

What is Human and institutional Development? : A Note

The question - what is human and institutional development? - unfolds articulations that reveal a rich body of experiences, perspectives and methodologies. To deepen our understanding, the following section highlights a few salient dimensions of HID.

Centrality of Self-Growth and Personal Development

Indeed, central to HID is realisation of human potential. While speaking about human potential - what comes first to all of us is - how do I realize my own potential? As actors in society - within the family, neighbourhood, community, and organisations - we have roles to play, capacities to be acquired and above all aspirations to be fulfilled. We all have self-images and those that are constructed by society, which influence our behaviour. In this regard, HID is all about understanding our self-images and those created by society - a process that leads us on a journey of learning and be prepared to respond to life situations by being aware and with sensitivity? More often than not, the question - who am I and what am I here for?, pursues each one of us in our reflective states - taking one through uncharted paths of self-exploration - creating new levels of awareness and functioning.

For the practitioners, the expectations from HID are several and the most important relates to learning - to processes that lead to bonding and connectivity, efficiency, effectiveness. It is this process that opens several doors for individuals to grow and mature - contributing to the institutions that they belong and to society at large. For many, these processes have been personal, social and even spiritual.

Emphasis to Institutional Building

As social actors, each one of us is part of an institutional field - be it the family, community, organizations, the state etc., which lay down the rules of the game and make demands for being sensitive and effective in whatever roles we are playing. Clearly, individuals have an institutional face just as the latter has a human face. HID then may be viewed as the lens that looks concomitantly at both - individuals and organisations/institutions and the interconnections between the two.

HID, therefore, is about institution building and its builders. Apart from technical expertise and efficiency - what is being asked of organisations/institutions and their players is how relevant they have remained - through their vision and performance. This calls for many HID competencies, which give emphasis not only to the individuals but also to the robust functioning of organizations - its perspectives, structures, systems and culture.

HID has a Crucial Role in Social Development

At a very fundamental level, HID inevitably raises issues and questions about inequities - within organizations as also wider issues of social inequities such as caste, class, age, race, colour etc. that are steeped in hierarchies. Not only are these issues deeply embedded in the social fabric of society but are closely interlocked in its power

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dynamics. For HID practitioners, the challenge is how best to bring about greater democratisation in institutional process, practice and culture. In its methodology, HID raises the challenge of promoting greater democratisation through co-constructions of different slices of social realities.

HID is about Change and Transformations

Any discussion on HID is incomplete if one does not delve the importance it gives to change or transformational processes. Transformation does not occur in isolation or through silos as both our physical and social universe are interconnected and in dynamic interaction. In the development sector, globalising forces have amply demonstrated this much more than before.

Increasingly, HID has begun to emphasise the importance of planned and negotiated change in the development sector that is holistic and system-wide. Even as HID has brought process and process orientation to the centre stage of its work, it gives equal emphasis to end process and products. It is said that the success of any intervention is not only the transformations it brings about but also the new process and paths it creates. As they say the joy of arrival is in its journey.

What contributes to transformations? For HID, these are perspectives – understanding and being sensitive to the diverse perspective that are at play, going through processes of unlearning to be open and sensitive to different slices of realities to gain deeper insights. Going beyond perspectives, HID highlights the role of the method and methodologies that help institutional players to facilitate change processes. It is in this context, that individuals and institutions have to be equipped with a set of skills and competencies. For example, amongst the many HID skills, facilitation has taken centre stage in all process work. This is an important skill/competency that all change agents are being asked to acquire. For some facilitation could come naturally. Yet facilitation is a competency that requires a set of learnt skills. For example, facilitating situations that bring multi-stakeholders with diverse perspectives or situations that demand conflict resolution, vision and perspective building is not only a skilled task but goes beyond into being sensitive to processes and psycho-dynamics of the groups or collectives. There are different styles of facilitation too. There are also a basketful of methodologies that facilitators use either in a structured manner or dynamically for effective outcomes.

HID is Contextual

There are no textbook formulae for HID. As individuals, our life situations are not the same as we have different backgrounds and starting points. Similarly, organisations too have different contexts that stem from their histories, their goals, leadership styles and the socio-political environments in which they are located. Hence, any intervention in HID has to be contextually analysed and solutions found. With all this, HID underscores the importance of multi-disciplinary perspectives and methodologies as change processes embed technical and non-technical dimensions for transformations in a specific context.