Chapter 18: Development

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Exercise 18.1 — Multiple Choice Questions

Q1 Development of a country can generally be determined by (i) its per capita income (ii) its average literacy level (iii) health status of its people (iv) all the above

SOLUTION

Development is a many-sided idea. Different people have different developmental goals, and a single indicator cannot capture the well-being of a country's citizens.

The chapter uses per capita income (a World Bank criterion), and also health and education indicators (used in the UNDP's Human Development Report) to compare development. Since all three — income, literacy and health — are used together, the correct choice is 'all the above'.

Answer: (iv) all the above

Q2 Which of the following neighbouring countries has better performance in terms of human development than India? (i) Bangladesh (ii) Sri Lanka (iii) Nepal (iv) Pakistan

SOLUTION

Human development is measured in the UNDP's Human Development Report using per capita income together with health (life expectancy) and education levels, expressed as the HDI rank.

In Table 1.6, Sri Lanka has GNI per capita of 12,616 (2021 PPP $), life expectancy at birth of 77.5, mean years of schooling of 10.8, and an HDI rank of 89 — all better than India (9,047; 72; 6.9; HDI rank 130). The text notes that 'a small country in our neighbourhood, Sri Lanka, is much ahead of India in every respect.'

Answer: (ii) Sri Lanka

Q3 Assume there are four families in a country. The average per capita income of these families is Rs 5000. If the income of three families is Rs 4000, Rs 7000 and Rs 3000 respectively, what is the income of the fourth family? (i) Rs 7500 (ii) Rs 3000 (iii) Rs 2000 (iv) Rs 6000

SOLUTION

Average per capita income = (total income of all families) / (number of families).

Total income of four families = average x number = 5000 x 4 = Rs 20,000. Income of three families = 4000 + 7000 + 3000 = Rs 14,000.

Income of the fourth family = 20,000 - 14,000 = Rs 6,000.

Answer: (iv) Rs 6000

Exercise 18.2 — Short and Long Answer Questions

Q1 What is the main criterion used by the World Bank in classifying different countries? What are the limitations of this criterion, if any?

SOLUTION

The main criterion used by the World Bank to classify countries is the per capita income (average income), i.e. the total income of the country divided by its total population. Countries with higher per capita income are called rich (developed) and those with low per capita income are called low-income countries.

Limitations: Per capita income is only an average, so it hides distribution — it does not show how income is divided among people, and a high average can coexist with a few very rich and many very poor people. It also ignores non-income aspects of development such as health, education, equal treatment, a pollution-free environment and security, which are equally important for people's quality of life.

Answer: The World Bank uses per capita income (average income); its limitation is that it hides inequalities in distribution and ignores non-income aspects like health, education and environment.

Q2 In what respects is the criterion used by the UNDP for measuring development different from the one used by the World Bank?

SOLUTION

The World Bank uses only per capita income to classify and compare countries.

The UNDP's Human Development Report compares countries on a broader basis: it uses the educational levels of the people, their health status (such as life expectancy at birth), along with per capita income. Thus, unlike the World Bank's single income measure, the UNDP treats people's health and education as central to development, making its criterion more comprehensive.

Answer: The World Bank uses only per capita income, whereas the UNDP combines per capita income with the health and education levels of the people (the Human Development Index).

Q3 Why do we use averages? Are there any limitations to their use? Illustrate with your own examples related to development.

SOLUTION

We use averages because for comparison we need to reduce large amounts of data about many people or things to a single number. For example, to compare the income of two countries with different populations, we use the average income (per capita income) rather than the total income.

The limitation of averages is that they hide disparities — an average tells us nothing about how a quantity is distributed among people. For instance, two countries may have the same average income, but in one the income may be shared fairly equally while in the other a few are very rich and most are very poor. So a high average income does not guarantee that most people are well off.

Answer: Averages are used to compare situations by reducing data to a single number, but they hide the distribution — two countries with the same average income can have very different inequality.

Q4 Why is the issue of sustainability important for development?

SOLUTION

We want the present level of development to go up further or at least be maintained for future generations. However, since the second half of the twentieth century scientists have warned that the present type and levels of development are not sustainable.

Sustainability is important because resources such as groundwater and crude oil are being over-used and are running out, and because the environment is being degraded. If development today exhausts resources and damages the environment, future generations will not be able to meet their own needs. Hence development must be sustainable — it should continue without harming the ability of coming generations to develop.

Answer: Sustainability matters because present resource use and environmental damage threaten the ability of future generations to meet their needs; development must be maintainable over time.

Q5 For each of the items given in Table 1.6, find out which country is at the top and which is at the bottom.

SOLUTION

Table 1.6 gives data for India and its neighbours for 2023: Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (2021 PPP $), Life Expectancy at birth, Mean Years of Schooling of people aged 25 and above, and HDI Rank in the world.

GNI per capita: top — Sri Lanka (12,616); bottom — Nepal (4,726).
Life Expectancy at birth: top — Sri Lanka (77.5); bottom — Myanmar (66.9).
Mean Years of Schooling: top — Sri Lanka (10.8); bottom — Pakistan (4.3).
HDI Rank in the world: top — Sri Lanka (rank 89); bottom — Pakistan (rank 168). (A lower rank number is better.)

Answer: Sri Lanka is at the top for GNI per capita, life expectancy, mean years of schooling and HDI rank; Nepal is lowest in GNI per capita, Myanmar lowest in life expectancy, and Pakistan lowest in schooling and HDI rank.

Q6 The following table shows the proportion of adults (aged 15-49 years) whose BMI is below normal (BMI <18.5 kg/m2) in India, based on a survey for 2019-21. Kerala: Male 8.5%, Female 10%; Karnataka: Male 17%, Female 21%; Madhya Pradesh: Male 28%, Female 28%; All States: Male 20%, Female 23%. (i) Compare the nutritional level of people in Kerala and Madhya Pradesh. (ii) Can you guess why around one-fifth of people in the country are undernourished even though it is argued that there is enough food in the country?

SOLUTION

(i) A BMI below 18.5 kg/m2 indicates an adult is undernourished. In Kerala only 8.5% of males and 10% of females are below normal BMI, while in Madhya Pradesh the figure is 28% for both males and females. So the nutritional level in Kerala is much better than in Madhya Pradesh, where undernourishment is far higher.

(ii) Even though enough food may be produced in the country, around one-fifth of people remain undernourished because food is not distributed and accessed equally. Many poor people cannot afford enough nutritious food, and factors such as low incomes, poverty, and lack of proper public health, sanitation and food-security arrangements mean availability of food in the country does not ensure that every individual gets adequate nutrition.

Answer: (i) Kerala (8.5%/10% below normal BMI) is far better nourished than Madhya Pradesh (28%/28%). (ii) Despite enough food being produced, unequal distribution, poverty and low purchasing power leave about a fifth of people undernourished.