

## **Is there a Christian WAY to Development?**

By

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Society is made of human persons influencing human minds, actions and being shaped at the same time by human beings. Beginning, growth and an end is part of living organism, human being are not different in this matter. However there is a difference and that is about change. Human beings are not mere part of evolutionary change but they are capable of and bring about change in themselves and society they live in consciously, wilfully. Development of and in society have to do with this change determined by human beings. Human interventions are important and necessary for this kind of social change and development, it just does not happen but made to happened. It is not god given, our fate, but human made. Development is understood here as change in quality of human life, in individuals, in the communities and society at large. Individual, communities and development of society are complementary, and one is not possible without the other.

Here is an effort to reflect on the role of an individual in development, the individual as a human person, as a citizen and as a believer [no matter what religion s/he may belong to (if there is anything like belonging to a religion)]. An individual may have her own aspiration and sense of development. She may also think of her community (I refer to the faith community, sharing the same creed) and its development. She may have some aspiration and ideal of development of this community she belongs to. The same person may have a dream, a vision of the larger society of which she as well as her 'faith community' is part. This individual as a Christian may draw inspiration from her tradition, scripture, and teaching of the Church and may have different spiritual and religious approach to development. But that tradition, scripture and teaching cannot stand opposed development, right to live as a human being, which is valid for all, which is based on the principles of justice, equality, and freedom, enshrined in the constitution of India, enunciated in the charter of human rights. First, I shall discuss the concept of development and then look at it from a Christian perspective and suggest ways and means of engaging in development initiating with the Christian community but moving on to the larger society.

If development is understood as transformation of quality of human life in an individual, communities and society at large; then each person, each citizen has a

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responsibility as well as a claim over her/his share in development. It is not a prerogative of any one individual, religion, or a group. Human development is not different for Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, Jains and Hindus, though culturally and religiously it may have different and various manifestations. The difference may be visible in the respective perspectives, the values highlighted and the motivations that stir the individuals of a community to act. Those who believe in a particular god and religious teaching may have a specific religiosity spirituality and a unique tradition of being involved, and of contributing toward development. They may share specific religious beliefs, and/or interpret their 'sacred books' to motivate them towards development, that is, "well-being of all". A Christian may be motivated by the theme of 'Kingdom of God', a Muslim by 'universal brotherhood and sisterhood', the Hindu by 'Ram Rajya' (not 'ram rajya' equated Hindu Rashtra by Sangh Parivar), and a Buddhist by 'Karuna'. Therefore I would like to suggest that the specific 'Christian role' in development is the specific Christian motivation and interpretation of development (a socio-religious construct) and development per se.

### **What is development?**

Development must be seen against "Man's inhumanity to man and more so to woman (italic my addition) increasing in leaps and bounce, and the still sad music of humanity is unheard by those who wield power and command wealth" (Iyer, 1999:6). Development, then, is returning from inhumanity to humanity, promoting and maintaining quality of human life and resisting the anti-human forces, because "We believe that human life is a gift, but this gift is constantly threatened by various anti-human forces created by human beings themselves" (Dabhi, 1999a).

According to Amartya Sen, 'development' means the expansion of capabilities, in other words, increasing the possibilities for more people to realize their potentials as human beings through the expansion of their capabilities for functioning. According to Sen's 'capability approach', development should be about the enrichment of human lives, not in the sense of 'having more things', but in the sense of having the freedom to choose between different ways of living. According to Mahbub ul Haq,

"The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and can change over time. People often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately,

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in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives."

[Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/hd/default.cfm> 'What is Human Development']

These two economists, Sen and Mahbub ul Haq, (from India and Pakistan respectively) insist that development goes beyond just economic well-being, though, an important aspect of human life. The understanding of wellbeing beyond economics is presented in the box.

Dimensions of well-being are related to

- ☞ Longevity – the ability to live long and healthy life,
- ☞ Education – the ability to read, write and acquire knowledge; and
- ☞ Command over resources – the ability to enjoy a decent standard of living and have a socially meaningful life.

Source: National Human Development Report, 2002:10

Therefore development has to do with all that concerns and affects human communities and human life – “Development process has to be ultimately assessed for impact on quality of life and human well-being” (National Human Development Report, 2002:3). The economical, political, cultural, religious and social impact on the well-being of human beings are aspects that need to be analysed and worked upon in order to constantly and consciously transform human life and its quality , thus bring about development (Dabhi, 1999). Development then is transformation of human beings, society and the environment. Development is taking sides (Korten, 1992), taking a stance, a stance in favour of the poor, the marginalised, the excluded, the laity, the women, the dalits, and the tribals. The Gospel, the Jesuit GC 32 and 34 have urged the same stance – option for the poor. That is why those who are not prepared to displease the establishment and people in power, whether in the family, community, Church or society, are ill equipped to work for development.

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Some of the conditions for development cited in Thomas A. and Potter D (1992:123) may enhance our understanding of it. The conditions are democratisation of political life, good literacy and educational levels, relatively equal status for women and participation by women, sustainable ability to meet future needs. Development which does not include sustainable environment cannot be called 'sustainable development'. People like Worsley (1984) would include culture in studies of development. It means respect and appreciation of all cultures, at the same time maturity to critique cultures and eliminating elements in cultures, which are discriminative and anti-human.

Many will identify human rights as the goal of development and rightly so, because "Human rights postulate a spiritual vision and philosophy of divine presence in larger brotherhood/sisterhood (*italic is my addition*) as the cornerstone of global democracy. Being holy or unholy is irrelevant; being religious or atheist is immaterial. A revolution in consciousness, a kindly process of active fraternity deeply rooted in the reverence for fellow-beings and the personhood of every other – that is the essence of human rights" (Iyer, 1999:44). Iyer, also, cites a Philippine jurist of eminence: "No cause is more worthy than the cause of human rights. Human rights are more than legal concepts: they are the essence of man and woman (*italic is my addition*). They are what make man and woman (*italic is my addition*) human. That is why they are called human rights: deny them and you deny man's and woman's (*italic is my addition*) humanity ..." (Iyer, 1999:3).

### **Implications**

The above discussion makes amply clear the role of every citizen and thus of every Christian vis-a-vis development. It must be recognised that all are not capacitated, endowed (humanly and materially) or empowered to contribute towards this development in terms of time, energy, and resources (see 1 Cor, 3:7-9, 12:4-11). But no one is exempted from participating in the process of development, whether they are poor or rich, powerful or powerless, clergy or layperson, woman or man, believer or non-believer. Individual and collective critical awareness of the situation of underdevelopment and the process of development and a proactive stance are of vital importance in development of a community and society, more so when the role of the State is being reduced in the wake of Globalisation and privatisation. Anjali Chavhan (2000:27) has well argued that "The State action does not provide initiative and leverage, but in the absence of supportive collective

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community efforts, the fabric of society remains almost unchanged which leads us nowhere". In a secular and democratic country like ours (at least in the constitutional of the country) people's voluntary participation in development activities is essential and important.

The contribution of individuals and groups can vary according to their respective competence and endowment. I would like to emphasize that the role of women and of men are alike. We are talking of a development where women are equal partners in visioning, planning and implementing. Some people might like to contribute intellectually, i.e., they can put their intellectual expertise at the service of the community – e.g. education, research, writing, journalism for a social cause etc. Some can contribute their emotive strength, namely they can help people to change their attitudes, values, prepare people to be more emotionally mature to handle conflicts and stress. They can help people to be motivated and committed to change. Those who are action oriented can assist people in their efforts to change their behaviour and help in being more proactive, instead of reacting to people and events; in learning to foresee events, and act strategically. Finance and other resources are musts in development and it goes without saying that the group/community must mobilize, from within and outside, necessary resources to make development sustainable.

**Some of the obstacles to our progress, change and development are:**

1) Obsession with tradition: "As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be" is an attitude which is typical more of clergy than the lay people. Often this attitude is masked behind the so called concern for people's faith: "we must not shake people's faith", a tape invariably played by clergy at any hint of experiment (trying out) leave aside change. Christian tradition has at times abused often by the custodian of tradition. "Christians have sometimes fallen into 'integralism', reducing every sort of knowledge to a subset of theology and all authority to a function of religion" (Alford and Naughton, 2001:21). Traditions have socio-cultural and religious aspects but "An active tradition can retain its significance only if it succeeds in continuing its relevant and marginalised dimensions which are meaningful in light of the realities of its time" (Verstraeten, 2000:67). They are good to the extent that they keep the community united and preserve what is good. But if traditions do not allow me

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to exercise my right to choose, my right to change and development has no meaning.

The traditions (the traditional rituals around birth, puberty, marriage, death, religious celebration are some of them) are governed by strong beliefs, assumptions and ideologies, which are not given by god but made by human beings, in fact to a large extent made by 'men'. It is important to note that most of the world's highest religious councils are made up of men, take for example the synod of bishops in the Catholic Church, and if there is any women representation it is a token gesture. The dichotomy between divine and profane, religious and worldly still dictates our minds, emotions and our behaviour. When these traditions and the 'beliefs and assumptions' become exploitative and a tool for domination and control, they need to be scrutinised, changed and if necessary discarded, because "Sabbath is for human being and not human being for the Sabbath" (see Mk 2:23-27, Lk 12:10-17). All that is old need not be gold. But tradition and laws are made *Santo sanctum*, you break them and you are branded anti church, anti religion. Fear is the key, don't think, don't confront, don't question, things will be so easier. It is a religiosity based on fear, not freedom, not love. It is said "There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment" (Jn 4/18) so you do not break the traditions and you will not be punished.

It is high time we think and act differently, creatively, humanly – "Freedom is what we have ... stand then, as free men and women (my addition), and do not allow yourselves to become slaves again" (Gal 5:1). Let the urge to hide behind traditions remind us of "the dangerous memory of the Cross" and urge us, "to fight against the misuses of memory and ideological deformation of reality" (Verstraeten, 2000:76). The author goes on to suggest that this memory of the Cross has shaped a prophetic company of critics who remain vigilant with respect to meaning which risk being perverted by the logic of the market or technology and I would like to include the pro status quo theologians and religious teachers and 'Christian brahmins'.

2) Anti-Christ, anti-human and anti-change religiosity: It is a graveyard, dead religiosity which thrives on status quo, and uncriticality, (read the story of 'the guru's cat' de Mello, 1982:79). There is a need to stop promoting and

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fostering a religiosity (often in name of spirituality which is very different from religiosity it seems to me), which does not allow internal freedom, and internal and integral well-being, which does not allow individuals and communities to grow. We need to de-polarize body and soul, horizontal and vertical, sacred and secular. Paradoxically, in the name of religiosity people develop docility, resistance to change, to new thinking and to committing oneself to justice and equality (think of gender bias and denominational bias in various Churches). A spirituality, which does not help in the empowerment of the whole person, to take a stand against the anti-Christ and anti-human forces in Church and society, is an obstacle to development. One can find clergy fighting for human rights, gender equality and democracy in the non-Church situations but the same clergy is blind (selective blindness!) to the similar situations within the Church. May be in the 'secular' world they have nothing to loose, while within the Church they have plenty to loose – status, power, position, security! Let me cite the example of the healing ministry: clergy tend to foster a sense of guilt (I have been to couple of them and have been scandalised), by insisting that to be healed by God one needs to be purified and therefore need to make a confession (not necessarily repent). The number of people going to confession might have increased but one wonders how much joy and happiness have increased among them!

3) Domination and discrimination: Domination and discrimination are against human freedom, against human development, which in itself is a human right. "Human development shares a common vision with human rights. The goal is human freedom. And in pursuing capabilities and realizing rights, this freedom is vital. People must be free to exercise their choices and to participate in decision-making that affects their lives. Human development and human rights are mutually reinforcing, helping to secure the well-being and dignity of all people, building self-respect and the respect of others" (Human Development Report, 2003: in United Nations Development Programme, 2003 website).

Domination and discrimination have to do with power over others, power used coercively and manipulatively (see Lk 11:37-53). Power is necessary for development but power which is exploitative needs to be dealt with firmness. Divisions and domination of one group over the other or discrimination of one group by the other is not uncommon in the church and in the society at large. Communities within the secular society and to some extent within the Church as

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well, experience discrimination. This discrimination and domination may be perceptual or may be real. This may be related to linguistic, economic, and power-status within the church. The divide between the clergy and the laity, the divide between the women and men are still strong in the Church and change is strongly resisted by people in power and those who aspire to be there.

Development, therefore, is of vital importance for Church as a community. As mentioned above, development is multidisciplinary and thus we need to think and act in multifaceted ways and use means and methodology, which will support the various dimensions of development. In my opinion, there is no best way of development neither there are best people to do development. Everyone can and is advised to contribute. There is ample opportunity available to unlearn and to learn. Development of human community is an ongoing dynamic process. We must join hand locally, nationally and internationally, with the spirit of building and breaking when there are no other alternatives but always looking for alternatives and options. The call to work towards development is to all women and men of good will, determination and above all a strong faith, faith in other human beings and not faith in any particular 'god'. People have a tendency to forget that they are human beings first and only secondarily a member of a particular religion (Christian, Muslim Jain, Sikh, Zoroastrian and Hindu)

#### **Biblical inspiration for development:**

The Biblical values highlighted in the experiences of early Christian communities are that of Promotion of life, justice and fraternity. A follower of Christ not only tries to live the spirit of Christ and his values but tries to promote that spirit and values around. Therefore a Christian has a three-in-one mandate, as a human being, as a citizen of this country and as a follower of Christ who stood for better quality of life for human beings in his own times. We recall scriptures, experiences of people who were called and sent on a mission, to invite people to work for liberation and a qualitative life. Moses was called (Ex: 3:3-12), so was Jeremiah (Jer 1:4 -10), Mary was called (Lk: 1:28-38), John the Baptist was called (Mt:3/1-3) and Jesus was called (Lk:4/18-20). The call is universal for universal good (Mt25/31- 45).

James talking about faith says, "So it is with faith; if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead. But someone will say, one person has faith, another has actions. " My answer is," show me how anyone can have faith without actions. I

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will show you my faith by my actions” (Ja: 2/17-18). The so called miracles in the bible give us an insight into Christ’s sensitiveness about the physical needs of people and his efforts to do something about it (Mt:14/13 -21, Mk:6/53-56, Lk:13/10-13). The stories in Bible are a great inspiration and invitation for us to act, to intervene in lives of others and society.

### **How do I contribute to development of self, community and society?**

Religious experience, development and human beings are not static neither is our understanding of these realities, they keep on evolving. An effort to dogmatise and impose these experiences on other human beings and communities is violence. My lack of faith in any particular god, person is not going to offend that god/person, god cannot be capsulised and capitalised by any person, community and institutionalised religion. Faith that does not respect others, does not do justice is a suspect to say the least. I do not want to suggest that a small community within the Church has not contributed to cause of justice, it has, in spite of difficulties within and without. Efforts of such people have incorporated “human rights into Catholic social thought and has transformed the older Thomistic natural law model into one that can better account for the complexity and diversity that exists in modern social life” (Glague, 2000:140).

Human Rights declaration, Constitution and fundamental rights are all required and necessary for development and for transforming human society, but history demonstrates that without human will, strong commitment and genuine action things do not change. Lyndon B. Johnson (Address to Howard University, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 1965) had rightly said, “Freedom is not enough. You do not wipe away the scars of century by saying: now you are free to go wherever you want, do as you desire ... it is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through these gates .... We seek not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and as a result” (cited in Iyer, 1999:21).

Therefore development in theory and in practice, planning and implementation is not possible without us playing our part, our role. The role can be played in very many ways and in various situations. As a human being, as a citizen of this country, and as a Christian I have ample opportunities: first of all to be ‘aware’, think, analyse, and act differently and effectively in my family in my locality, in my parish, in my work place. There are ample situations where I can take a stand in

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favour of fairness, of justice, and for equality. This may be in favour of women, of poor, at the cost of displeasing the powerful in the process. Do I do it, do I wish to do it? In my work place there is ample room to do my duty justly and help those who are helpless and marginalised. Can I and do I open my mouth, take risk and say things, change rules, regulations and policies in favour of the poor, marginalised or do I prefer to be in good-books of everyone? . As a person and as a citizen I can look at various situations and events from Human Right perspective and not as injustice done to me or to my community alone.

The development efforts and interventions from individuals, groups and organisations within the church may be on many fronts such as, psycho-spiritual, socio-cultural, educational, economic, and political. They can be varied in scope and range, degree and intensity. These efforts can be from the level of governance, management, implementers and evaluators. At every level, stage and area not forgetting that I have responsibility and right to develop and contribute to the development of society, county.

Let me mention some areas where individuals and groups can take initiatives and participate in development as human beings, as citizens of this country and as Christians.

#### **Socio-cultural:**

1. Creating critical awareness about justice, equality and freedom – “Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Mt 10:16-17), and promoting new ways of relating, interacting and functioning in the family, parish and society (Jn 13:12-17), consciously and constantly examining all the spaces, events and situations and implementing gender equality – sharing in household work by women and men, girls and boys without gender stereotypes, using gender sensitive language in prayers, reading, in daily conversations. It is unfortunate but “a first weakness of Catholic social thought in the contemporary context is a relegation of its non-official, non-ecclesiastical stream to the margins, in terms of both historical understanding and continuing roles, a compared with the official teaching of the magisterium” (Boswell, 2000:95).

[UDHR, Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards

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one another in a spirit of brotherhood/sisterhood (my addition). Article 19: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.].

2. Use the media available to highlight the issues concerning the community and join others especially the marginalised and the excluded communities through advocacy. Networking with other groups and organisations to learn from them and to give and gain support for a common cause is of paramount importance. Join hands with poor Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, Adivasis, other backwards castes, Hindus and other groups to work towards development benefiting the poor and marginalised. Understand and respect strength and limitation of cultural symbols and heritage of various groups besides yours and develop a pluralistic approach to overall empowerment of the people.
3. As laity distinguish the different roles that can be played in the Church by clergy and laity. Question, however, the stereotype roles that exist, and continue to dialogue to change the injustice and bias that exist in the execution of these roles. Empower yourself as laity to be autonomous, and interdependent. Being a member of the church and being 'churchy' in our approach to life, language and practices are different things.

[Gal 6:1-10; 1 Cor 12:6-9; Jam 2:14-21; 1 Pet 4:10-11, 5:1-7]

4. Rise above petty denominational and religious interests (1 Cor 1:10-17) and look at injustice, hardships, suffering of larger community (one's own community as well as other). [UDHR, Article 29/2: In the exercise of his/her rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.]

#### **Educational:**

5. Universalisation of elementary education is a constitutional provision and a national commitment. It implies enrolment of all children in the age group of six to 14 in schools or their alternatives. Ensure the literacy and education of the members in the Church community and society in which it

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is rooted and surrounded. In India literacy rate among male is 75.9 % and 54.2 % among female. Make sure that all children go to school especially the girls and children from families, who for whatever reasons do not or cannot send their children to school. See that the children in the church run education institutions do not just get bookish knowledge but grow in confidence, civic sense, less prejudice and bias towards people, culture, and communities, environment friendliness and holistic health (see Persis and Jimmy, 2003). Those who can afford to contribute to these children's education outside the classroom can do so with least expectation of return. Empowerment and distributive roles: Greater literacy and educational achievements of disadvantaged groups can increase their ability to resist oppression, to organise politically and to get a fairer deal. The redistributive effects can be important not only between different social groups or households, but also within the family, since there is evidence that better education (particularly female education) contributes to the education of gender-based inequalities.

[UDHR, Article 26/1: Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit].

6. Create opportunities for career guidance to students from early age and help them pursue it, especially after completion of higher secondary education. Many children need help to decide which subject to choose and what career to pursue in college and universities. Many land up with subjects which they are not happy with and are difficult to change later on due to our inflexible education system.

[Article 29:2 of the Indian Constitution shows the importance of equal opportunity of education].

7. Encourage young women and men from the community to go into different discipline of education and professions (depending on the job opportunities and market demand). Gender bias in professions still exists and some can take initiative to challenge that. One finds girls going for teachers training, nursing, which are some how still viewed as child caring and nurturing and

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the stereotype that it is women's work and they are good at it. The pulpit can be well utilised for such information sharing for services for young people and their parents.

[UDHR Article 26/2: Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace].

### **Economic:**

8. Promote and create livelihood options for the poor families in the community especially in the rural areas – new skill development, small business, employment. In India 26.10 % of the population lives below poverty line. It was earlier projected that India will be free of poverty, hunger and malnutrition and would become an environmentally safe country by 2020. Presently, 204 million people in the country are under-nourished and more than 350 million are living below the poverty line. They are vulnerable to natural disasters. Also, more than 50 per cent of pregnant women are anaemic, and every third child born in the country has low birth weight, having the risk of impaired health and brain development (The Statesman, 2004).

[UDHR, Article 23/1: Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Article 25/1: Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself/herself and of his/her family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his /her control. Article 25/2: Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

### **Psycho-spiritual:**

9. Promote spirituality which goes beyond pious religious and cultic practices. Spirituality which integrates over all human development and wellbeing and

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is not averse to economic and political empowerment of people. Spirituality which increase people's faith not only in a particular personified god but in divinity within and outside. Faith that helps me to have faith in my fellow human beings. Spirituality which facilitates increase my wisdom, and courage to affirm myself, confront self and others in face of injustice but does not make me subservient to authority, traditions, 'yes' woman and man. Spirituality devoid of joy, freedom and life is a suspect.

10. Learn, develop and imbibe a spirituality and theology, which are people oriented, god loving and not god fearing, liberating, respectful of others and democratic in nature. Religions and spiritualities are human made (in fact, they are man-made: the paternalism and anti-women teachings and practices are clear sign of male domination) and therefore can and must be changed and transformed. Ensure that they serve humanity and do not enslave human body and spirit, especially woman's body and spirit.

"Human rights, for me, spring from the spiritual nidus nourished, with a sense of balance, by contentment which is sustained by provision for all of basic material needs and other conditions which make for joy in life. An exchange between American Economist Higginbotham and Gandhi may be apt (Iyer, 1999:6):

Higginbotham said: "Spirituality to be meaningful should be three-fourth economics".

Gandhiji replied: "Economics too, to be useful, should be three parts spirituality"

### **Political:**

11. Enhance participation of people and encourage church to take up and join hands with other in public action. Public action would mean participation of Church along with other groups, the public in a process of social and political change (Dreze and Sen, 1989).
12. Strengthen community organisations and organisational power of the community, it would be advisable, however, to weaken the hold of traditional leader, rigid orthodoxy and enslaving traditions on the organisations (see Dabhi, 1999b, 2004). Activate these organisations to be more at the service of poor in the society – providing opportunities for new

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and varied leadership to come up (especially women), the financial co-operatives of the community could provide loans creatively for livelihood options, education etc.

[Article 29/1: Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his/her personality is possible].

13. Find out and utilise appropriate government schemes for various purposes and make them available to yourself and others in the community.

[Declaration on right to development, Article 8: State should undertake, at the national level, all necessary measures for the realisation of the right to development and shall ensure, inter alia, equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income. Effective measures should be undertaken to ensure that women have an active role in the development process. Appropriate economic and social reforms should be carried out with a view to eradicating all social injustices].

14. Acquire and use bureaucratic and political power for yourself and for the empowerment of others, without being coloured by the values and ethos of 'dirty, manipulative, self-centred present day politics'. Encourage people to participate in Panchayati Raj actively, not only by becoming role holders but also by active participation in gramsabha (village Assembly) and its decision making. Facilitate participation in gramsabhas and help basic unit of national governance to generate and provide opportunity for leadership from among the poor, marginalised and women in particular.

[Article 21/1 Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Article 21/2: Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his/her country.

### **Conclusion:**

I have made an effort to throw light on the aspect of development and response of a person as a human being, as a citizen of India and as believer in this context a Christian. It is suggested there is no Christian development as such though you may have people who are involved in development inspired by their religious teaching and vision which at no point puts human being second and religion first. I have suggested that development needs to be understood as change in quality of human

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life, in individuals, in the communities and society at large. It is suggested that individual, communities and development of society are complementary, and one is not possible without the other. Some obstacles are highlighted and finally some suggestions for intervention and involvement in development are offered.

Finally let me end with a note that any effort, intervention in the direction of development of people is valuable and need to be encouraged. Not all the efforts are born out of people centred intent but it is my hope that people will learn to detect ego centric intent behind development effort and intervention however great and high-sounding be the effort and stop such people from vitiating public action and efforts.

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