

Neo-Liberal Dilemmas of Development: Covid 19 and Socio-Economic concerns of Migrant Labour

*¹Zeba and ²Vasundra Rajae

¹PhD scholar, Centre for Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University

²PhD scholar, Department of Strategic and Regional Studies, University of Jammu

ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 13 September 2021

Keywords

Migrant labour, democracy, liberal state, neo liberalism, capitalism

*Corresponding Author

Email zebabht@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The philosophical concerns of Neo-liberalism offering an economic framework for the development of world economies has been of pertinent concern in the present political scenario across nation states owing to the rising inequalities and unrest pervading among various vulnerable and marginalised sections of the society. This paper underlines these concerns philosophically and conceptually, in terms of the major thrust of neo liberalism as a political and economic policy guiding nation states of today. It draws on the economic framework envisaged by neo liberal capitalism in terms of the centrality and dominance of international finance capital besides the political belief in the idea of individual autonomy, free trade, rule of law and role of the state reduced to being a facilitator alone. The praxis of this economic and political belief has resulted in a particular role for the state in terms of defining the 'common good' for the citizens. This paper delineates the nature of capitalist development undertaken by states and the socio-economic concerns underlining state policies. Covid 19 has opened the Pandora's Box of multiple unanswered and unaddressed questions relating to various aspects of the neo liberalism. This paper seeks to argue that in the present liberal democracies of today, whether there is a possibility of reconciliation of the aspects of 'neo liberalism' with emphasis on enhancing economic growth and advocating overwhelming role of the individual driven by market logic, and the 'democracy' aspect of creating an egalitarian, sustainable and inclusive public sphere with a welfare role of the state. It specifically tries to do so in the context of Indian state and its efforts in shaping the socio-economic reality with concerns of growing unemployment, migrant labours, daily wagers and the unorganised sector and various non-conventional concerns of security. It tries to underline the challenges and the negotiates and debates as to how do we define the role of the state in protecting the migrant labour and ensure inclusive linear growth for all in the current neo liberal world scenario.

Introduction

Neo liberalism as a economic framework accompanied by the liberal democratic set up of nations supporting neo liberalism as a political framework has been all pervasive in our current scenario across nation states of today. Despite, the various crisis experienced by the ideology of neo liberal capitalism from the time of its emergence, it has continued to survive as a coherent ideology shaping our existence as political communities. This paper seeks to explore this philosophy by delving into its key propositions, while deciphering the contradictions and contestations it has created in our societies. It further seeks to address and illustrate empirically how this neo liberal development model has contributed to accentuating the vulnerabilities of those at the socio-economic margins of our society.

Tracing the fundamental Ideological assumptions of Neo liberal ideology

The emergence of Neo liberalism and the ideological assumptions underlining the same can be traced back to the Liberalism which was a product of enlightenment and the French Revolution. The term 'Neo-liberalism originated in

Walter Lippman Colloquium held in 1938 and the chief exponents and advocates of this ideology Ludwig von Mises, and Friedrich von Hayek was also presented. Neo liberal assumptions of giving the prime consideration to the individual as a category of defining the society with individual being a rational decision maker of his/her destiny with the predominance of reason, driven by the market logic and choice, economic progress and growth, freedom and utilitarianism can be seen as underlining the framework of Neo liberalism and thus serving as a fundamental principals in defining the development goals of liberal democracies.

David Harvey illustrated the theoretical definition of the ideology of neo-liberalism in his 'A Brief History of Neo-liberalism' stating, "Neo-liberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade". (Harvey, 2005)

Neo liberal capitalist framework also upholds the idea of being 'individual centric'. Being an individualistic ideology, it fosters the individual to work and exploit his/her labor to the maximum extent which is representative of his freedom and not

subordination. Therefore, the individualistic ethic of work ensures accountability of one's work via exercising responsibilities and duties and thus adds social legitimacy to the idea of capitalism. Maximization of profit by seeking one's self interest is also perceived as legitimate in a capitalist framework as it would eventually be beneficial for the society as a whole in terms of market exchange.

Neo liberalism has been perceived as an ideology and a political project that seeks institutional transformation, legitimizing competition among individuals while condemning any form of collectivism. Organisation of labour and bargaining are rendered as market distortions that disturb the natural hierarchy of social darwinism. Dardot and Laval also calibrate this ideology as a norm of existence defining generalised competition among individuals. Besides, utilitarianism as advocated by Bentham has also been a feature of modern capitalist or neo liberal economic framework. The utilitarian logic also assumes precedence in context of the individual as the liberal state seeks to maximize the autonomy of the individual over their own life in order to maximise their happiness. Therefore, the market in the neo liberal regime is considered as a domain of maximisation of the individual profits and gains and minimization of the losses.

Upholding the ideal of individual freedom and autonomy of the rational self, neo liberalism advocates the economic freedom of the individual in the processes of the market, as Hayak elucidates, the real freedom means the absence of coercion. He believed that the human relationships are in a 'spontaneous order', the individuals are always aware of their human needs and transaction among individuals is always in a free and open environment and if the government intends to regulate the human activity it would be curtailing of individual freedom from achieving their genuine needs. (O.P.Gaubha, 2009)

Advocating market freedom and capitalism, Freidman in "*Capitalism and Freedom*" underlines the necessity and indispensability of the free market for the fulfillment of individual needs. He asserts that real equality would imply the maximization of the freedom of the individuals which are best served in competitive capitalism of neo liberalism. It projects the idea that the benefits delivered by the market are incapable to be achieved through planning. The popular belief or doxia of neo liberalism has been its appeal to elasticity and flexibility of the market contributing to the common good.

Social Darwinism as asserted by Foucault(2004) and Dardot and Laval(2009) also can be seen to be predominantly represented in the ideology of neo liberalism. Proposing the ideas of competition and struggle, this social theory underlined the pertinence of struggle for existence by individuals which pushes them to compete for limited resources at their disposal. Struggle is perceived as evolutionary in nature that facilitates the development of the society besides that of the individual. Therefore, it is believed that any intervention to disturb the law of competition would foster survival of the unworthy or unfit in society that would hinder the growth of the society. This implies that in consonance with the liberal tradition of giving precedence to the autonomy and liberty of the individual, neo liberalism also favours liberty and freedom of the individual over upholding the ideal of equality and social welfare for the vulnerable and weak.

Neo liberalism is based on the idea of free and fair competition among various individuals inspired by theory of Social Darwinism. Competition as defining human relations is considered as economically viable contributing to the efficiency of the economic system as the best individuals would compete and produce economically fruitful results, while it would benefit the individuals too by enhancing their skills and being the best versions of their economic selves. Therefore, individuals must be competitive to the changing economic realities and undertake the responsibility for his/her existence. Any public intervention in the economic system is thus to be justified only if it caters to the supreme principle of competition and seeks to preserve the latter. Besides, it also results in reduction of all socio-political issues and considerations to the economic realm of progress and competition.

The idea of self-reliance as another significant norm in a neo liberal societal framework also contributes to delegitimizing the collective as all social questions and organised interests represented in the social realm are reduced and treated at the level of the individual.

Joseph Stiglitz presupposes Neo liberalism as a set of ideas based on the fundamentalist notion that markets serve the public interest adequately as they are self-correcting, and allocate resources in an efficient manner.

Owing to the fundamental assumptions of the Neo liberal economic framework, a substantial change has been witnessed in the nature of the Liberal state as well. The political framework under which the neo liberal economics is envisioned i.e. Liberal democracy also manifests certain characteristics that work in cognisance with the economic framework and are driven by the latter. Neo liberalism unlike laissez – faire does not believe in the non-intervention of the state in the market. It perceives the liberal state as an important stakeholder in the maintenance of the market order. The latter is prohibited to intervene in the exchange and production process, however regulates any mechanism or processes that inhibit competition in the market. As asserted by Prabhat Patnaik, the nature of the state has been transformed from being an institution standing above society and intervening in the economic realm for the socio-economic interests of the society as a whole to being a neo liberal state promoting and advocating the ambitions and objectives of the finance capital. This change has been demonstrated in the role of the state from being a producer, and investor to facilitating privatisation and disinvestment.

The further implies that the neo liberal state must institutionalise and establish procedural laws and mechanisms that facilitate economic activity via free market. Neo liberals associate equality before law as of significant importance for the protection of liberty and serves or atleast projects itself as a neutral force in society. Therefore, the state has a regulatory function of intervening in the economic sphere so that free competition thrives unhindered.

Institutionalisation is further undertaken by the state through the regime of property and contracts for market prices. Therefore, envisaging the role of the state in a neo liberal framework, it can be said that "it is a state that establishes and preserves, through its constant action (...), a competitive

market order which is an artificial human creation and not a product of nature"¹.

Neo liberalism also limits democracy by proposing the rule of enlightened elites and constitutional rules where masses could have the authority of choosing their rulers however should not intervene in the decisions of the state. For good decisions to follow, it is important that they be left out of democratic control to be taken by the elite. This restrains the idea of popular sovereignty and active political participation.

The fundamental premises of neo liberalism and its relation to the state functioning has had a major impression on how the role of state is perceived in the contemporary era and the nature of public services delivered by the state in various socio economic and political realms of our society and the manner in which social relations are perceived today.

Unravelling the Dilemmas of Neo liberal project of Development

Neo liberal model of development which seeks to transform human existence through redefining the human nature as self-seeking individuals, and its relation to society in individualistic terms, driven by profit and consumerist tendencies, while providing a political framework that supports the market logic and constructs consent in a form that supports the freedom of the market has not been without contestation and contradictions. This section seeks to put forth the various contestations and crisis that have emerged owing to the neo liberal capitalist socio economic framework that has had implications for us as social beings, and economic individuals.

As asserted by Bourdieu, Neo liberalism as an economic framework caters to the interests of transnational corporations, and capital forces giving the illusion of choice and liberty of the individual. Neoliberal form of development has led to elimination of the idea of social community by destroying the institutions of solidarity manifested in the mass unemployment, exploitation of labour. While upholding the category of individual and his freedom and choice, neo liberalism seeks to delegitimize any collective action which shall prove to be detrimental to its fundamental presupposition of competition and individual freedom.

The neo liberal philosophy of development is an expression of the neo conservative restoration forces in the world, the forces of mega capital that promote ultra-right utopia, the utopia as exploitation sans ravages².

This implies that the neo liberal discourse of development results in a disjunction between the economic logic of development which seeks to promote economic growth and efficiency via competition and the social logic of development which seeks inclusivity and a sense of justice in the public domain. It does so by instrumentalizing the latter while subverting the same and upholding and advocating privatisation, de regulation and liberalization which seek to dismantle the collective institutions of solidarity manifested in the legal aspects of the welfare state. This explicates that once the economic overpowers the social logic and the welfare state,

the intermediary seen in the form of the institutions representing the collective shall be disintegrated, which shall allow the predominance of the market forces in the form of profit maximisation and economic efficiency to prevail.

In upholding the principle of competition and the social darwinism of the right of the stronger in the society, the philosophy of neo liberalism produces social violence through structural inequalities, besides adding cynicism and uncertainty to the social living. The implications of the nature of neo liberal development are demonstrated in the form of more adhocism and contractual labour, commodification of labour, job dismissals, exploitation of labour, inequality of income and wealth, privatisation of the public services besides destroying the other collective institutions of welfare state.

It further contributes to the downgrading of the quality of life for the majority population, disregard for the various forms of participatory democracy, marginalisation of various collective formations in the form of trade unions and groups, while subordinating the role of the nation states succumbing to the requirements of the global transnational actors in the name of protecting the freedom of contract and economic progress.

As Pierre Bourdieu while referring to the neo liberal ideology affirms that neo liberalism in its calibration of the human society, attempts to compartmentalise the various realms of human society while separating the social and the economic and envisioning the individual and human nature to being a homo economicus, i.e. one-dimensional man. This implies that the social realm of the individual is subdued to the forces of free market and its uncontrolled hegemony.

It is further reiterated by John Gray reflecting on the dilemmas of the neo liberal developmental framework, that "a free market is not a natural state of things, it is not an iron law of the historical development but a political project so that, in this sense, there is no harmony but a contradiction between social democracy and global free markets in the contemporary world, namely, that democracy and market are competitors rather than partners"³.

The implications of neo liberal nature of development are also well manifested in terms of dismantling the social relations and commodification of the same through mass exploitation, alienation, precarity and fragmentation of the social realm and society at large. Owing to the connection of the neo liberal ideology with the mega capital interests in terms of seeking transnational corporate interests, with the ostensible appeal to progress and economic growth, promotes market fetishization and is fraught with power relations. It rests on the ideology of social neo darwinism which upholds the idea of competence in human society as of indispensable significance which celebrates the attributes of competence, victory of the capable in the society while categorising the vulnerable as lacking enough capability and merit and therefore less worthy of consideration and economic benefits. This promotes a model of development set on the technocratic vision of the society, dominated by notions of the hierarchies, and economic rationalisations that favours the individuals who can survive and thrive in the free market while excluding or overlooking the vulnerable groups and their socio-economic concerns.

As Neo liberal mode of development upholds the idea of self-reliance, therefore as a consequence, redistribution and

¹ According to Hayek, the spontaneous order of the market is independent of human design but not of human action. as cited in *Morals and Politics in the ideology of neo liberalism*, Bruno Amable, Socio economic Review, 2011, 9, pp. 3-30

² P. Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance*, 1998, p. 107

³ John Gray, *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism*, Masmedija, Zagreb, 2002, p. 225

social protection are perceived as illegitimate leaving the vulnerable groups and the economic individuals exposed to the risk of the market and economic uncertainties without the expectation of any social guarantees from the state in terms of collective rights.

Stiglitz further while underlining the moral dimension to the neo liberal framework, states that neo liberalism is deprived of morality as it socializes the loss incurred while privatising the profits. This contributes to a society overwhelmed with attributes of materialism and market fundamentalism, thus erasing any sense of solidarity in the form of community.

Prof. Thakur ⁴ in his work, "Is Capitalism facing a Philosophical crisis" also reiterates the philosophical dimension of neo liberal capitalism and the crisis unfolding the same. He raises the argument that capitalism as a coherent ideology of the past with its commitment to the idea of common good and later the idea of enhancing individual freedom lacks in the neo liberal capitalist framework of the current times specifically manifested in the 2008 financial crisis, thus leaving capitalism with no philosophical justification to draw social legitimacy in the present times. He states that the present stage of capitalist development is devoid of any sense of people's well being and human value with a prime motive and aspiration for absolute individual freedom. Illustrating the current societal crisis of capitalism, he underlines, "This is a time when there is no parity, ...as the capitalist class has tremendous control on financial resources and almost complete control on the political power, whereas workers have an unprecedented lack of bargaining capacity. There is a fragmentation of oppositional politics at a time when the ruling class is most organised politically, institutionally, and discursively, which does not give much hope for the return of welfare economy(Venn, 2018)"⁵

The crisis of neo liberal development can further be seen in the developing world specifically talking about the Indian context with the popularisation of the security paradigm and increasing funds for armament purchase while spiralling down the funding for social welfare schemes evident in the education and health sector. This would result in growth of authoritarian tendencies in nations worldwide, growth of populism and pervading alienation in the society.

Besides, neo liberalism also contributes to a political crisis in the nation state where the domain of the state is shrunk where individuals exercise their choices via spending. The nature of consumer democracy results in different voting capacities of the citizens which leads to disempowerment and further disenfranchisement of the poor and vulnerable sections of the society. These results in the emergence of a vacuum in the political domain which propagates fascist tendencies in the state and a conspicuous visibility of a police state to seek legitimacy in the social sphere that stands lost in the economic sphere owing to rising inequalities and wealth accumulation and lack of delivery of public services.

Therefore, owing to these contradictions and loopholes in the fundamental propositions of neo liberalism, the idea of a welfare state and social protection measures for the vulnerable sections are perceived to be economically unviable, as the responsibility for one's social standing is associated to the individual's own self effort and not spoken in the language of

demanding rights and redistribution from the state affirmative social policies.

Correlating the Project of Neo liberalism with the Socio economic crisis of Migrant Labour

As underlined in the previous sections, regarding the tension and contradiction created by the neo liberal development model between the Economic and the Social realms of our society, this section seeks to correlate the neo liberal assumptions and the contradictions emerging out of the same for the socio economic vulnerable sections of our society specifically the migrant crisis in the Indian context that took a tragic turn during the Covid pandemic. The outbreak of the pandemic and the emergence of the socio economic crisis confronted by the migrant labour in India opened the pandoras box of questions relating to not just the containment of the health crisis, but also the socio economic and political framework of neo liberalism that we inhabit in the current scenario. It raises questions as to whether the neo liberal framework of development we currently espouse driven by tendencies of self interest, profit maximisation, individualism serves the idea of social justice in terms of representing the concerns of the vulnerable and marginalised sections of our society.

The mass exodus of the migrant labour with the imposition of a lockdown in March 2020 not just made the socio economic ordeals and vulnerabilities of this section explicit in terms of job losses, food and home insecurity etc to the larger society, a group which remained invisible in the public domain since long, but also explicated the failure of the state to ensure a sense of dignity to these groups in its efforts of rehabilitation and addressing their socio economic concerns. March 2020 presented a sombre reality of the informal sector workers in India with around 40 million migrant workers impacted due to the pandemic and state apathy and lack of planning. It is roughly estimated that around 90% of the workforce in India is engaged in the informal economy with a substantial portion coming from Bihar and UP. Illustrating the inadequacy and lack of capacity of the state to address their concerns, a migrant worker stated, "Maybe when [they] decided to do this, nobody told [them] about us. Maybe [they] didn't know about us."

The inadequacy of the state in anticipating the needs of migrant labour and the distress experienced by the group suddenly visibilized a larger workforce crucial to the unorganised sector of the Indian economy. The failure of the state in addressing and providing the necessary relief and rehabilitation to these groups can be recorded in the lack of substantive data regarding internal migration in the country. Besides, a recent survey of government labour force illustrates that around 71% of the workers in non agricultural industries with a regular salary have no written job contract. Nearly, half of these workers are therefore not eligible for benefits accrued via social security schemes. Besides, the daily wage workers are put to more precarious situation as they have no or only limited access to social security measures. The dismal state of affairs of this marginalised section and the state intervention for ameliorating their conditions can also be explicated through data which demonstrates that Indian government spending on Public social protection excluding health is just 1.3% of the GDP.

⁴ Is Capitalism facing a Philosophical Crisis?, Manindra Nath Thakur, *Social Change*, 2020, 50(2), pp. 215-235.

⁵ Ibid.

The nature of neo liberal development is further reiterated in the findings of the National Health Profile 2018, the data for 2015 shows that the average public expenditure on health among lower middle income countries was 2.5 per cent of GDP, while in India it was 1 per cent" (Indranil Mukhopadhyay and Dipa Sinha, 2019; p.156). Besides, as further explicated by Mukhopadhyay and Sinha, "Enhanced public spending, as recommended in various policy documents including the High Level Expert Group (HLEG) report, plan documents, and the latest National Health Policy 2017, requires a coordinated effort from both Centre and the states, particularly in areas of primary care and preventive health services. Under current regime, marred by cutbacks in spending on health, such possibilities hardly exist" (ibid; p.166).

This is reflective of the neo liberal concerns of the state while overlooking and providing enough incentive for overhauling the public infrastructure which came under major stress during the peak of the Pandemic. As corroborated by Jean Dreze, Indian economy does not provide for any mechanism in anticipation of a shock which is well manifested in the decision of the state prior to imposition of a lockdown in March, where there was no mechanism of ensuring a comprehensive and holistic social protection package for 90% of the workforce in the informal sector to prepare them to absorb the shock caused by the pandemic.

Besides, migrant labour despite being a significant workforce in the economic framework of society, its inadequate space in the formal aspects of democracy has also resulted in the denial of their citizenship rights as the inability of the labour to cast their votes due to continuous economic mobility for work that they undertake. The denial of their formal right to vote happens as a voter may only be enrolled to vote in the constituency in which they are 'ordinarily resident'; and second, they can only access their franchise through in-person voting at their registered constituency. Circular migrant workers owing to the nature of their work, continuously migrate from their home to host cities for work, therefore their inability to access their right to vote due to economic exigencies has resulted in their least representation in the electoral democracy of the state. The nature of this disenfranchisement comes from the lack of freedom to access their right of vote.

The challenge for the state in addressing the vows of the migrant labour also lies in widening the scope of various social protection schemes and integrating them holistically so as to access social security benefits from across the country particularly significant for the migrant workers who are not situated in static contexts. The development of a comprehensive system of adequate income and social support flexible to the requirements of this group undertaken by the state could adequately address their concerns. Increasing the accessibility to direct cash transfers via banks to these vulnerable sections could also facilitate their amelioration. Given the dearth of investment and public spending on health care and social protection, the need of the hour is to ensure that state undertakes responsibility of ensuring trust, responsiveness and efficiency in public institutions for creating a just society with adequate social protection supporting the vulnerable.

Despite the various social security packages and doles given by the government, the adequacy of the same was well

illustrated in the article of Yamini Aiyar, that underlines, "data collected from 11,000 distressed workers across the country by the Stranded Workers Action Network (SWAN), a group of volunteers working to provide relief, reports that by the third week of the lockdown, 50% of (migrant) workers had less than one day's worth of rations. More worrying, 96% had not received rations from the government while 70% had not received any cooked food." So, it can't be ruled out that the possibility of hunger in the relief camps and the "fear of dying alone" might again push the migrants to make attempts to return home in the course of the lockdown.

The forced migration of the labour imposed by the pandemic and the state political decisions also reflected the lack of public trust of these groups in the state institutions and its mechanisms of delivering the necessary social security for the migrant labour. As Gudavarthy also asserts, that the neo liberal nature of development with dismal public investments in social security priorities also segregated the more vulnerable and insecure working class who have been alienated of the rule of law as well with inadequate or no access to the regulatory institutions.

It also points to the proposition that had the political and economic framework inspired trust in the institutions created by the state, driven by a sense of cooperation, the crisis of migrant labour could have been adequately taken care of and managed more efficiently. As a consequence of the neo liberal economic failure, to deliver public goods to the vulnerable and the common sense created in the inefficiency of the government and its minimal intervention in the economic sphere, the concerns of social justice for the vulnerable remained unaddressed and further accentuated with the security apparatus of the state. It also raised questions if the government intervention had been perceived as more of a positive intervention for delivery of social security for its vulnerable sections in the language of government obligation to secure the rights of a dignified living, restoring of livelihood, creating a sense of security for the marginalized, rather than perceiving rights in the market apparatus of performances and outcomes alone, the concerns of the migrant labour could have been better secured in the uncertainty of the market and the exigencies created by the Pandemic.

Keeping this in purview, it can be said that the nature of state functioning must be accompanied with a politics of responsibility, redefinition of the relationship between the individual self and its societal relationships, ensured through securing the right to a decent living for the vulnerable, besides enlarging the scope of the public distribution system. Besides, the product of neo liberalism i.e. uneven development and profit maximisation resulting in further migration also needs to be taken into consideration. The dismal state of economic development and poor nature of socio economic and physical infrastructure in the northern states, apart from the distress owing to lack of agricultural development and incentives also has resulted in the migration of these groups to the host cities. Therefore, the onus of the state lies in addressing these sectors in order to facilitate the sustainable growth model which is people centric and not growth centric alone where *Sabka Vikas* is ensured along with *Sabka Saath* as the migrants through an instrumental workforce for growth of urban

economics found themselves alien in the same land during the pandemic.

As Ajay Gudavarthy asserts, the need of the hour is to undertake a fundamental redefinition of the relationship between the state and the individual within the neo liberal framework that we are currently situated in. This transformation needs to be ensured in various realms of our political community- social, political, economic etc. in order to drive growth and development which is inclusive, cooperative and not competitive alone, sustainable and secures harmony and not hostility between various sections of the society.

Conclusion

Therefore, this paper through its analysis of the philosophical and theoretical assumptions of neo liberal form of development and the dilemmas associated with the same, sought to reflect on the socio economic challenges of the vulnerable sections of our society specifically the migrant labours. It underlined that owing to the various contradictions within the neo liberal framework that is currently pervading our society and state functioning, the possibility and scope for ensuring justice for the poor and marginalised seems to draw a gloomy picture. It leaves the readers with various unanswered questions to explore, such as whether the neo liberal capitalist framework has more to offer in terms of taking the entire society and especially its vulnerable sections along in its development story and resolving the contradiction between the rational self and the relational self. As Gudavarthy remarks, "One hopes that a rethinking on the neo – liberal ideology that debunks the very idea of collective and recognises individual as the only reality- which ought to be shunned post- 2008 global economic crisis itself- will find adequate epistemological challenge, compelling a shift in development policy towards a people- centric shared and collective global progress to avert such disasters."⁶

It begs the question that whether in the present economic and political system driven by competitiveness, individualism and profit driven interest, there seems to be a possibility of ensuring holistic development of the society as a collective, besides ensuring sustainable growth with harmonious relationship between various sections of the political community or do we require a new socio economic and political vision and a framework which can add coherence to our political existence and ensure inclusivity.

⁶ A *Pandemic as a Political Reality Check*, Vijay Gudavarthy, Ajay Gudavarthy, April, 2020.