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THE AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (AID) AND THIRD WORLD DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Most of the development assistance from the United States to the developing countries in the post-1945 era was administered by the International Cooperation Administration (ICA). Even though such aid was targeted for post war relief and reconstruction, it eventually served foreign policy objectives of the U.S. government. The creation of the Agency for International Development, (AID) in 1961 marked a turning point in America's long term development interest in the third World. The need to find solutions to the endemic and persistent underdevelopment problems in the third world countries gave rise to the search for answers. Hence, many competing and contending explanations emerged. They range from the dual economic model of Gunnar Myrdal which attributes underdevelopment to unequal patterns of development, which thus causes imbalance; to Andre Gunder Frank's theory that there exists a whole series of mechanisms whereby the modern sector exploits the traditional one, which then generates underdevelopment in the later sector.

The concept of institutional development has been perceived as the realistic hope for third world development. Hence, the AID, through the contracting of Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) work on a tight rope in an attempt to balance their functional goals with the interest of their parent country, the United States. One of the development strategies of the AID is introduction of incentive criteria and the utilization of local resources and technologies suitable for small scale operations. Such "intermediate" technologies are believed to hold answers to third world underdevelopment problems. This paper therefore explores the nature of technology in question; its impacts on development management in the third world, and the manner in which the AID in particular has applied it to third world development. In order to broaden the understanding of the concept of technology and politics of development in the third world, this investigation examines competing theories of development and the means and strategies the AID has employed in its implementation of development programs to suit the ecological needs of the target states.

Historical Development of Aid

Since 1945, the United States has extended much of its foreign aid to post war relief and reconstruction. Thus, this policy known as "Marshall Plan" has been designed by the U.S. government to achieve the following objectives[1]:

1) To limit Soviet influence
2) To stimulate recovery from the war

3) To stimulate economic development
4) To make and cultivate friendship with other nation.

Much of this aid was being administered and implemented by the International Cooperative Administration (ICA). It was widely perceived then that its efforts did not achieve any long term objectives. Hence, in 1961, the Agency for International Development (AID) was created as an institution to enhance long term development goals of the United States in the third world; and especially in Asia, Africa and Latin America where development assistance was most needed. Also, in these parts of the world many new nations were first emerging out of colonialism.

The AID is one of several agencies involved in implementing foreign assistance policies of the United States government. Economic assistance had become an alternative to military interventionism as a way of influencing events in the third world. However, there was some uneasiness in this regard because the foreign policy motive of the U.S. goes beyond the altruistic sentiments of direct response to the plight of the third world. Foreign aid had become an instrument of U.S. national policy. Thus, U.S. government provided assistance in ways that promoted its national interest and worked against those nations that worked against it. It is this conflict between national interest, foreign aid and international obligations that has made U.S. foreign assistance sometimes inconsistent.

Theories of Development

Many nations strive to achieve development as reflected in various indicators like gross national product (GNP) and income per capita; but, development involves more than that. According to Michael Todaro, "development is multidimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of entire economic and social system. It also involves radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as popular attitudes, customs and beliefs."[2]

A glance at the levels of development among nations show some disparity. Spatial development may take national or regional characteristics. Some theorists place nations on the scale of development, while others concentrate more on the causes of underdevelopment. In some cases, others focus on the characteristics of the nations involved or even processes of development.

Many competing and contending theories have been posited in an attempt to explain this dilemma. W.W. Rostow advances the Stage Theory of Economic Growth in relation to time. He found that Economic growth does not occur in continuous progression. Rostow identifies three phases of development, namely:

1) Long Period - When precondition for take off is established.

2) Critical Period - Time frame for take off that occurs between 20 and 30 years.

3) Long but indefinite period - When growth becomes automatic.

Rostow's argument implies that "the least developed will include those nations that by some accident or circumstances of history, culture and location got a late start. They will therefore be the random residuals at the very base of the economic ladder."[3] However, "it appears that such explanation may serve to discourage criticism of local ineptitude or indigenous exploitation and thus prevent the development of self-reliance."[4] In fact, Rostow's doctrine of "distinct Stages" or "step by step" transition from underdevelopment to development is hard to identify and therefore unrealistic.

Gunnar Myrdal's dual economic model argues that unequal patterns of development cause imbalance. (Imbalance in this case has been used interchangeably with backward and polarization). In his opinion, backward development occurs when labour, capital, enterprise, social and economic infrastructures are mainly directed toward major growth areas like manufacturing industry as opposed to agrarian sector and other underdeveloped areas of the national economy. Such dual patterns of development may need some government intervention to expand or shift development to the neglected sectors of the economy.

The "two sector' model has been associated with the work of Arthur Lewis who posits that the economy of a nation consists of two sectors:

1) Traditional - Rural subsistence sector characterized by low productivity and surplus untapped labor pool.

2) Urban Industrial Sector - Part which absorbs the surplus labor force.

Lewis has postulated that the problem of regional balance can be offset by introducing a system of structural balance in development. Unbalanced development, he observes, causes "structural bottlenecks" which create a zero-sum effect. He also maintains that it is inappropriate to expand the industrial sector at the expense of that of agriculture since any additional income will be spent on imported agricultural products. To Lewis, this problem of unbalanced growth and development has not been addressed by developing nations. He suggests that both the industrial and agricultural sectors be given equitable attention on development issues. This is because, he maintains, simultaneous development in both sectors will help to create a balance and thus facilitate a meaningful development.

Andre Gunder Frank sees a continual chain of exploitative relationship between the developed and developing countries. He observes that it is inappropriate to uphold the two-sector theory of Arthur Lewis. Rather, he states, "there exists a whosle series of mechanisms wshere the modern sector exploits the traditional sector and thus generates underdevelopment in the later"[5] However, he contends, there could be certain sectors which may operate independent of each other-modern from traditional or vice versa, especially when they occur in different systems.

AID's Concept of Institutional Development

Participation is a very important aspect of development in the third world. It is through participation that development is institutionalized, with the problem of solving man-power needs very well considered. In projects being financed by the AID, issues of institutionalization are primary. The essence is to replicate projects on a long term basis, even when donor nations have all withdrawn. The idea is that when projects are developed, they should be able to con-

time and grow.

In the process of formulating projects which are to be implemented, there is always a collision between what outside institutions (donors) consider as priorities. But in most cases, the priorities of international institutions prevail because they provide the funding. Each donor entity, has in its own mind, what it considers important. It may have political overtones and motives, and so must reconcile its differences with the national (host) government.

To guard against suspicion and distrust, international agencies, like the AID use non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to keep away donor countries from decision-making. These non-profit organizations are also called private voluntary organizations (PVOs). The policy of AID is trying to establish and strengthen private and public institutions in developing nations as a means of fostering meaningful development purports to the following objectives:[6]

1) To enhance a country's ability to marshall its own human and financial resources for development.

2) To expand people's opportunities to undertake successful development by providing increased incentives for investment.

3) To provide individuals with opportunities to acquire the skills, resources and services needed to increase their productivity, income and well being.

4) To increase the likelihood that AID and host country resources will foster development that can be sustained after external assistance is withdrawn. That is, to asssure that investment and reinstatement by beneficiaries themselves continue after the termination of donor involvement.

To achieve these prementioned objectives, the AID has concentrated more on these axioms:[7]

1) Government policy.
2) Alternative organizational forms.
3) Institutional coordination and linkages
4) Management systems.
5) Manpower training and skills.
6) Capacity-building and transfer
7) Development of infrastructure and logistics.
8) Local capacities and participation (Local initiatives and participation)

The Role of PVOs in Development

Private endeavors in development programs have proliferated since the end of the second world war; so is the interest of the United States government assistance agencies of which the AID is a member. Many kinds of PVOs are involved under various terms like grant agreements and contracts to carry out a broad range of development activities. Some of these organizations include Africare, American Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services and World Vision. The demand for and use of PVOs in development programs, especially in the area of small scale project are fast increasing. This is because they have kept a good track record which has proved effective by virtue of the following accomplishments:[8]

1) PVOs are successful in fostering self-help initiatives among the poor.

2) They are able to mobilize substantial financial and human resources, both from their native and host countries.

3) They are subjected to less bureaucratic restriction than regular bilateral governmental programs. They initiate design and monitor their programs.

4) They encourage and strengthen indigenous participatory institutions.

5) PVOs are more acceptable to host governments and peoples because they are perceived to be less involved in politics.

6) PVOs are cost efficient because they pay lower staff salaries and accumulate lower overhead costs.

One of the dilemmas of the PVOs is trying to protect the national security interests of the United States while at the same time fulfilling their development commitments independently and honestly. To achieve the later will imply accepting financial resources from the U.S. government with no strings attached, or even doing without them. The urge to preserve their integrity and independence puts them at odds with donor nations; and sometimes they find themselves in awkward and ambivalent situation.

Hence, the fear of their loss of independence by relying heavily on tax dollars and support from the government sector has left them with no viable choice options, but to rely more on public good will expressed as donations. The principal motivation behind such action is that any dependency on government support will damage the relationship between the PVOs and their hosts countries in the third world.

Technology and Development

Technology and its creativity are vital in the process of development. Technical change is also a function of social and psychological factors. The transfer of one mode of technology to another environment will succeed if the level of absorption, use and maintenance of such technology is adequate in the receiving country. This requires a high degree of technical competence. As Alan Mountjoy once said, "it is for this reason that during the whole of man's history, the transfer of technology has involved more than relocation of machinery and plant. It has involved irregular diffusion of ideas and values."[9] The direction of development in the new nations has attempted to focus, with emphasis on self confidence, creative use of local resources, manpower, technology and knowledge; and a growing stress on collective reliance among third world nations.

The direct impact of technology on society is that it enhances its transformation. Transformation takes place in many forms-scientifically and culturally, or through other innovative ways. It is a way of remaking society by altering its values and organizations. As Alvin Toffler observes, "technology challenges all our assumptions; old ways of thinking; dogmas and ideologies. The world is emerging from the clashes of new value and technologies; new geographic relationships, new life styles and modes of communication demand new ideas and analogies."[10]

When we change the level of consciousness of a people, authomamtically, we contribute to the mutation of such society, change of society involves changes in roles, relationships, institutions and the retrospection of old ideas-reexamination and reevaluation of old ideas. Human growth walks a process path, vulnerable or susceptible to transformation through socialization that brings participants to a new level of awareness and consciousness. Technology as an agent of transformation, insists Toffler, offers independent thought, originality, creativity and choices. Toffler states that technology exists in two broad forms:

1) Enhanced communication.
2) Ideas which emphasize changes in attitude and which bring about changes in consciousness and communication.

The consequences which technology brings with it are enormous. There is a change in politics and new forms of ssocial and associational networks which come into being as a result. Because people have undergone change, new perspectives alter their old beliefss and values. Hence, new orientations destroy old cultures and contradict old and obsolete traditional ways of life. Toffler again reacts this way: "The new civilization brings with the new political conflicts and beyond all, an altered consciousness."

Technology, Attitudes and Behavior

The impact of technology on the attitudes and behavior of people has been the core of Marylyn Ferguson's work. Her assumption is that "if the mind can heal and transform, then it is imperative that once many people are made to think and behave in a certain calculated way, the whole society can be transformed" [12] In ordder to enhance the social land economic development of the third world, it is necessary to change its personality. This involves the change of values, routines, habits and the way people respond to issues and situations. It is through the transformation of the whole person that we can change the societal structures, to enable them to adapt to the needs of what Ferguson calls the "prescent personality of the future."

Technology brings change to the individual, his attitudes toward authority and the ability to think independently. In the developing countries, there are many peasants and low skill speople. Enhancement of their transition into industrial life, suggests Ferguson, requires that they receive basic training and education. As a result, she maintains, they will be socialized into a new way of life with new roles and under a set of new framework. These kinds of training, she continues, will give them a new meaning and positive attitude to work, self esteem and self image. The utility of this strategy has been to encourage work ethic, orientation toward self relaince and self help to shape social life and mould character, with emphasis placed on productivity. Alvin Toffler calls this tendency "prosumer ethic," the essence of which is to restore respectability toward work and industry. He declares, "it implies the abilitys to adapt and survive under difficult conditions, and the ability to do things with their own hands."[13]

There is great emphasis on the creation of communication, with reliance on information systems. Our entire psychological package-thinking attitudes and decision-making are affected by information, even though certain changes may be subtle and sometime take place unconsciously. According to John "Naisbitt, information constitutes the basis for knowledge, and thus, workers in developing countries need information in order to perform effectively in their different tasks. Information which is perceived as a great resource serves as a conduit or vehicle of access in the economic system. "Knowledge has become the key sto productivity, competitive stength, and economic achievement. It has become the primary insdustry which supplies the economy, the central and essential resource of productivity."[14]

Information flow constitutes a changing factor in developing countries. Innovations in commucation enhance the rate of change by breaking down what Naisbitt referred to as "information float". New information produces new activities while enhancing processes. The significance of information in businesss and commerce is posited in these words: "With the collapse of information float, we can respond to electronic letter within an hour than a week, accelerating life and commerce."[15]

Technology, Communication and Information

Social network provide a form of communication and interaction. It is human equivalent of technology. Through the networks of people, resources and projects are linked. Not only do networks share information and contracts, they create, transfer and exchange date. It involves the obtention, synthesis of information and its ultimate translation into ideas. As Naisbitt notes, "each new thought is integrated into consequent one, thus producing a new cumulative awareness of humman nature and the universe. The new mental models are being shared withind the newly developed networks universally."[16] Networks form when people want to change society, irrespective of cause, beliefs, goals or motivations. It is an effective non-bureacratic structure with the individual at the center. Networks are the offsprings of a decling traditional society; presence of information overload and the failure of institutions to cope with the problems of present day socicty. Thus, as Naisbitt concludes, networks are needed for cohesion; and communication is necessary to address societal problems.

Technology and Bureaucratic Decision-Making

The bureaucracy is the mechanism for implementing government policies. The political decision-making apparati are increasingly threatened by overload due to the overflow of irrelevant data. The already existing institutions in the developing countries are not adaptive to the

"quick-solution" orientation capable of dealing with contemporary issues. Thus, as Toffler contends, they are assigned to a "slower society" with non-developed bureaucracies. He further notes," the acceleration of change has overpowered the decisional capacity of our institutions making todays political stuctures obsolete, regardless of the kinds of leadership. These institutions are inadequate, not only in terms of scale and structure, but speed."[17]

Knowledge is not always well organized with functions overlapping, non-specialized and fragmented. With the problem of bureaucratic coordination characterizing third world bureaucracies, government attempts to solve "interweave" problems through decentralization that eventually leads to red tape and bureaucratic inertia. Government bureaucracies tend not to be effective because they tend to approach problems from nontechnological but traditional ways. It should be noted that bureaucracies in less developed countries are designed customarily to make decisions at a slow and leisurely pace. As a result, they appear to have been overwhelmed by societal change in the sense that policy makers become helpless and ineffective and in some circumstances confused because of their inability to cope with problems which they are not properly equipped to handle.

Alvin Toffler understood that social change has accelerated to the point of putting unbearable pressure on decision makers, with political institutions unable to accommodate necessary transformations when he disclosed that "too many decision, too fast concerning many strange and unfamiliar problems express, the gross incompsetence of government secisions. With our institutions realing with decision implosion and working with outdated political technology, our capacity for effective government decision making is rapidly deteriorating."[18]

Development Management Strategies

The emergence of the "second wave" civilization-industrial and technological society may have given rise to a dual world: One comprising developing countries, and often described in Western literature as characterized by rampant malnutrition, illireracy, poor health and underdevelopment. In contrast, the other world consists of the industrialized countries which traditionally rely on the developing countries for their cheap sources of raw materials and energy to sustain their industrial productions. The asymmetry in these too levels of development creates the Marxian dialectic and dependency relationship between the developed and developing countries, with the economics of the latter replenishing that of the former but at the expense of the latter.

There have been internationally sponsored efforts to break this trend. Attempts to duplicate or transplant patterns of development as they are experimented in the industrialized states like Japan or the United States have often failed. These failures have been attributed to certain ecological factors peculiar to the third world systems. They include overreliance on foreign expertise, corruption, nepotism and bad planning. Based on a study by Jean Claude Garcia-Zamor on the problems and failures of administrative reform in Brazil, other environmental factors are indentified. They include force of tradition, low pay, lack of education and uncontrolled growth of the civil service. [19]

In the 1970's a new strategy was developed by the AID, which placed emphasis on "first wave" (low level) technology as opposed to high technology that is alien to third world systems. The AID encouraged rural development, which checked population shift from rural to urban centres. The essence was to harness available local resources for the provision of basic local needs. This was done by encouraging the operation of small scale (cottage) industries which are labor intensive, given the abundance of skilled labor and low capital. As Alvin Toffler postulates, industrial technologies are a disaster when transferred to a poor country

because the receiving entities depend on imported labor to repair expensive machines that have broken down. Also, given the shortage of trained labor and expensive raw materials imported, "appropriate technology", sometimes called intermediate", "soft" or "alternative" technology is needed.[20]

The international agencies encourage the development of intermediate technology which has resulted in a number of successes in selected third world countries, especially in the area of low scale technology innovations. As Toffler further observed, "Bostwana's Mochudi developed ox or donkey drawn device which plowed plants and applied fertilizers in single or double row cultivation."[21] Even, Gambia's Department of Agriculture adopted tools for mold board plow, groundnut lifter, seeders and ridgers."[22] "Ghana saw the development of pedal-driven rice thresher and an all-wood squeezer for extracting water from banana fiber."[23] In the 1970's India, having experience high prices in fertilizers and crude oil encouraged the establishment of self-reliant projects that relied on local resources. Thus, India gradually moved away from excessive reliance on textile industry to increased use of handlooms to produce fabrics.

The handloom, according to Toffler, is more adaptable in the rural environment because it requires little or no technical expertise to operate.

Decentralization has been the hallmark of AID's strategy of production in the third world. The aim has been to reactivate and make rural life more productive and viable by stressing on the use of cheap and locally produced resources to offset imports. By relying on less technocratic developmental may be able to survive the change of the time. Hence, the role of high technology and science is discouraged in recognition of Toffler's concern that much of what we call advance science was a scientific creation designed to solve the problems of the developed states. Therefore, he warns, "any development policy which begins to bind itself to the advanced scientific and technological knowledge condemns hundreds of millions of desperate hungry and toiling peasants to perpetual degradation."[24]

Such development strategies have been intiated and encouraged in Africa, Asia and Latin America by the AID. Development projects

have been indigenized and made dependent and oriented toward local needs, in a way that the economy balances its development needs with its cultural and ecological stability. The AID, like other transnational agencies such as the World Bank and the Overseas Development Council has recognized that since the "first wave" countries generally suffer from massive unemployment and underdevelopment; emphasis should be palced on small scale projects that expend less energy, consume less capital and provide more employment for indigenous workers. Transformation strategy has as its basis development designed to coexist and preserve societal vaules and culture. Also, the people in third world countries are taught, and in some cases reeducated to develop taste for indigenous goods consistent with the true spirit of self reliance and independence.

Institutional Building, Local Capacities and Participation

The AID has recognized that the key institutions of development are likely to be those that can generate, adapt and disseminate technology and knowledge where they are needed. This explains why the transfer of technology is readily accomplished by countries which have a scientific base necessary for adapting such new technologies to indigenous needs and conditions. Thus, the AID has concentrated on establishing local institutions geared toward achieving such developmental needs in third world countries. Shand and Richter highlight their concerns in writing that developing countries can enhance their potential capabilities in the area of food production by investing more resources trying to adopt new varieties and develop-

ing new production techniques. In their assertion, "the capacity to develop technnology consistent with physical and cultural endowments is the single most important variable accounting for difference in development."[25] In their observation, they conclude that the less developed countries lack the capacity to conduct research on commodities of major importance to their economies. It is worthy to note that the traditional belief regarding the adopting of suitable technology has been that the true and appropriate technology is always that which is diffused from the developed to the developing world.

But, as Pradip Ghost notes, the nature of such technologies are always shaped by convergent class interests of elites in both worlds with the result that the dependence created by such dependent technologcal relationships perpetuates the historical inequalities that exist between both worlds in a more extreme form [26]. Alan Mountjoy has alerted us on the danger of importing or transferring high technologies to developing states. In his account, technologies of advanced nations are capital intensive but labor-saving. Thus, she states that the needs of third world countries are in collision with those of insdustrialized nations. Acquiring high technology will consume the scarce resources of the developing countries while failing to tap the abundant manpower resources in the labor sector. This will in no way help to ease the problem of unemployment that threaten the new states, he contends. The intermediate technology as an alternative self help technique offers hope on the basis of the following qualifications:

1) It is less expensive and affordable
2) It is easy to use and maintain.
3) It relies on local skills and resources.

According to Mountjoy, although intermediate technology appears less attractive and less prestigious to many institutional planners in the third world where it is naturally suitable because capital is scarce and labor abundant. He notes that it has yielded a lot of positive results in India where it was faithfully adopted.

Modern India has been able to introduce homemade ploughs and tools for tilting the land, woodworking industrial equippment like bicycles, sewing machines and electric light bulbs. He describes the importation of high technology as nothing but an "alien magic" and insists that the answer to meaningful development in the third world lies in the "intermediate technology." He concludes that it holds great promise because "it is suitable for small scale operations and falls between the traditional handcraft and full mechanized advanced technologies."[27]

In the areas of local capacity building and participation, the AID has strategized a system by which human resources are mobilized. In order to facilitate this plan, a system of tangible incentives is built in development administration, especially where political, social or geographic factors impedes peoples opportunity to participate. The AID tries to remove such constraints through selected intervention and pressure techniques.

Community level involvement is often sought. Also, beneficiaries are encouraged to invest in time and resources toward development efforts. It is an attempt to initiate the process of indigenous investment and reinvestment with the potential to mark the beginning of a successful development initiative that can be self sustaining even when donor support is cut. Guy Gran calls this technique "empowering people to develop." In his opinion, the essence of all the efforts alluded to is to foster self reliance. In Gran's analysis, self reliance is depicted by five basic criteria:[28]

1) Selective resistance to specialization of production.
2) Extensive and efficient use of local resources.
3) Demand for mass participation.
4) Basic needs are given greater priority.
5) Activities are designed to stimulate creativity.

Having observed these laws, Gran contends that ecological balance will then be more likely to be observed, since psychological solidarity can best be built among mature and socially conscious citizenry. He further states, "the lessons of social responsibility from the outside world may then be less dominant, and the socio-economic inequalities at the local level will have diminishing justification."[29] It has been the opinion of Samuel Paul that a development program that encourages people to participate at all levels and provides the employees with internal autonomy to plan their task, may yield not only better plans, by generating ideas which top management on its own cannot, but also imports greater motivation and commitment to the participation for action."[30]

Conclusion

The concept of technology is an integral part of development in the third world. It not only involves the use of machines, but ideas that emphasize change in attitude and also bring about changes in consciousness; and enhanced communication. The major problem of development in the developing countries has been attributed to their rush to adopt high technology which is not adaptive to their environment. The high technologies while readily available in the developed countries were designed to suit their problems and bureaucracies. Thus, when transferred to developing countries, these technologies do not work. Some of the reasons why they are not suitable are ecological. The third world countries lack the money and skilled manpower to operate, repair or maintain those costly equipment.

As a result, the AID has paid more attention to intermediate or mid-level technology which is less expensive, easy to maintain and relies on local skills and resources. The long term goal of AID is to foster the spirit of self reliance and independence in third world development, approach. It is perceived that this form of "institutional empowerment" will make the receiving third world states of development assistance able to sustain their economic and productive capacities even when such assistance is discontinued. The application of this development strategy has yielded impressive results in third world countries like India, Gambia, Botswana and Ghana. AID's development strategies which focus on institutional development and indigenous capacity building holds great promise to meaningful development in the third world.

NOTES

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18) Ibid., p. 427.

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