Institute of Development Studies Kolkata
&
University of Calcutta

MPhil in Development Studies, 2014-16

Entrance Test 2014

Date: July 12, 2014   Time allowed: 2 hours (12.00-2.00 pm)

1. Read the following excerpt: [30 marks]

Understanding disability poses a number of challenges that need to be overcome, ranging from a paucity of resources, a lack of reliable data and knowledge, to stigmatization and lack of visibility of persons with disability and policies that have proven to be inefficient when based on setting up separate structures for the persons concerned. Furthermore, existing data on disability is scarce and often lacks comparability between different countries. Surveys and censuses that address this subject, either as the main theme or as a section included in a larger study, use a variety of methods and phrasing of questions that make comparability even more of a challenge.

For long, the medical and the societal models for defining disability have been presented as having opposite views. The medical view, based on the individual and his/her impairment considers the physical or mental 'problem' that a person has. This view, which looks at disability by focusing on the individual, has been considered to be biased by disability activists and organizations. The latter puts forward the argument that persons are 'disabled' because of the structure of the society in which they live, which does not accommodate their impairment. Thus it is the environment, physical and social, that makes a person with impairment, a person with disability. This view, which has been put forward by a number of disabled persons' organizations, looks at the barriers that exist within the social context and that prevent a person from achieving the same level of functioning than a nondisabled person. Mainstreaming disability concerns is a progressive and sustainable way of re-designing society in order to include persons with disability.

The Capability Approach is based on "beings and doings that an individual has reason to value", thus shifting the focus from the specificities of the disabling situation to how to look at establishing equality in terms of possibilities and choices. Amartya Sen's Capability Approach looks at not what a person actually does (functionings) but at the range of possibilities that he/she chooses that specific functioning from – this is the capability set. By taking the view of the individual we look at the interaction between the person, with his/her limitations in functioning (which may or may not be permanent) and the context, which consists of a number of resources as well as expectations, stereotypes and often prejudice and discrimination. The Capability Approach thus examines the abilities of the person but also the potentialities, the ability to do things consistently over time. Focusing on developing potentialities means to look at the adaptability of the individual to an ever-changing social

1

context, the ability to tackle and even change the elements of the context that make a situation disabling for a given person. This approach stresses the interplay between characteristics of the individual and the social groups that he/she belongs to, as well as the institutional factors that may influence or even hinder his/her choices. Outcomes are thus measured in terms of the expanding of people's choices and freedoms.

The central place that the Capability Approach gives to human diversity and the interactions between disability, gender and ethnic dynamics and religious implications are also particularly important when carrying out research on disability in developing and transition countries. This also brings us to another consideration: a disabling situation can result from a series of causes, from the interaction between impairment and other conditions related to the individual. For example the fact of being a woman may have just as much of an influence on the 'mobility' outside the house in certain traditional cultures. Gender, in this case, may have more of an affect than impairment such as being an amputee. Looking at the capabilities and thus taking a more comprehensive view of the living conditions of the person can be a means for accounting for all the various factors that come into play when considering human lives where elements are often intertwined in complex dynamics.

The Capability Approach also constitutes a framework to take 'agency' into account. The agency of the individual looks at to what extent the person considers him/herself as the main actor and decision maker in his/her own life. It is the "ability to form goals, commitments, values etc." It is recognizing a person as "someone who acts and brings about change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of her/his own values and objectives, whether or not we assess them in terms of some external criteria as well." (Sen 1999)

Based on your understanding of the above text, answer the questions below. Limit each answer to approximately 50 words.

    (a) What are the main challenges in the way of understanding disability?

    (b) What is the major difference between the medical and societal models of disability?

    (c) How can the Capability Approach further the understanding of disability?

    (d) What does focusing on developing potentialities mean?

    (e) How does the Capability approach focus on agency?

2. Write approximately 300 words on any one of the following: [30 marks]

(a) Indian patriarchy and rising violence against women

(b) Rising prices and quality of life in India

(c) Sports and Globalization

(d) Privatization of education in India

(e) Social media and youth in India

3   This section is on interpretation of data: [20+20 marks]

A. The following table provides (approximate) average wage rate (Rs./day) received by the rural casual labourers of India in MGNREG (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee) public works, non-MGNREG public works and other types of casual labour works during the years 2009-10 and 2011-12.

Public work type	Average wage rate (received) during the years 2009-10 & 2011-12 (Rs./day)			
	2009-10		2011-12	
	male	Female	Male	Female
MGNREG	91	87	112	102
Non-MGNREG	98	86	127	111
Other casual labour works	102	69	149	103

Using the above information, state whether the following statements are 'true', 'false' or 'cannot be ascertained without additional information'. In each case, give reason for your answer.

(a) During 2009-10, the male-female wage differential was similar across public work types.

(b) For MGNREG and non-MGNREG public works, the male-female wage differential was less during 2011-12 compared to 2009-10.

(c) The increase in male wage rate between 2009-10 and 2011-12 was lowest for 'other casual labour works' and highest for MGNREG public works.

(d) For 'other casual labour works', the female wage rate increased more than the male wage rate between 2009-10 and 2011-12.

B. The following table gives state-wise data on approximate female population and approximate number of reported cases of crime against women for six Indian states for the year 2012:

State	Approximate female population (lakh)	Approximate number of recorded crime cases against women
Bihar	480	5990
Gujarat	290	2020
Kerala	180	1270
Madhya Pradesh	360	5300
Maharashtra	550	3310
Uttar Pradesh	970	12120
West Bengal	440	6810

Using the above information, state whether the following statements are 'true', 'false' or 'cannot be ascertained without additional information'. In each case, give reason for your answer.

(a) Crime rates for Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are very similar.

(b) West Bengal has a lower crime rate than Madhya Pradesh.

(c) Kerala and Gujarat have lower crime rates than Maharashtra.

(d) Recorded crime per person is highest in Uttar Pradesh.