

# NATIONALISM DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT BOSE AND JALAL PRANAB BHARDAN pdf

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*This volume examines issues of history and political economy that are central to the problems of nationalism, democracy, and development. The contributors, including Amartya Sen and Pranab Bardhan, question the dichotomy between secular nationalism and religious communalism and take issue with cultural critiques of modernity and nationalism.*

Instruments and Idioms of Colonial and National Development: India at any rate did not seem to offer a developing "third world" model to the ex-communist "second world" that was about to taste the mixed treats of first world-directed development efforts. Now India was being asked to unlearn its long-cherished dogmas of development and be tutored in the lessons of stabilization and structural adjustment by those international paragons of virtuous economic discipline based in Washington. All but the most churlish would acknowledge that there have been some successes to report as well. The critics range from "neoclassical" and liberal advocates of the "free market" to "postmodern" votaries of the "fragment" and "antidevelopment. It is only by recovering the intellectual and political origins and aims of development and reappraising the strategies and trajectories pursued toward the set goals that it may be possible to ferret out not only the successes from failures but also the legitimate from flawed criticisms. The development paradigm, whatever its other limitations may be, is not on the whole wedded to ahistorical attributes of cultural uniqueness and consequently not hostile to careful and meaningful cross-country and cross-regional comparisons. Before delving into history in the comparative vein, it may be useful to clarify the senses in which the terms "instruments" and "idioms" are used in this paper. Each term is used in at least two senses. Scholars and practitioners in the field of development economics generally take instruments to refer to "means-enhancing" variables, such as savings rates and investment, foreign exchange reserves, food stocks, and so on. This is the first sense in which the term "instruments" is used in the appropriate contexts of economic analysis. Any attempt to probe the relationship between development knowledge and the social sciences must, however, also deploy a broader definition of instruments that refers to state institutions and policies. This is of the essence since development efforts have been generally conducted over the past half century under the aegis of centralized, late colonial and postcolonial states. Any rethinking about development must include ideas about restructuring the modern nation-state. The term "idioms" in the first place encapsulates the goals, such as removal of poverty and improvement in the quality of life, that assigned the idea of development its normative privilege. Yet in order to avoid the methodological pitfalls usually associated with a sharp separation between means and ends, "idioms" will also refer to the singular concepts of nationhood and particular state forms that came to be favored by the dominant ideology of development as better suited to its purpose. Idioms in this connotation could well serve as political instruments. Historical Origins of the Concepts of Colonial and National Development Two years before the passage of the landmark British Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945, the Indian National Congress had set up a National Planning Committee to draw up blueprints for the economic and social reconstruction of India once independence was won. By contrast with Africa, the institutional expression of the concept of "national development" predated that of "colonial development" in India. An economic critique of colonial rule was articulated, of course, in both continents long before colonialism under siege turned to development as an ideology of self-justification. In Mohandas Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj* offered his own particular reading of the early tomes of economic nationalism: It is machinery that has impoverished India" Gandhi Whatever the differences in nationalist positions, Indian nationalism "began as a critique of policy" and "became a critique of British power by its being denied a voice in government" Ludden The precise relationship between colonial and national development marked both by contradictions and imbrications can be clarified and elucidated only by bringing into play the analytical distinctions between instruments and idioms. Such an observation has a measure of accuracy with reference to the inheritance of instruments of development in the form of institutions of state. The idiom of national

development, on the other hand, might be construed to be the only distinguishing feature of the facade of a postcolonial state that was erected on the authoritarian, institutional foundations of the colonial state. As Partha Chatterjee aptly notes, "even today one is forced to witness such unlovely ironies as regiments of the Indian Army displaying the trophies of colonial conquest and counter-insurgency in their barrack-rooms or the Presidential Guards celebrating their birth two hundred years ago under the governor-generalship of Lord Cornwallis! Planning for development enabled the postcolonial state to "claim its legitimacy" as an embodiment of "the will of the nation. But in the specific historical context of India, the mischief of invoking legitimizing idioms to privilege preferred instruments was committed, I will argue, at the conjunctural moment of the postcolonial transition. Recent attempts at unraveling Indian nationalist thought, whether construed as "a derivative discourse" P. Chatterjee or as "a cultural product of nineteenth-century capitalism, on the same plane with bourgeois nationalisms in the West" Ludden Caveats about "noninevitability" and "possibilities" notwithstanding, these teleological views leave little theoretical space for the recovery of historically contested visions of nationhood, alternative ideological frameworks for the postcolonial state and real debates about the instruments and idioms of national development. These debates deserve a closer analysis, especially since the lines of division did not always reflect the dichotomies of modernity versus tradition, reason versus unreason, science versus superstition, or, most simplis- tically, Nehru versus Gandhi that many latter-day commentators have read into them. A consideration of the debates over national planning during the final decade of the British Raj in India may help throw light on the complex relationship of universal values to the particular history of Indian development. The Congress President said in reply: I must say that all Congressmen do not hold the same view on this question. Nevertheless, I may say without any exaggeration that the rising generation are in favour of industrialisation and for several reasons. The reasons cited were fourfold. Industrialization was necessary for 1 "solving the problem of unemployment," 2 "national reconstruction" based on "Socialism," 3 ability "to compete with foreign industries," and 4 "improving the standard of living of the people at large. The railways, telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors and such like have all to go, and the so-called upper class have to learn to live consciously and religiously and deliberately the simple life of a peasant" Gandhi , vol. Over some forty years since , Gandhi only slightly modified his stance. As late as October 5, he wrote to Nehru: I still stand by the system of Government envisaged in Hind Swaraj. I have not Hind Swaraj before me as I write. It is really better for me to draw the picture anew in my own words. And whether it is the same as I drew in Hind Swaraj or not is immaterial. I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognized that people have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. I do not want to draw a large scale picture in detail. It is possible to envisage railways, post and telegraph offices etc. For me it is material to obtain the real article and the rest will fit into the picture afterwards Nehru Nehru promised safeguards for "cottage industries" but could scarcely conceal his exasperation with such "unscientific" obduracy. On the whole, however, Nehru enjoyed his work on the National Planning Committee, finding it "soothing and gratifying" and "a pleasant contrast to the squabbles and conflicts of politics" cited in P. Planning, Partha Chatterjee has argued, by being constituted as a domain outside politics, served as an instrument to politically resolve the debate on the need for industrialization in India. There can be little disagreement about the political instrumentality of the planning exercise before and, more pronouncedly, after independence. But that was not all that there was to it. The Gandhian notion of self-regulating, harmonious village communities and the associated concept of elite trusteeship of common property were designed to politically resolve potentially explosive class and caste conflicts within Indian agrarian society. It requires an analytical sleight of hand to counterpose antimodernist vision to modernist politics. Another false dichotomy has crept into the scholarly literature on nationalism and development around the issue of authenticity. Gandhian nationalism, it has been argued by Ashis Nandy and Partha Chatterjee in slightly different ways, represented a truly "indigenous," and thereby authentic, form of resistance to the modern West Nandy , ; P. The unfolding of the colonial encounter as a messy historical process means that the search for wholly "untainted" anticolonial nationalist thought can

only end in futility and carry the unfortunate implication of erasing significant strands of resistance that fail to meet the ahistorical litmus test of purity. This is not to deny that Gandhian thought provided a powerful critique not only of modern industrial civilization but of "fundamental aspects of civil society" P. Beyond evoking the utopia of Ramrajya, where the patriarchal ruler was the embodiment of the collective will of his subjects in a way that rendered representative institutions unnecessary, Gandhi did not elaborate on a theory of the state. But even within this camp there were variations. Some seemed more willing than others to build the socialist state on the basis of regional autonomy and an equitable sharing of power among different religious communities. In any case, the bureaucratic and authoritarian colonial state was not the kind of centralized state socialist ideologues had in mind. Science and reason, according to this idiom, would be the servants, not the masters, of the efforts at development. The aim was to reverse the process of rural poverty and urban decay that were seen to have set in under colonial rule. There were other models, such as, C. According to this remarkable model, the "ordinary work" of a "Central Government" in free India "should be mainly advisory. In an insightful analysis of nationalist thought at the "moment of arrival" exemplified by Nehru, Partha Chatterjee has shown how the discourse came to be conducted in "a single, consistent, unambiguous voice" and succeeded in "glossing over all earlier contradictions, divergences and differences. This device of "taking as paradigmatic the most developed form of [the postcolonial] state" 49 unfortunately obliterates "all earlier contradictions, divergences and differences. What got marginalized in were conceptions of a state of union forged from below that reflected and presided over the balance and harmony of free regional peoples and religious communities. It was a paradigm shift in the idea of development brought about by the capture of centralized state power by the machine politicians among the nationalist elite. National Development and the Postcolonial State The project of planning for national development in the postcolonial phase privileged instruments over idioms, means over goals, in at least two distinct ways. First, the exercise of planning concentrated on questions of means enhancement, such as, ways to increase the rate of savings. Consequently, means came to be confused with goals and the accumulation of capital rather than betterment of the quality of life often turned out to be the end-all of development efforts. Second and more important, an insufficiently decolonized, centralized state structure seized upon national development as a primary source of its own self-justification. Even though India opted for a political system based on representative parliamentary democracy, elections based on universal adult franchise were incapable of bridging the gap between a democratic political process and a postcolonial state imbued with a strong element of bureaucratic authoritarianism. Even in the specific domain of planning, postcolonial India lost sight of the vision of eradicating poverty, morbidity and illiteracy that had inspired the debates on national development in the colonial era. This was not a case of Nehruvian modernism triumphing over Gandhian traditionalism. In other words, the official version of development had arisen after and in reaction to the popular, national efforts. Capitalists and colonialists were stealing the idea mooted initially by socialists within the nationalist movement. Mahalanobis represented something of a break with the past in its emphasis on capital-goods led import-substituting industrialization. A departure from both the "textiles first" and "export-led" strategies adopted by other industrializing countries, these plans nevertheless relied heavily on influential means-enhancing models of development. The Second Five Year Plan of , "the single most significant document on Indian planning," was "a variant of the Lewis model" Chakravarty The Indian variation from the pristine Lewis model related to the role given to a development bureaucracy and not just capitalist industrialists in powering growth in the "modern" sector of the economy. The Third Five Year Plan built in many important ways on the second, but also placed a special emphasis on agriculture and "distributional considerations. The shift of emphasis from growth to distribution and the new concern with income did not, in any case, entail a sensitivity to entitlements and capabilities of people which, Amartya Sen has forcefully argued, have a much more direct bearing on the means-using goals of development Sen The "crisis of Indian planning" in the mids is generally put down by its apologists to "external shocks" in the form of war-induced increase in defense expenditure and monsoon failures, and by its critics to either "urban bias" or "neglect of

foreign trade. In the late s and early s there was a partial recovery of these idioms in the "populist" political and economic program of Indira Gandhi with its emphasis on poverty eradication and rural employment. This particular paradigm shift was triggered by a realization of the limits of the Nehruvian form of oligarchical democracy whose project of "national development" had not cared to address the means-using needs of the poor. In the elections the party bosses had failed to deliver their votebanks as before. But this attempt to make the center the fount of redistributive justice for those at the bottom of the agrarian hierarchy was not matched by political empowerment at the base and became vulnerable to challenges mounted by middling agrarian groups and rich farmer lobbies in several states. Improvements achieved in instrumental variables like savings, foreign exchange reserves, and food stocks in the mids were consequently not reflected in indicators of the quality of life. As Kaushik Basu points out, "These. We must realize that food stocks with the Government is not something which the people eat, the savings rate is not something which you wear and one cannot sleep under the roof of foreign exchange" Basu Clarion calls for "a sharper focus on employment and poverty alleviation" in the Approach to the Seventh Five Year Plan of was immediately and resoundingly contradicted by the minuscule allocations for employment generation and poverty eradication and a real decline in plan outlay in the very first budget of the plan period Basu In assessing the lessons and nonlessons of the Indian development experience, Amartya Sen makes a clear distinction between what is instrumental and what is intrinsic: What post India lacked, by contrast for example with post China, was direct and massive public action to improve living conditions.

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## 6: Nationalism, Democracy & Development by Ayesha Jalal

*See also Bose, Sugata and Jalal, Ayesha, eds., Nationalism, Democracy and Development (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, ), 6 Although this is hardly surprising in a federal system marked by such a high degree of socioeconomic heterogeneity, most treatments of Indian democracy focus on the national picture.*

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