



## International Journal of Financial Management and Economics

P-ISSN: 2617-9210  
E-ISSN: 2617-9229  
IJFME 2022; 5(2): 39-44  
Received: 18-06-2022  
Accepted: 25-07-2022

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### Capability approach to development through Jain doctrines

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#### Abstract

Mahavira, 24<sup>th</sup> Tirthankara of Jainism is highly celebrated figure in the world for his ideas that revolutionized the world. He was a realist thinker who tried hard to spread humanitarian values, his human-centric teachings centred on making one's life viable for himself and for others. This paper is an attempt to present in brief one aspect of Mahavira's model of individual well-being and comparing it with 'Capability-approach' by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen which was a path-breaking reform in the field of economics. This paper briefly elaborates both approaches, then draw parallel between them by holding up particular dimensions like views on poverty, freedom, development etc. It also presents how Mahavira went a step ahead by reaching the way to attain desired end as Sen visualised and solved the major loophole of Sen's approach.

**Keywords:** Deprivation, capabilities, freedom, poverty, community

#### Introduction

Economic is a social science that aims to maximise welfare of individuals and society. It existed since ancient times and underwent serious transformation with the passage of time. Several notable social scientists endeavoured hard to present alternate viewpoints regarding well-being and ways to achieve it. Modern economics which derive its foundation from Adam Smith remained concerned with abstract notions about human welfare which revolves around subjective concepts like utility. Most economists spent all their life in presenting mathematical and graphical models that actually have very less impact on human welfare as Nobel Laureate identified "Mathiness" in the domain of economics. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen made considerable attempt to revolutionise this field of Dismal Science by creating a model that incorporates things that really affect human welfare. Critical analysis of Jain canonical texts too offers important insights about human and social welfare. It is not easy to describe vividly approach towards human well-being as deciphered by realist thinkers like Mahavir in one go so, this paper focuses on one aspect of welfare-regime in Jain school of thought. It delves into analysis of 'Capability approach' of Amartya Sen and its comparison to Mahavir's approach to development. It briefly presents the similarities between the two around various dimensions like Poverty, Poverty alleviation etc as some basic notion forms the foundation of both.

#### Literature review

(Schumpeter J., 1954) <sup>[15]</sup>. Presents in brief journey of economics from a human-centred social science to dismal science. (Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum, 1993) <sup>[21]</sup>. Opened new horizons for understanding human development in the domain of welfare economics. (Sen, Capability Approach: Theoretical insights and Empirical Applications, 2008) <sup>[17]</sup> was a path-breaking reform in the field of economics which changed the perception of masses towards what actually determine quality of life. (Gyanchandra) made remarkable attempt by presenting Jain philosophy in simple yet interesting way by citing its relevance in modern times. (Mahpragya, 2008) <sup>[11]</sup>. Related ideas of Mahavira with economics and showed the Jain way to attain maximum welfare. (Bothra, 2013) <sup>[2]</sup> Described the socially optimum code of conduct that Mahavira prescribed for his laymen that can go way a long way to enhance capability of individual.

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### Sen's capability approach

Amartya Sen's capability theory has emerged as a serious alternative model of progress and development as it is both comprehensive, flexible and broader than other approaches like the human resource approach, the basic needs, minimum rights and the human welfare approach etc. It shifts the development discourse from pursuing material opulence to expanding capabilities, from optimizing monetary factors to enlarging freedoms. Sen's approach focuses on the richness of human lives rather on abstract richness. People obsessed to measure human well-being in monetary terms suffered from a setback as this approach revealed social, personal, psychological and other dimensions of development.

Life of a person consists of sequence of things the person does, or states of being he achieves, together they constitute 'Functioning's' which refers to what people actually "do and are" and 'Capabilities' denote what people really "can do and can be". Capabilities reflect his freedom to choose between alternative combinations of functioning's. Therefore, the freedom to choose is inherent in defining capability. First one, a victim of famine and the other, sitting on hunger strike. Although both lack the functioning of being well-fed, but there exist major differences. The former is badly constrained in freedom and lacks the capability to achieve the functioning to be well-fed; the later has this capability even though he is choosing to be hungry. Functioning are achievements of people, which gives value to life. Functioning are various things a person value, being and doing. Achieving it with available resources depends on multiplicity of factors. Capabilities denote a person's opportunity and ability to achieve desired outcomes, considering all factors. It means not only the achieved functioning's are valuable but also the individuals' capability to choose and discriminate among different possible living.

Thus, Amartya Sen place Capability as an important determinant to assess one's well-being.

### Mahavir's capability approach

Mahavira believed in pluralist theory to understand reality (Anekanta) i.e., reality is composed of multiple and sometimes, contradictory doctrines. So, in order to comprehend reality, one must try to analyse reality from different viewpoint and then proceed to arrive at decision. This principle of 'Relativism' is of high importance in the field of science, logic etc. and same can be applied in the field of economics to understand the state of welfare and approach to maximise one's well-being. Mahavira in 'Samayvayang Sutra' said "Ege Aaya" i.e., all souls are same. At the same time, Jainism clearly prescribes that each soul possesses infinite potential, all individuals have inherent in them ability to attain the state of bliss, where one wins over each and every woe that victimise him. Attaining this ideal state require enhancing soul's capability to get of external bondage of 'Karmic Vargana'.

Jain doctrine of reality revolves around two kinds of viewpoints- Vyavahara Naya and Niśchaya Naya (Niśchaya Naya enables us to understand the reality from the viewpoint of the substance without denying the existence of modes. Vyavahāra Naya allows us to comprehend the reality from the perspective of modes and attributes, but does not deny the existence of substance. From the perspective of former, it is matter in the form of

gold. From the perspective of latter, it is a vessel. Both the statements are true, because relative to the vessel, gold is the substance and vessel is its mode). Jainism states that from the viewpoint of Niśchaya Naya all individuals are same and perfect, their actual state is pious in which they are free of all sorrows but Vyavahara Naya accepts differences which are visible from external look. Jain theory of metaphysics is actually very vast and diverse, it states that differences arise from external karmic bondages which gets accumulated with the passage of time. As stated above, any soul in state of bliss is same (this is the original or raw form of any soul) but differences are caused by bondage which can only be eradicated with the help soul's capability. As mentioned, each soul has same potential as raw state is same for all but Capability is ideally affected by both internal and external factors, Taking Capabilities to highest level can help one to attain liberation i.e., State of Bliss.

Thus, just like Sen's capability approach, Mahavira had rejected normative evaluations of welfare based exclusively on commodities, incomes, or material resources but it takes scope of well-being to higher realms by focussing on real factor that affects one life i.e., Capabilities.

### Understanding poverty

Per capita GDP is the common way to compare countries' state of development but there is no straightforward relation between per-capita GDP and quality of life. For example, Sri Lanka and the Indian state of Kerala have low per capita GDP but have higher life expectancies and literacy rates than richer countries like Brazil and South Africa. Clearly, growing national wealth doesn't automatically translate into enhanced well-being of all people. Recent reports from Oxfam International points to the disturbing trend of rising inequality where wealth is increasingly concentrating in few hands. Amartya Sen asserts that poverty should be seen "as a deprivation of basic capabilities, rather than deficiency of income, where that deprivation limits the freedom of a person to pursue their goals in life. In today's world of sheer abundance there are people living in poverty, they are living in a state of 'un-freedom', unable to realize their capabilities. "Poverty is denial of choices and opportunities for living a tolerable life."

In Sen's view, all individuals are endowed with a certain set of capabilities. If situation is created so that they can realize it, they will automatically escape poverty. If in today's world of sheer abundance there are people living in poverty, they are living in a state of 'un-freedom', unable to realize their capabilities. For Sen "capability deprivation" is a better measure of poverty than lowness of income. For instance, in India over 50% of all malnourished children come from non-poor families. In the context of measuring poverty, Sen asserts that "identifying a minimal combination of basic capabilities can be a good way of setting up the problem of diagnosing and measuring poverty."

It is not sufficient to know how much access a person has to resources in order to know his capabilities. Rather, we need to know much more about the person and the circumstances in which one is living in. thus to arrive at decision regarding one's well-being, one needs to apply principle of 'Anekanta'. Mahavira placed Puniya above Shrenik despite knowing that economically Puniya can't afford to live luxurious life like King of Magadha in palatial buildings full of wealth and servants and led an austere life without pompousness but with contentment. It was in later stage that

one realizes that proposition by Mahavira was not wrong as the king of Magadha was sentenced to jail by his own son for the wealth he owned while Puniya lived and died peacefully.

### **Freedom in Sen's and Mahavir's view**

Freedom means having space to acquire capabilities and using them as one would want to. What people are "capable" of doing is influenced by the freedom. It is necessary to evaluate the status of freedom enjoyed by individuals so that effective developmental policies could be framed. Development is the process of expanding human freedom. It also means removal of contrary forces that restrict people's freedoms such as poverty, discrimination and so on. In his book 'Development as Freedom', Sen prescribed five types of freedoms namely Political Freedoms (that includes functioning democracy, freedom to scrutinize and criticize actions of authorities, freedom of expression and speech, and presence of free press etc.), Economic Freedoms (such as People's opportunity to possess and use economic resources or entitlements etc.), Social Freedoms (that includes people's ability to access health and education services, opportunities to participate in social processes and activities etc.), Transparent Governance and Protective Security. Expanding these freedoms constitute not only the means, but also the end in development. The state must play its role in supporting freedoms by providing infrastructure and easy access to public services, social safety nets, good macroeconomic policies, and environmental protection. Along with these external freedoms to channelize one's scope for development Mahavira had also identified internal sources of bondages (like anger, lust, deceptiveness etc.) that restricts one to enhance and utilise his capabilities. So going a step ahead, as per Mahavira Development occurs not only when above mentioned 5 types of external freedoms are enlarged but when these external freedoms are balanced with extension of internal freedoms. It is clear that outlook of Mahavira is much broader while analysing aspects of development. As mentioned above "freedom" is a vital part of the capability theory. Lack of freedom limits people capabilities in different ways. But this freedom is not what is given on paper by the national Constitution. It is the 'real' freedom enjoyed by individuals so that they can live their lives in the manner they want.

Amartya Sen said "The success of a society is to be evaluated primarily by the freedoms that members of the society enjoy." In Jainism 63 illustrious men are given great importance in history for their immense contribution towards welfare of their subjects. Some of them attempted to create an ideal system that would benefit their people by giving them due opportunities to incentivise enhancement of their capabilities. Thus, to ensure development one needs to probe the potentials of the individual and the constraints in realizing them, as opposed to simply seeing their income, consumption or expenditure.

The capability approach of development is about enlarging freedoms so that all people can pursue choices that they value. Just like Sen, Mahavira too focussed on liberating individuals from Karmic Bondage to enhance their capabilities. Consider the difference between fasting and starving, on a person's well-being. Fasting involves a choice to not eat despite the availability of food, but a poor person starves because he has no choice. Clearly, the difference is

the freedom of choice. Therefore, having a lifestyle is not the same as choosing it. The capability approach is not merely concerned with outcomes, but with person's quality of life. The only purpose of development is to enrich human life, not economy. Mahavira took concept of freedom to greater realms, he argued well-being not only depends on one's freedom to consume but also on one's freedom to fall prey to consumerism. This is why he directed his followers to pursue self-restraint. He argued that real freedom lies in winning over desires as it is indiscriminate desires that enslaves people. In "Freakonomics" Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner presented an excellent example to show how men in post-modernist world has been victimized by Consumerism, they wrote it was after the advent of Mouthwash in market, 'Bad breath' became a socially awkward situation. At the same time, he preached his followers to give food, shelter, clothes etc to needy so to enlarge their respective freedoms. Prof. J K Mehta propounded the "Theory of want lessness" that defines economics "as a science which studies human behaviour as a means to the end of want lessness".

An important specialty of the capability approach of Mahavira and the subsequent freedom envisioned in the Jain thought is the acknowledgement of current capabilities of an individual and providing them with a way of development which is based upon their capabilities. For this reason, the dharma for a person willing to advance in spiritual freedom is twofold- 'Saagaar' and 'Anaagaar'. The first one is for the lay householders who have limited capability for spiritual advancements and the second one is for the mendicants who tread on the path of dharma with full capabilities and strengths. Hence, the Jain thought has laid down both kinds of ways to ensure that every individual develops their own spiritual capabilities. The layperson who has limitations in practicing dharma can also expand their freedoms through the path designed for them. Pujyapad in his *Ishtopadesha* draws the beautiful example of two travellers, the first one being a symbol of the munidharma and the second being the symbol of grihasthadharma. While the first traveler walks ahead at a rapid pace and is surely going to reach the destination (salvation) much earlier, the second traveler walks at a slow pace but it is sure that he shall also reach the same destination; albeit later than the former traveler. This sums up the dichotomy of Saagaar and Anaagaar dharmas which allow both the munis and shravakas to pursue their development.

The five doctrines or the panchvratas are also divided on these lines into 'greater vows' (Mahavratas) and 'lesser vows' (Anuvratas) which allow a person to pursue spiritual development as per their own current capabilities and to find the process capable of gradually expanding that development. The concept of twelve 'pratima' is envisioned specifically for the purpose of expanding the freedom of the shravak or layperson. This process of freedom starts with the first level in which the shravak renounces things like eating food in night and having grounded vegetables and it goes on till the twelfth pratima in which the person becomes ready and capable enough to actually take the vow of monkhood (diksha).

Therefore, the capability approach of Mahavira also takes into account the limitations of the individuals and does not force a uniform method upon individuals for their development. Instead, it provides person specific methodology in which people of varying spiritual



capabilities, interests and objectives can find their betterment.

### **Development in view of Sen and Mahavira**

The Capability Approach has been highly influential in the context of international development. It has led to a paradigm shift in the understanding of development. People differ in their ability to use available choices and hence, in what they can achieve. In order to be good agents of change, people need the freedom to be educated and healthy, to speak in public without fear, to participate in the social and political processes, etc. On the positive side, once people have these freedoms, they can themselves build the environment in which they can be educated, healthy and speak freely and participate, and so on. Compared with the income perspective of development translating the capability approach into practice is quite challenging due to the emphasis on value judgments with high informational requirement and its multidimensional nature. In the capability approach the units of evaluations are not opulence (utilities, goods and resources) but functioning's (doings and beings).

Sen and Mahavira considers people as humans (and not as mere consumers who seem programmed like robots to maximise their utility) and thus, the scope of their respective approaches is quite vast as they take into consideration different possible factors - personal, economic, social, political, or environmental - that can possibly influence human capabilities. They focus on individuals, unlike the basic needs and standard of living approaches that concentrate on households. Resource based theories that dominated the doctrine of economics till 21<sup>st</sup> century do not acknowledge this. Both Mahavira and Sen View's goal of development as expansion of people's freedom, not expansion of economic output or consumption. They do not see people in isolation, but inherently considers societal, political and other factors that affect people's lives and capabilities to function.

In his book "Outlines of Jainism", Jaini has written "In Jainism fourteen stages are indicated through which the individual progresses from impurifying matter on to final liberation". In Jainism the Gunasthan describe the path, modalities and pre-requisites for an individual to attain point of bliss. It thus show stages that one passes through in gradual development. Mahavira being a realist philosopher even attempted to identify '22 parishahas' pertaining to the enduring of hardships while an individual attempt to be in the state of serenity (In other words, these are problems that obstructs the path of an individual trying to attain tranquillity in his life). The '22 Parishahas' mentioned in 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of "Uttradhyan Sutra" are Hunger, thirst, cold, heat, insect bites, lack of clothing, dirt, refusal, abuse, bruises, begging, erotic, praise, faith-loss, depression, pride, lack of good beddings, anger, honor diseases and fear. Using jargons of economics, we can say that these 22 factors are the causes of Consumer Disequilibrium.

### **Agent in Sen's and Mahavir's view**

Amartya Sen defines an agent as someone who brings about change. Agency in the context of capabilities approach primarily refers to a person's interactive role in the society i.e., his freedom to participate in economic, social, and political actions. In order to be agents of their lives, people need cordial environment. Jain Philosophy is based on the

idea of 'Swa-Par Kalyan' i.e. followers of Jainism through their practises and code of conduct enhance their spiritual power and inner happiness and at the same time, they attempt to enhance overall welfare of society at large. Mahavira and Sen see people as "Agents" of Change, not passive recipients of benefits of expert created policies. In Sen's view, in the development process "people have to be seen ... as being actively involved - given the opportunity - in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programs." So, the central theme of development is to enable people to become agents of change in their own lives. When people, individually or in groups, are recognized as agents, they can define their priorities and also choose the suitable means to achieve them. This can also be substantiated with latest empirical evidences. "The poor themselves can create a poverty-free world. All we have to do is to free them from the chains that we have put around them." Remarkd Muhammad Yunus, Nobel laureate and founder of Grameen Bank that helped 10 million Bangladeshis to move above extreme poverty.

### **Poverty Alleviation as per Sen and Mahavira**

In ancient time, there existed many contrasting philosophical viewpoints, Jain canonical scripture "Sutrakratang Sutra" mentions 363 school of thoughts simultaneously existed which mainly got categorised as Vinayavaadi (which believed that respect for Gurus is a source of liberation), Kriyavaadi (which believed that following strict set of norms will result in perennial pleasure), Agnanvaadi (which believe that pleasure lies in lack of knowledge) and Akriyavaadi (which do not believe in following strict regimes). All these followed 'Ekantavaad' i.e., they only focussed on one aspect of reality but Mahavira with his 'Anekanta Darshan' combined the positive sides of all these thoughts. Mahavira centred his philosophy on 'Purushartha', he believed one can shape his destiny with his own deeds unlike philosophers like Goshalak who believed in 'Niyativaad', destiny is created by supernatural element and one has no control on it. Thus, Mahavira believed one can change his fate by his own deeds. In 'Development as Freedom', Sen argues that "People have to be seen in this perspective, as being actively involved in shaping their own destiny. They are not mere passive recipients of the benefits of the development programs". The individuals need to be seen as "agents of change" rather than "patients" diagnosed with the "illness of poverty".

### **Community in view of Sen and Mahavira**

Likewise, "democracy is best seen as governance by discussion" - namely, people's participation and public reasoning. Citing the history of global famines, Sen asserts that "no famine has ever taken place in the history of the world in a functioning democracy". He cites India's example, "The prevalence of famines, which had been a persistent feature of the long history of the British Indian Empire, ended abruptly with the establishment of a democracy after independence." This is because democratic governments "have to win elections and face public criticism, and have strong incentive to undertake measures to avert famines and other catastrophes". As a contrary historical example, he cites is the massive famine in China during 1958-61 during the failed 'Great Leap Forward',

which claimed close to 30 million of lives. Loss of lives could have been avoided if people and the media in China had freedom to report the truth. For various self-serving reasons local authorities also did not convey the ground reality to their top bosses.

In the context, particularly of poor nations, people often think that freedom counterproductive to both political stability and development. However, Sen takes the opposing view and cites the examples of Taiwan and Thailand and claims that the rapid transformation of East Asian economies resulted from the “social opportunities” provided by governments in the form of schooling, basic health care, basic land reform, and micro-credit. As a result of development, these economies became more democratic. Taking the same logic forward, Sen points to the breakdown of former Soviet Union and asserts that political liberties are essential for sustainable development. Thus, comparing the development strategies of India and China he argues that democratic India holds more promise for a long term and sustainable development. It points to the importance of fostering institutional participation, public debates, democratic practices, and empowering policies. These are all on-monetary dimensions of life and particularly important for poverty alleviation, sees as expansion of capabilities

In Jain canonical scriptures, servants are referred to as ‘Kautumbhik’ which means Family member, this shows how Mahavira attempted to strengthen community which minimising the narrow lines of differences that separates a person from his fellow brothers. Mahavira being a realist thinker placed ‘community above any other factor and thus created a system of Checks and Balances by forming “Chaturvidh Sangh” to extend moral, political and financial support to his disciples. Great thinkers like Deen Dayal Upadhyay propounded theories like “Integral humanism” to draw the attention of world towards human beings as world was getting too much engrossed in the debate between capitalism and communism. The success of Jain community can be traced from the fact that they have the highest literacy rate in India, 94.1. % compared with the national average of 65.38%. They have the highest female literacy rate, 90.6. % compared with the national average of 54.16%. Also as per NFHS-4 conducted in 2018 Jains were declared wealthiest of any community with 70% of their population living in top quintiles of wealth. The sex ratio in the 0-6 age group is the second lowest for Jain (870 females per 1,000 males).

#### Loopholes of Sen’s approach and solutions of Mahavira

To apply the capability approach, capability surveys need to be designed to assess capabilities and potentials, rather than incomes, in order to determine the constraints that restrict capability expansion. The conditions leading to constraint are, by nature, subjective. Therefore, the input must come through a participatory process following a down-top approach, rather than from statistical analysis of ‘experts. Thesis is focused on individualism and localism. It almost entirely revolves around the individual - his abilities and choices, he seems to be less concerned with role of community at large. His theory ultimately appears to come out in favour of capitalism running on principles of justice and good ethics. Though these ideas seem plausible yet he offers no strategy for creation of such good conduct. Sen’s theory assumes presence of an honest and just world which

is ruled by the most ‘capable.’ It makes it an ideal theory without legs to stand on the uneven ground. Mahavira has also identified the pathway to enhance capabilities.

Acharya Hemachandra presented a list of the 35 attributes or general principles of appropriate conduct in his famous book “Yogashastra”. Following these 35 rules of morality, one can attain ‘Marganusari’ Life. These can be understood as 35 ways to be a good human. Mahavira believed that man should be a master of his senses, not a slave to them. Henceself-discipline and self-control are very important, and this is widely acknowledged as a key ingredient of successful life. He advocated that one should live his life in a way that causes the least injury to other living beings. According to him, one can lead such a life by inculcating the following three jewels:

- Right knowledge (Samyaga-Gyan)
- Right belief (Samyaga-Darshan)
- Right conduct (Samyaga-Charitra)

Anuvrat Movement, A social reform campaign established in 1949 by the late Jain mendicant leader, Acharya Sri Tulsi, a widely celebrated and inspirational figure. He preached that positive social change depended first and foremost upon the ethical and spiritual conduct of the individual. Putting this philosophy into practice, Tulsi thus promote ‘Anuvrat’ a series of small vows of ideal conduct that Mahavira prescribed for his followers, something he envisioned would beneficially impact both individual as well as society alike. Mahavira set 12.

Puniya and his wife accepted 12 vows of being ideal Shravak and Shravika. They lived pleasurable life despite depravity of resources. They had a vow to feed a layman each day so to do so one of them fasted each day to feed the third person. This clearly shows resources are not at all scarce, it is us who have made our wants unlimited so to get them fulfilled.

- **Non-violence (Ahimsa):** One must do their best to avoid any intentional hurt to living things.
- **Truthfulness (Satya):** Jains must always be truthful. Jains must always conduct business honestly.
- **Non-stealing (Achaurya):** One must not steal or cheat anyone.
- **Chastity (Bramacharya):** One must try to control lust for sex.
- **Non-possession (Aparigraha):** One must only possess what they need and use surplus possessions to benefit others.
- **Limiting area of activity (Dikvrata):** By this vow one must restrict the extent to which they travel, so as to reduce the area in which they may do harm.
- **Limiting use of consumables (Bhoga-Upbhogavrata):** One should limit their use of consumable items like food and clothing according to what they need.
- **Avoiding pointless sins (Anarthadand Vrata):** Thinking or speaking badly of other people. Being inconsiderate (and not just to people), Being self-indulgent, Reading, watching or listening to immoral material.
- **Samayika Vrata:** Vow of consecration of samayika (periodic concentration) after renouncing all attachments and aversions, and adopting a sense of equanimity in all objects, one should practise, many times, periodic concentration (sāmāyika), the principal

means to realize the true nature of the Self.

- **Desavagasik Vrata:** Vow of austerity of sides. It's a vow of putting geographical restraints on oneself. In this vow, one has to perform 10 samayikas with a restraint on food, water etc. It is a vow of putting restraints on duration of daily activities.
- **Pausadhavavasa Vrata:** Vow of conservation of Pausadha. In Jaina tradition, Pausadha is a vow for a day where lay followers replicate the lifestyle of an ideal Jaina monk or nun. It is a vow of practicing the 5 Anuvratas to the highest potential.
- **Yathasamivibhaga Vrata:** Vow of charity. It is a vow in which one gives selfless offering to the needy and monks and nuns, thereby developing detachment from worldly things.

Since ancient time, a process is going on to regulate the day-to-day practice of behaviour of the mendicant, in which the main points which form the principles for mendicants are.

### Conclusion

Amartya Sen's theory has clearly a humane approach and has won widespread acclaim by the mainstream economists. Despite the challenges, attempts to apply the Capability Approach have mushroomed in recent years. Among other things the approach has been used to investigate poverty, inequality, well-being, social justice, gender, social exclusion, health, disability, child poverty and identity. It has also been related to human needs, human rights and human security. Some studies have tried to capture capabilities, the most well-known measure is the HDI of the UNDP. Human Development Report of 1990 defined human development as "a process of enlarging people's choices" The annual UNDP reports also began a process of questioning the wisdom of 'trickle down' economics. Since capabilities go hand in hand with freedom, the development must necessarily involve expansion of people's freedom which creates an enabling atmosphere for building capabilities.

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