile neoliberal development (Dirk, 2006). The available information on different experiments for social, economic and political development is biased and partial (Seers, 1983: ix-x). All forms of propaganda have failed to hide the crisis ridden neoliberal model of development. On the other hand, the neo classical economic analysis of development has neglected the structural difference between different countries (Seer, 1963). The development hypothesis asserts that there has been a rapid change in the nature of production and so economic relations among and between different regions and people. The same hypothesis affirms that the state driven planned development with welfare objectives has lost much of its distinct claim to carry forward internally driven development and egalitarian strategies have become ineffective to the point of irrelevance without economic growth. Thus economic growth is, in this view, seen as a tide sweeping over borders in which industrialization is irresistible to transform the

condition of poor and underdeveloped. The economic growth by industrialization is seen as the only alternative for the development of the state and its people under the neoliberal market.

The 2008 global economic crisis reflects the crisis ridden neoliberal economic ideology even in the developed world. The decades of the neoliberal model of economic growth and development are successful in abandoning the path of human development and welfare in pursuit of a social finance capital. The 2008 economic crisis was successful in institutionalising Development Studies within the language of the neoliberal paradigm and its methodology to understand and explain the causes and consequences of economic crisis and its impact on people. The impact narratives are homologous within a uni-dimensional ontology. The power inequalities within an unequal economic structure and their global, national and local characters have become secondary in responding to the immediate necessities of people in the face of economic marginalisation. Such short-term approach has made people as 'recipients' of state benefits and welfare programmes of the so called human face of welfare oriented economic policies rather than 'active' agents of change towards equality of power and ownership over productive resources. The 2008 economic crisis is the first structural crisis of 21st century monopoly finance capital. It is imperative to study its historical dynamics and contradictions in terms of social and economic impacts and the conditions in which the crisis occurred. In Development Studies, crisis is neither a social construction nor an economic landscape of class dividend in which the rich consolidate

their capital base with state stimulus whereas the working class suffers vulnerability in every step. Therefore, Development Studies need to study the relationship between productive and non-productive, social, economic and cultural forces by reinventing its radical language of freedom.

Development as Freedom

The development of human civilisation, from the Stone Age to the century of cyberspace has witnessed an uninterrupted struggle for freedom from ignorance to freedom from hunger. The struggle against feudalism, slavery, colonialism, dictatorship, injustice, underdevelopment, gender disparity, racial segregation and crime are part of the human endeavour in search of freedom. The right to freedom of life, personal liberty, religious choice and democratic political practice are some of the defining transformations during the twentieth century and have had an immense impact on different notions of freedom and its history (Foner, 1998). These are not just abstract ideas of freedom but rather manifestations of concrete conditions we either realise or ignore. How to understand such processes? The answers to these questions manifest themselves in the contested ideas of freedom and development studies has yet to answer this question.

However, the existing literature in Development Studies on the idea of freedom documents the institutional performance towards achieving the goals of freedom in

terms of rights, obligations and entitlements (Dierksmeier, 2007). Berlin (2002:668) talks about positive and negative freedom whereas Sen (1999) has categorised freedom as formal and substantive freedom. The Marxian scholarship has documented the competing visions and binaries between individual vs. collective or bourgeois vs. socialist freedom (Marx, 1906; Taylor, 1999; Harvey, 2005). The argument is further developed by Brian (2006:14) who has classified freedom as spontaneity, transcendence and as a mode of being. How to understand these often conflicting notions of freedom? Most of the literature on the idea of freedom follows the Hegelian philosophy but neglects its foundation in logic (Wallace, 2005)³. Moreover, the Hegelian scholarship is not only Eurocentric but also epistemologically narrow within its universalising tendencies. The postcolonial and subaltern scholarship attempts to document the marginalised notions of freedom within the Hegelian logic. Thus, the ideas of freedom as practiced by the people, communities and their societies have been denied their due place in the philosophical debates on freedom. The denials have multiplied with the growth of industrial modernity represented by the market as an institutional process that conceptualises freedom as availability, accessibility, choice and purchasing power (Sen, 1991). Such ideals are clubbed together and assume economic development as freedom (Sen, 1999) where utility, pleasure and satisfaction determine the levels of individual freedom and their happiness which depends on policies of welfare and wellbeing. Those who are in the margins of such a process i.e. the indigenous

³ There are exceptions to such trend in the works of Dudley (2002), Wood, (1990), Patten (1999), Franco (1999) and Neuhaus (2000).

communities have experienced many transformations. One such transformation is their ideas of freedom as a result of mining led industrialisation and expansion of formal and organised markets in the indigenous areas (Nayak, 2007). Development Studies locates the impact of mining and industrialisation on different communities, environment, displacement and its causes but does not locate its impact on other forms of transformations at the ideological level that plays a vital role in the organisation of society and economy (Nayak, 2018).

The conception of freedom as employed in Development Studies today is all about opportunities for a better life in terms of accessibility to basic needs of life. The issues of food, health, housing, education and infrastructure to achieve these basic necessities are central to Development Studies as a discipline without understanding the conditions in which agencies and structures interact with each other to achieve these issues. It has constantly been reinventing itself from the language of administration, governance, globalization to access, welfare, participation and well being to realise freedom and eradicate poverty, hunger, homelessness and unemployment around the world. There are some transformations within the pathways of Development Studies to address both its own ontological and epistemological issues.

Development as Participation

The paradox of plenty and failure of development policies have led to new forms of social, political and economic movements resisting the state and market forces as they

have failed to deliver the basic necessities of life. Therefore, participation is a new slogan now but the question remains who participates, where, when and how? The answer remains invisible within the bandwagons of the consultancy led development practitioners who are talking about 'participation, empowerment and democratisation'. Such language is the part of the new 'theology of development' which has its root in religion (Henkel and Stirrat, 2002:177). It provides the cultural, philosophical and ideological justification for the new development orthodoxy carried out by NGOs⁴ and sponsored by both state and non-state actors. In the project of new development orthodoxy, "control is exercised in such a way that participants appear to be controlling themselves ; individuals attest to their conversion; sinners admit their faults before they see the light (Henkel and Stirrat, 2002:178)". It is a religious revivalist tradition followed by the advocates of neo-liberal economy of development in which they admit their failures and mistakes (for details on the World Bank's acknowledgement of its mistakes, see; *Bretton Woods Update*, No-18, August 2000).

Further, the NGOs have become the favoured institutional set-up for the development agencies both globally and nationally (Edwards & Hulme, 1996a) which creates a process

⁴ The development anthropologists consider NGOs/COs as 'non-governmental sectors of development industry' (Stirrat, 1996; Ferguson, 1997:8) which creates a 'culture of consultancy' (Stirrat, 2000) and work as 'cultural consultants' (Henkel and Stirrat, 2002:169) in the field of development. As a student of political economy of public policy, I call them 'salary seeking social servants' who find NGOs/COs in tribal or rural development as a sector of employment to earn their livelihood and pursue their cultural hegemony in the rural and tribal areas of India. NGOs have achieved many things but the structures of power that control and determine the resource allocation for development at different levels (locally, nationally and globally) have remained unchanged (Nyamugasira, 1998:297). Thus the structures of inequality and exploitation that emanate from these levels have continued to exist in our contemporary development discourse (Nayak, 2018).

of depoliticising development. The depoliticisation of development reinforces problems which are structural and political (Ferguson 1990). Development anthropologists locate such processes as a by-product of a new development orthodoxy that talks about 'participation, empowerment and democratisation'. Such language is a new theology of NGO led development, with the help of local elites and government agents (Hirschman 1987; Sanyal 1994), has created a culture of consultancy reinforcing the existing power relations and inequalities within society (Stirrat, 2000; Henkel & Stirrat, 2002). Thus, NGOs prefer to maintain the status quo in the social, economic and political structure rather than to change it (Fowler, 1993; Ndegwa, 1996; Starn, 1995). Many consider it as colonisation of the masses through local elites, government agents to international agencies and donors (Reilly, 1992; Jhamtani, 1992; Fisher, 1995) encompassing local and national boundaries (Kothari, 1993).

However, there are radical and transformatory NGOs working within rural areas and in urban slums pushing for development, justice and social change (Kanungo, 2004; Matthews, 2017). The emancipatory role of NGOs and CSOs are visible in different social movements for freedom, democracy, development, justice and equality (Marcelo, 2013; Veronica, 2018). International NGOs and CSOs are playing a major role in shaping and initiating different invaluable debates within Development Studies; hence, contributing in the making of the discipline (Yanacopulos, 2019). Such NGOs and Civil Society Organisations are not merely salary seeking, neoliberal and third sector actors. Similarly, the states and markets can play both positive and negative roles in the process of

development (Fernández and Ormaechea, 2019). For example; the post-colonial states in Asia, Africa and Latin America played a major role in driving development and citizenship rights within a capitalist development framework where state dominates over market (Zheng, and Huang, 2018). It reflects contradictory role of state and markets within a welfare economic framework of capitalist path of uneven development (Offe, 2018). In this way, uneven development and contradictory processes of success and failure of development processes both in their institutional and non-institutional process over decades have created gaps between the different sections of population and region in general and state and citizenship in particular.

Failures of Development Studies and Impossibility Theorem

The debates on the failures of Development Studies started to take shape during the 1960s due to the growing gap between realities and expectations in the developing societies. The desire to reverse the situations of underdevelopment and its colonial lineages has either failed or did not move forward as planned. “The 1960s could well be called the decade of disillusion. The development plans prepared in many countries, often with the help of highly sophisticated economists, have proved of limited use as guides to policy decisions⁵. They were very largely government investment programmes. Most of us working for governments have come, however, even if slowly and reluctantly, to realise that what holds up development is not only, or even primarily, lack of capital but systems of education or land tenure, politicians unwilling or unable to

⁵ See; Seers (1968) and Kattel, Mazzucato, Ryan-Collins, Sharpe (2018).

change the social structure, administrative systems which are archaic or nepotistic (Seers 1968 as cited in Jolly, 2008: 14)”. So, the impossible theorem was used to question the relevance of Development Studies, as the discipline was a product of a gap between development theory and practice (Costantini, 2018).

The impossibility theorem as argued by Corbridge (2007:181) is based on the epistemological foundations of Development Studies concerned with the ‘necessities’ to address issues and predicaments of people with short term or medium term development projects and policies to eradicate poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, diseases and corruption. The philosophical justification of the impossibility theorem of Development Studies is partly derived from the works of Escobar (1995) who argues that “the discourse and strategy of development produced its opposite: massive underdevelopment and impoverishment, untold exploitation and oppression. The debt crisis, the Sahelian famine, increasing poverty, malnutrition, and violence are only the most pathetic signs of the failure of forty years of development (ibid: 4)”. Both the studies of Escobar (1995) and Corbridge (2007) either consciously or subconsciously have ignored the ontological foundation of Development Studies which is concerned with ‘emancipation’ to address the structural basis of these issues through transformation. It reflects a clear direction of Development Studies as a discipline.

Therefore, the import of Arrow's General Impossibility Theorem⁶ to replicate the failures of the discipline does not make sense.

However, Development Studies continues to face the challenge from twin internal disciplinary dangers. The twin question of language and methodology continues to hunt Development Studies as a discipline. It is impossible to sustain a discipline that does not develop its own language but exists by borrowing the language from other disciplines in humanities and social sciences. The interdisciplinary language in which Development Studies survives and claims as its strength cannot be an excuse. Similarly, on the question of methodology, Development Studies needs to develop and expand its own generic methods and methodologies to remain as a discipline of scientific inquiry. The answers to these twin questions are significant for the survival of Development Studies as a growing discipline.

The Question of Survival

The impossible theorem questions the very basis of the survival of Development Studies as a discipline. The question of the impossible theorem is based on the performance of Development Studies in terms of creating ideas and institutions to accelerate economic indicators. The debate over the viability of Development Studies focused on model driven technical issues of information, incentives and achievements of specific plans and

⁶ Arrow's "General Impossibility Theorem has been generally interpreted as proving that no sensible method of aggregating preference exists (Tullock,1967: 256)".

projects. The wider logic of Development Studies is on resource allocation through structural change which sets preconditions for achieving specific plan objectives. The impossible theorem debate on Development Studies ignores the wider logic of Development Studies as a discipline. Further, the projection of the narrow understanding of the discipline is infected with the Eurocentric understanding of world development; biases inherited from late colonialism and its production of knowledge to expand neocolonial ambitions. It is not only myopic but also a systematic design to divert the attention of Development Studies as a discipline which is trying to understand the causes, effects and conditions of underdevelopment. The troika of cause, effect and condition of Development Studies puts capital and its market in a situation where exploitative capitalist accumulation is impossible. Development Studies as an infant discipline has tried to create consciousness among people by replicating the failures of different political systems and policies.

The danger put by Development Studies to capital is the very basis of attack on the discipline. It is even premature to argue that Development Studies has failed. Because, Development Studies as a discipline is yet to grow and develop its own disciplinary languages and methods. Further, the question of survival of a discipline depends on its ability to analyse, understand and respond to the crises in the society. As far as, the discipline of Development Studies is concerned, it has a successful record of analysing the causes, effects and conditions of underdevelopment in the different parts of the world during the post Second World War period. It has offered some instant solutions to

the predicaments of people and it has also failed in many ways in terms of its long term objective of structural transformation. Based on the failure of a baby, it is either irresponsible or agenda driven to predict the failure of an adult. Development Studies as a discipline is still in its infant stage and waiting to take a concrete shape with the growth of time.

However, it is important to understand the problems in ideologically model driven research objectives which gives concrete shape to Development Studies as a discipline and address its problems. But, there are ideologically driven models in all disciplines of social sciences and humanities. And based on these models, different disciplines try to analyse, interpret, understand and predict on different issues. But when it comes to Development Studies, people argue for an unbiased and value free research to achieve objectivity and maintain scientific nature of knowledge and truth. For example, one researcher will do research on “Winston Churchill and his smoking behaviour”. If the researcher is an economist, then s/he may locate cost benefit analysis of smoking; its instant and long term effects on Churchill’s health and society at large. An anthropologist will locate the space and time specificities of smoking behaviour of Churchill and its impact whereas a political scientist will locate smoking and its affiliation with statesmen. A researcher in International Relations may locate the geopolitical position of Britain during Churchill’s age and its relations with his smoking behaviour. A sociologist may find out a symbolic relationship between smoking and politicians or people in public life in general. Similarly, a historian and philosopher will analyse

Winston Churchill and his smoking behaviour differently. But a researcher in Development Studies locates the smoking behaviour of Churchill by replicating the realities of negative impact of smoking; on Churchill's health, its influence on his followers and their health. Thus, it is more unbiased, objective and value free when knowledge is being produced by replicating realities of lives and societies than by interpreting the events to derive knowledge. The idea is not to argue that knowledge derived from other disciplines is wrong or false. Neither there is an attempt to develop an impossible theorem for other disciplines. But this is central to understand the contradictions of social sciences and humanities where knowledge is trying to accommodate, co-opt and collaborate with the dominant paradigm of the time and place for its survival. The designs, models and ideas were developed and attempts were made to project market led capitalist system as the only alternative. But there is no scope in Development Studies to hide the fallacies of capitalist logic at different periods of history. Thus, there is a question of survival put forward by those who want to see the decline of Development Studies as a discipline.

The donor driven research⁷ is growing in Development Studies which has given rise to consultancy culture (Brett, 2016). The growth of consultancy culture is a threat to the philosophical foundation of Development Studies as its research findings are either

⁷ Mönks, Carbonnier, Mellet and Haan (2019) have argued for a renewed vision of Development Studies moving beyond donor's agendas. Horner(2019) called for a new paradigm of development whereas Gupta, Hordijk and Vegelin (2019) proposed an inclusive development agenda within the development policy praxis. And Melber (2019) advocated for knowledge production by understanding power and ownership for building Development Studies.

predetermined or manipulated as per the requirements of the funding agencies. Such trend puts the autonomy of Development Studies as a discipline and independence of its research under question. The attack on Development Studies was started with the first phase of neoliberal ideas in development policy making during the 1970s. “They were carried into development by new ideological concerns within the World Bank and the IMF and by the priorities for stabilization and structural adjustment to cope with burgeoning deficits and the threats of debt in developing countries (Jolly, 2008: 36)”. The research institutes and universities which were offering teaching and conducting research in Development Studies were asked to change the direction of the discipline as per the policy directions of World Bank, IMF and different governments. A world class research institute in Development Studies like the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, UK was declared as quasi-non-governmental organization, ‘non departmental public bodies’ by the Government of the UK (ibid: 37). The funding for such institutes was reduced and cancelled to stop research on Development Studies. This has led to a compromise formula between the government and the then director of the IDS which reveals that the research in Development Studies “need to avoid embarrassing the government of the day”⁸. As a result of which the present IDS research is more consultancy driven depending on the donor’s agenda which is catering more to the instant policy needs than the desire for structural change. There is an ongoing debate within IDS about donor agencies and their research agendas. For example; Leonard (2008: 11) talks about “responsiveness to the needs of both the

⁸ See; *IDS Fourth Annual Report 1969/70*, Brighton: IDS: 5, as cited in Jolly (2008: 20).

world's poor and our donors for first class" where as Moore (2008: 9) argues for disagreements with "research agendas which are shaped by funders" and reinforces 'Northern' or donor perspectives of development. The debate within IDS is well summarized by Jennings (2008: 12) who says that "the influence of donor agendas on research was a major concern to come out of the IDS40 Roundtables. As researchers become more linked to the aid industry their research is increasingly subject to policymakers' rapidly changing agendas and buzzwords. As their capacity to produce reflective knowledge is eroded we are left with policy themes without theory, when the discipline of development studies ought to be providing a more comparative, interpretive approach, which explores and negotiates interdisciplinary".

Thus, the survival strategies of Development Studies depend on twin processes. The first step of the process is to liberate its research in Development Studies from the donor agendas. Jennings (2008:12) has advocated for maximum freedom from donor agencies to rediscover theories in Development Studies for long term projects. The second step of the process is to reassert the radical language of Development Studies that craves for structural change towards liberty, equality and justice in every step of human lives. However, Development Studies as a discipline, has failed to come out of its essentialist and immediate necessities and address the issues of emancipation.

Alternatives within Development Studies as a discipline

It is suicidal for a discipline to look for ideas, theories, methods and languages from outside its own scope. The alternatives for the survival of Development Studies exist

within its own field of critical inquiry beyond donor agendas. There are following twin ways of looking for alternatives within the discipline.

Firstly, the urgent and immediate need is to “revive development theory, not as a branch of policy-oriented social science within the parameters of an unquestioned capitalist world order, but as a field of critical inquiry about the contemporary dynamics of that order itself, with imperative policy implications for the survival of civilized and decent life, and not just in the ex-colonial countries (Leys, 1996: 43)”. This process de-territorialises the discipline and looks at different issues and challenges within global context. Chambers (2016) argues to bring back ‘love, trust and respect’ in development discourse which can create positive conditions for ‘Development Studies’. Secondly, an autonomous and independent Development Studies is possible by expanding radically plural and transparent way of undertaking and validating knowledge production with alternative epistemologies and methodologies from multiple disciplines (Mohan and Wilson, 2005: 261). This twin approach can reduce the gap between ‘discipline and interdisciplinarity’ of Development Studies as a discipline (ibid). It is also important for the discipline to move from an interdisciplinary to a cross disciplinary paradigm within its methodological debates (Sumner, 2006; Sumner and Tribe, 2008).

Conclusion

There are three questions that crop up within the debates on the (im)possibilities of Development Studies as a discipline. The first question is on rigor over relevance which

is a healthy debate in terms of intellectual priorities of the discipline. It can carry different trends (philosophical, theoretical and policy) of Development Studies together. The second question is around independent and autonomous language and methods of Development Studies. The second question is reductionist due to the fact that Development Studies from its very inception, continues to be an interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary field of study. It borrows language and methods from different established disciplines to reflect, realise and explain predicaments and realities of everyday lives. The third question is around scientific-ness of Development Studies as a discipline. This question derives its legitimacy from the first two questions itself. Development Studies responded to this question by embedding itself with positivist, statistical and mathematical methods and models. The World Development Indicators, World Human Development Index and the World Happiness Index are three classic examples and outcomes of this process.

However, the increasing tendency to analyse, assess, critically reflect and answer by means of model driven research in search of scientific-ness and legitimacy of knowledge production within Development Studies is reductionist intellectual culture. Because the fundamental problems within Development Studies are social, political, cultural, religious and economic by nature and cannot be reduced as numbers for mathematical or statistical representation. Therefore, it is important for Development Studies as a discipline to navigate its own path within hyper fragmentation of knowledge and engage with quantification with qualitative analysis (giving meanings to numbers). Development

Studies engages with problems (poverty, hunger, homelessness, gender, inequalities and uneven development) that are structural to the society and functioning of the state and government. Therefore, social subjectivity of conditions and scientific objectivity of analysis are twin pillars of knowledge production within the scope of Development Studies.

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