



Topic : Prof. A. K. Sen and Welfare Economics

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Abstract:

Prof. A. K. Sen's contribution is substantive to all the areas he has touched; some of them are highly technical. But from the very beginning his major concern was the welfare of people; especially poor. His principal contribution to welfare economics that is the scarcity of food is not the only reason for famine in many countries around the world but also other reasons have asserted on it. Sen analyzed famines with his theoretical approach to welfare measurement. He argues that famines can occur even when the supply of food is not significantly lower. In this view lack of opportunities and capabilities are responsible for poverty and famines. According to Sen, education and health can be valuable to the freedom of a person. This paper attempts to throw light on the major contribution of A. K. Sen's to welfare economics.

Introduction:

Professor Amartya K. Sen has been awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics Sciences for his contribution to Welfare Economics in 1998. Sen's contribution is substantive to all the areas he has touched; some of them are highly technical. But from the very beginning his major concern was the welfare of people; especially poor. Sen published his Ph. D. Thesis as a book on economics: Choice of Techniques in 1960. In 1970 his book Collective choice and Social Welfare was published, which dealt with the incompleteness of Arrow's model on personal choice to social choice and established a new law in this respect. He published his book on Economic Inequality in 1973 and welfare and Rights in 1998. In his book on Economic Inequality, he stressed out that the scarcity of food is not the only reason for famine in many countries around the world. This is principal contribution to welfare economics. Among his many books a few need to be remembered as pioneering work: Employment, Technology and Development; Poverty and Famines; Choice, Welfare and Management; Resources, Value and Development; Inequality Re-

examined, Jeevan Jatra O Arthaniti; Indian Economic Development and Social Opportunity. A. K. Sen's contribution to Welfare Economics has been analyzed in this paper. His principal contribution to welfare economics that is the scarcity of food is not the only reason for famine in many countries around the world but also other reasons have asserted on it. This paper attempts to throw light on the major contribution of A. K. Sen's to welfare economics.

A. K. Sen's Contribution to welfare economics:

Sen analysed famines with his theoretical approach to welfare measurement. He argues that famines can occur even when the supply of food is not significantly lower. In this view lack of opportunities and capabilities are responsible for poverty and famines. In other wards, hunger is essentially a problem of functioning failures. Haunted by his memories of the Bangal Famines, Sen has made it his life's works to understand inequality. Being an Indian, it is his country's wretchedness that has driven him to these matchless heights in human welfare.

It is perhaps a mistake to see the development of education, health care and other basic achievements only or primarily as expansion of "Human Resources", the accumulation of "Human Capital", as if people were just the means of production and not it's ultimate end. The bettering of human life dose not have to be justified by showing that a person with a better life is also a better producer.

As above line suggest the issue of health should be viewed from two aspects:

- (1) health is wealth.
- (2) health creates wealth.

The maxim that health is wealth highlights the increasing importance of health. Health is valuable on its own. It is perhaps the supreme element of economic development. We cherish the development of world but we do not cherish less for healthy world.

According to Sen, education and health can be valuable to the freedom of a person in at least five distinct

ways and these ways are as follows:

- (1) Intrinsic importance Education and health are valuable achievement in themselves.
- (2) Instrumental personal role A person's education and health to do many things.
- (3) Instrumental social role Education and health encourage demand for social needs.
- (4) Instrumental process role The education and health broadens the horizon of the people and generate benefits.
- (5) Empowerment and distributive role With better health and education, disadvantaged groups can better resist oppression and inequality.

There is a very close interlinkage between poverty and poor health. A vicious circle is operating here. Poverty causes poor health and poor health causes poverty. The improvement in health care can be an important step in reducing the level of poverty. When we consider a problem of health care in the context of less developed country, it is found that poverty and low income cause major difficulties in the lives of the common man. Therefore, a good health care is highly needed for human life. The components of good health care are as follows:

- (1) Nutritious diet
- (2) Hygienic condition of living
- (3) Safe drinking water
- (4) Information about good health care
- (5) Existence of good health care facilities
- (6) Existence of hospitals and medical treatment facilities
- (7) Financial ability to incur the medical expenses.

The medicine that Sen suggests for just an Indian society is of little interest to Indians politicians. Massive, efficient investment in primary health care, for instance, needs a long time to bear fruits. Longer the gap between two polls is that Indian society and Indian politician. Sen, believes globalization can be "a major force for good", but if a country globalizes fast and pays no attention to lack of social opportunity, illiteracy and health care, it ends crating serious problems for itself.

Well-being and advantage are the two headings; there are many possible approaches to them. For example, the various interpretations of utility can be seen as different ways of interpreting well-being. But there are other quite

different approaches to the well-being as well; e.g., opulence or the fulfillment of basic needs. Similar exercises of comparison, contrast, scrutiny and assessment have also been done for the notion of advantage. The judgment of interest is a problem of vary wide relevance to economics. It is, of course, central to welfare economics. It is also crucial for a theory of poverty for assessment of inequality, judging economic development and measuring standard of living.

Prof. A. K. Sen's economics is directed towards humanity and is intertwined with philosophy. He is not only an economist of world eminence but also a great scientist. His major contribution is not only to welfare economics but also other branches of economics and humanities. He still maintains his Indian citizenship despite his living abroad for nearly three four decades. His work stimulates many branches of world economy.

Conclusions:

In this paper to analyses Prof. A. K. Sen's major contribution to the welfare economics. Sen analyzed famines with his theoretical approach to welfare measurement. He argues that famines can occur even when the supply of food is not significantly lower. In this view, lack of opportunities and capabilities are responsible for poverty and famines. Haunted by his memories of the Bangal Famines, Sen has made it his life's work to understand inequality. There is a very close interlinkage between poverty and poor health. A vicious circle is operating here. Poverty causes poor health and poor health causes poverty. Sen believes globalization can be "a major force for good", but if a country globalizes fast and pays no attention to lack of social opportunity, illiteracy and health care, it ends crating serious problems for itself. His major contribution is not only to welfare economics but also for other branches of economics and humanities.

Reference:

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