

Preface

The role of the state in the development of the Third World countries has been an old and perennial debate. It has probably been the 'master debate' in development studies. As one looks to Third World development in the twenty-first century, the old and enduring issues relating to the role of the state in development have not subsided. But the creation of a near hegemony of pro-market development ideas in the 1990s brought the issues to be uncovered in new ways.

In the immediate post-war decades, the debate centered on the nature of the state and state building process. It focused on the type of state systems that would guarantee the coming into being of an organized nation, socially integrated and economically capable of ensuring rapid economic development. The state was seen as an entity that should take up the responsibility for a multitude of activities or services – either as a liberal welfare state or a socialist state. Every where, the state assumed the responsibility of managing the entire society.

This 'statist' model of development was subject to criticism increasingly since the 1970s. Critics challenged the view that state could act as an agent of development. Some have designated the Third World states as 'soft' or 'weak', in which state apparatus maintains only a tenuous hold over society, lacking legitimacy and therefore, the capacity to enforce policy. Others have seen the apparatus of state as being subordinated to interests of international capital. Simultaneously, with international recession, growing national debt in Latin America and Africa and wide spread military regimes, there was a deep scepticism about the state's role in development.

Such debates on state's role in development questioned whether the conditions existed for the Third World states to operate effectively. The neo-liberal debate in the 1980s held a deeper scepticism about the capacity of state to play a development role under any circumstances. The Third World states were taken at par with the states of the advanced capitalist countries, denying their specific historical context. The bias is now against state expansion and for the market. The motto of such shift was 'public provision, the exception not the rule'. This neo-liberal attack on the role of the state in

development sparked of ideas for 'rolling back' of the state that culminated in the 1990s with the strong support of the international financial institutions as expressed in 'Washing to Consensus'.

The present study is a humble attempt to explore this debate on the role of the state in Third World countries. It seeks to locate the debate in the evolving discourses of the theories of development. This has been done in the light of the experience in the Third World with particular reference to India. It is basically an exploratory research, which deals with theoretical aspects of a highly cultivated area of state-development interface in the Third World. However, the justification is its own way of looking into some aspects of this vast area of academic exercise.

Plan of the study

The plan of the study follows the sequence of the research guided by the research questions. The first chapter of the thesis entitled '*State-Development Interface in the Third World: The Research Problem and Its Theoretical Framework*' deals first with the statement of the research problem. It argues that though this vast area of study is well researched, some areas need further exploration. The research questions, the objectives of the research, the overview of the literature that deals with the covered areas of the research are presented. Also the research methodology, significance and limitations of the study have been delineated.

'The Idea of Development: Critical Perspectives' is the title of the second chapter. It touches up on critical issues in the contemporary development discourse. It highlights first the contested nature of the idea of development. The evolution, meanings, philosophy and ideology of development are briefly explored. The question of agency of development has also been dealt with.

That the Third World states need different treatment in matters of development policy has been denied by neo-liberalism. The third chapter of the thesis entitled. '*The Idea of the State: The Third World Perspective with Reference to India*' seeks to explore nature of the third world states with particular focus on the Indian state.

The historical contexts that shaped the emergence of theories of development and their basic premises are dealt with in the fourth chapter entitled '*The Theories of Development: Genesis, Basic Premise and Role of the State*'. It has spelled out that the

emergence a theoretical perspective is shaped by specific historical context and particular political economy in the back ground. The theories have got their ideological backups too.

The fifth chapter entitled, '*The Role of the State in Theories of Development: The Indian Experience*' examines the role of the state in development practice with reference to theories of development. Its focal point is to show that the theoretical perspectives offer a broad conceptual frame work to be followed. But in practice each and every country has to contextualize it. The strong version with the concurrent ideological backup at the international level prevails over other.

The thesis is concluded with the sixth chapter entitled '*Summary and Concluding Observations*'.

The purpose of the work is to make a theoretical sense of the current discourse of the interface between the state and development in the Third World and understand its distinctiveness in the field of development studies. It seeks to conceptualize the issue in the light of the experience of the Third World with particular reference to India. Thus the idea is not to go for abstract theorization as this has the tendency to dilute the significance of the problem and deflect it from the empirical context within which it is embedded.