

Philanthropy and Human Development

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ABSTRACT: This article investigates the connection between philanthropy and human development. Etymologically ‘philanthropy’ denotes ‘love for humanity’. There is a diversion among the theorists of philanthropy that whether just monetary aid or ethical decision-making in socio-political arenas is the real philanthropy. William H. McGuffey makes a distinction between true and false philanthropy. McGuffey’s distinction explicates that just charity donations is false philanthropy whereas changing social conditions of people through laws is true philanthropy. Drawing on McGuffey’s distinction, I hold that ‘true philanthropy’ refers to ethical decision-making in politics, economics and law for the common good. However, ‘false philanthropy’ means just monetary aid to the helpless. Although monetary assistance is central in philanthropy, it is sometimes used as means of the interests of the philanthropists. Yet I argue that philanthropy seeks ethical decision-making in political, economic and legal state of affairs to create a social environment in which people can pursue their interests and meet their choices themselves. Human development theorists explore the ways for human capital by enhancing human capacities, potentialities and capabilities. For explaining the central ideas of human development theory, I analyse briefly the works of Mahbub ul Haq, Amartya K. Sen and Martha C. Nussbaum. Accordingly, in this article, I defend two claims: first, the standpoint of true philanthropy is consistent with the literal sense of philanthropy, that is, ‘love for humanity’. Second, the standpoint of true philanthropy is consistent with human development.

Keywords: philanthropy, ethics, politics, economics, law, human development, the common good.

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Certainly, the summum bonum of philanthropy is human development. 'Philanthropy' means 'love for humanity'. For making real sense of philanthropy and its significance for human development, I make use of two classic works of cosmopolitan literature: Aeschylus's play, *Prometheus Bound* and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's novel, *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*. In his magnum opus play, *Prometheus Bound*, Aeschylus, an eminent Greek playwright, anticipated the notion of philanthropy. Prometheus, the protagonist of the play, was a sanguine philanthropist. In the play, Prometheus visited Zeus, the king of Greek gods who lived on the Mount Olympus, and requested him to help his fellow-humans, who needed dire assistance for their existence and subsistence. Zeus turned down Prometheus's request heartlessly. Feeling dejected and humiliated, Prometheus defied the decree of Zeus and distributed fire to his fellow human creature (Aeschylus 316). Significantly, fire epitomises knowledge which makes human beings creative to solve the riddles of life. In addition, fire also denotes a symbol of rebellion. For his philanthropic conduct, Prometheus was sternly punished. He was chained with a rock and his liver was eaten by a vulture time and again (Aeschylus 316). Like Prometheus, Socrates, a Greek philosopher, was charged with death sentence for his religious doctrines and corrupting the youth of Athens (Laertius 171). Socrates was not only the teacher of Plato but also of the people of Athens. He taught logical reasoning to the people of Athens for seeking objectivity, truth and justice. He invented a method of dialogue, which is known as the Socratic method. The state of Athens took the life of the philosopher with a cup of hemlock, who believed in the philosophy of love for humanity. Like Prometheus, Socrates becomes a metaphor for knowledge and rebelliousness.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), a German polymath, posits the idea of philanthropy in his seminal novel, *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* (1821)¹. In one of his travels, Wilhelm Meister, the protagonist of the novel, was asked a philosophical question by three sages: "One thing there is, however, which no child brings into the world with him; and yet it is on this one thing that all depends for making [hu]man in every point a [hu]man. If you can discover it yourself, speak it out" (Goethe 70). Wilhelm ratiocinated a while and moved his head in negation. The three sages altogether articulated – Reverence! Wilhelm listened to them patiently. They exclaimed again: "All want it, perhaps you yourself" (Goethe 70). They then explained a tripartite standpoint of reverence: first,

¹ Goethe published his novel entitled *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* in 1821. Thomas Carlyle translated the novel entitled *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* from German to English in 1907.

reverence for the one who is above us. They mean reverence for God who abides above in heaven. Second, reverence for what is beneath us. They mean reverence for earth which provides abode and nourishment to all living creatures. Third, reverence for those who are equal to us (Goethe 70-71). The third standpoint of reverence refers to fellow human beings. This means equal respect to human beings without any discrimination of racial, cultural or religious disparities. Goethe's third strand of reverence explicates the true philanthropy.

Albert Schweitzer², an Alsatian-German philosopher and physician; Malik Meraj Khalid³, a Pakistani politician and educationist; Nelson Mandela⁴, a South African anti-apartheid activist, politician and statesman; Abdus Sattar Edhi⁵, a Pakistani social activist; Ruth Pfau⁶, a German-Pakistani physician are a few metaphors of philanthropy in the twentieth century. In contrast, 'misanthropy' means 'hate for humanity'. Adolf Hitler, a German dictator, who assassinated millions of human beings, is a metaphor for misanthropy in the twentieth century. In *The Ethics of Giving* (2018), Paul

² Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) earned his PhD in Philosophy and MD from the Strasbourg University, France. He founded a hospital at Lambarene, Gabon, Africa, for leprosy patients. Dr Schweitzer was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1953 for his great services for humanity. His main works include *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (1906), *Civilization and Ethics* (1923), *The Philosophy of Civilization* (1923), *Out of My Life and Thought: An Autobiography* (1931), *Reverence for Life* (1933), *Indian Thought and Its Development* (1936), and *Peace or Atomic War* (1958).

³ Malik Meraj Khalid (1916-2003) was a lawyer, politician, educationist and philanthropist. After obtaining his BA Honours with Philosophy and History from Islamic College, Lahore, and LLB from the University of the Punjab, Malik Meraj Khalid started his career as a lawyer. As a philanthropist, he founded a social welfare organisation entitled, 'Anjuman Akhwan Islam' in 1939 at Barki, district Lahore, to bring about social and educational reforms. The organization contributed its historic role for the settlement and rehabilitation of Muslim migrants from India to Pakistan in 1947. As an educationist, he founded Akhwan High School in 1954 and then Akhwan Science College in 1994 at Barki. In addition, he also served as the Rector of the International Islamic University, Islamabad. As a politician, Malik Meraj Khalid served as federal minister of law, speaker of the national assembly, chief minister of Punjab, and caretaker prime minister of Pakistan.

⁴ Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) spent 27 years in prison as a political prisoner in Apartheid regime, and then he became the president of South Africa. As a president, Mandela ended Apartheid with non-racial democracy in South Africa in 1994. He was awarded a Nobel Peace Award in 1993 for his humanitarian politics. His seminal work is *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (1995).

⁵ Abdus Sattar Edhi (1928-2016) established 'The Edhi Foundation', which has been providing humanitarian services within Pakistan and abroad for more than five decades. Believing in humanity, Edhi throughout his life, worked for the welfare of people without any discrimination of race, culture or religion. For his great services for humanity, Edhi was conferred with numerous national and international awards, to mention a few include Balzan Prize for Humanity, Peace and Fraternity, and Lenin Peace Award.

⁶ Ruth Pfau (1929-2017) established hundreds of Clinics to fight against Leprosy in Pakistan which treated thousands of patients. In recognition of her great services for humanity, Dr Pfau was awarded with several awards, including Sitara-i-Quaid-i-Azam (1969), Hilal-i-Imtiaz (1979), Hilal-i-Pakistan (1989), and Nishan-i-Quaid-i-Azam (2010).

Woodruff points out a binary notion of philanthropy: “Philanthropy can be a matter of life and death, for both people and institutions. Some human lives depend on philanthropy, and so does the quality of life for many others” (Woodruff 1). This binary notion of philanthropy refers to the role of individuals and of institutions on the one hand, and the sustenance and the quality of human life on the other. There are two questions: first, what acts of individuals and institutions are philanthropic? Second, do philanthropists consider either the sustenance or the quality of human life in their philanthropic conducts. The first question is concerned with the methodology of philanthropy while the second question is related with goals of philanthropy. Methodologically, the question is whether monetary aid is sufficient for philanthropy. From the point of view of its goal, the question is whether sustenance is sufficient for philanthropy. I argue that philanthropy, in a broader sense, looks forward to show that human beings are self-sufficient creatures. Philanthropy serves to motivate people for ethical decision-making for the common good. Human development theorists look at the development of cognitive abilities, capacities and potentialities, to create a good human capital for the good life. Thus, the characters of Socrates, Prometheus and Meister symbolise the real sense of philanthropy. However, many philanthropists confine philanthropy with monetary aids only. It would be pertinent to make distinctions between two standpoints of philanthropy.

In an essay entitled ‘*True and False Philanthropy*’ (1844), William H. McGuffey makes a distinction between two standpoints of philanthropy. McGuffey presents a dialogue between two persons, Mr Fantom and Mr Goodman. Although they converge on the idea of philanthropy, yet they diverge on its methods. The philosophy of philanthropy in Mr Goodman’s mind is not more than just charity donations in monetary terms. According to Mr Goodman, donating money to the poor is a great service of humanity. In contrast, the philosophy of philanthropy in Mr Fantom’s mind is recreating social conditions through laws.

According to Fantom, it is not the donation of money, but the reconstruction of social conditions matters in the service of humanity. Mr Fantom assumes that money is the worst creation of the artificial society. Money, according to Fantom, is a waste and an evil. There are many misuses of money, such as exploitation, monopoly and terrorism. The sufferings of the world cannot be alleviated with just money. Mr Fantom holds that his standpoint of philanthropy can not only end the wars but also liberate the unlawful prisoners from the world (McGuffey 59-61). So, Mr

Fantom's philosophy of philanthropy improves the socio-political conditions of human life for the betterment of humanity.

Drawing on McGuffey's distinction of two standpoints of philanthropy, I hold that true 'true philanthropy', refers to ethical decision-making in a wide array of domains, including politics, economics and law, to devise policies and laws that make people self-sufficient, creative and productive. This account of philanthropy is consistent with the traditional account of 'philanthropy' which means 'love for humanity'. However, 'false philanthropy' is largely taken for donations, gifts or aids. This standpoint of philanthropy is used to control people for the vested interests of philanthropists. In *Just Giving: Why Philanthropy is Failing Democracy and How it can Do Better* (2018), Rob Reich states that "Philanthropy can be the pursuit of self-interest (seeking social status or civic honor, for instance), consumption, or an exercise of power, sometimes an objectionable exercise of power; when undertaken by the wealthy, it can be the expression of plutocratic voice in a democratic society" (Reich 18). Reich's thesis of plutocracy in philanthropy is right which stands contrary to true philanthropy. Corporate sector, sometimes, controls the people in the name of social responsibility. False philanthropy is insufficient for human development because it has a limited scope.

Two Standpoints of Philanthropy

In a similar vein to Fantom's philosophy, Ralph Waldo Emerson, a 19th century American scholar, argues for reforming a society. In an essay, *Man the Reformer* (1841), Emerson writes that "What is a man born for but to be a Reformer, a Re-maker of what man has made; a renouncer of lies; a restorer of truth and good" (Emerson 83). Reforms need shared commitments which should promote the account of true philanthropy. It is correctly stated that "Social challenges are to be resolved by philanthropy through shared endeavours. It is a method which frames individual and social lives at large scale" (Payton & Moody 12). The role of individuals and institutions can contribute in making a better world. In addition, Payton and Moody write that "Philanthropy is a way that we can work with others toward something better, toward a shared understanding of the public good" (Payton & Moody 98). True philanthropy vows to reform the social system in all strata of life in which people promote the good and eradicate evil from the world. This can only be possible with a collective endeavour. Payton and Moody (2008) wrote that "We turn to philanthropy to alleviate suffering and to improve the quality of life in a community and

also to advocate for policy goals, to experiment with new approaches to social reform” (Payton & Moody 100). Consequently, McGuffey, Emerson, Payton and Moody support the account of philanthropy which McGuffey calls true philanthropy.

Philanthropy and Human Development

The expression, “development” is one of the most contested notions in social sciences. In general, “development describes a process through which the potentialities of an object or organism are released, until it reaches its natural, complete, full-fledged form” (Esteva 3). Human development theorists primarily focus on the development of human potentialities. They explore how human flourishing or human functioning could be possible. In order to create a better human capital, human development theorists promote human potentialities, capacities or capabilities with their promising planning, policies and strategies. The question is which account of philanthropy supports human development. I hold that true philanthropy is consistent with human development because it has a broad scope. It is pertinent to explicate the idea of human development before developing a nexus between true philanthropy and human development.

Although the genesis of the idea of human development goes back to the Greek philosophers, particularly Aristotle, which has been advanced by some modern philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Karl Marx (1818-83), yet Mahbub ul Haq⁷, a Pakistani economist, developed the idea of human development formally in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Certainly, Mahbub ul Haq’s work, *Reflections on Human Development* (1995) is a foundational resource for human development studies in the twenty-first century. Mahbub ul Haq states that “The imperatives of human survival are changing fast. And there is a great opportunity to construct a new edifice of human civilization in the 21st century – based on equality of opportunity and on the centrality of human

⁷ Mahbub ul Haq (1934-98), was an economist, politician and human development theorist, graduated from the University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan; University of Cambridge, UK; and Yale University, USA. After getting a PhD from Yale, Dr Haq did his postdoctoral work at Harvard University, USA. Dr Haq served as Director of the Policy Planning Department, World Bank from 1970 to 1982, as Planning and Finance Minister in Pakistan from 1982 to 1988 and Special Advisor to United Nations Development Programme Administration from 1989 to 1996. In 1990, he created a Human Development Index which the United Nations Development Programme used for examining people’s standard of living in the world. Dr Haq’s principal works include *The Strategy of Economic Planning* (1963), *The Poverty Curtain: Choices for the Third World* (1976), *The Myth of the Friendly Markets* (1992), *The Vision and the Reality* (1995) and *Reflections on Human Development* (1995).

beings” (Haq 204). The staple thesis of human development, as propounded by Mahbub ul Haq, is the ‘centrality of human beings’ in all development planning and decision-making. Later, at the threshold of the twenty-first century, a close friend of Mahbub ul Haq from the University of Cambridge, England, Amartya K. Sen, a Harvard-based Indian economist and political theorist, and Martha C. Nussbaum, an American philosopher, made tremendous contributions to human development studies.

In human history, the focus of development has been on tribes, nations or empires. A common factor in the development of tribes, nations or empires is that people’s choices do not matter. In nation states, people have no value. In general, people do not have choices while they are puppets in the hands of powerful forces or historical determination. However, development from the point of view of humans is a paradigm shift in development studies. In his *Reflections on Human Development* (1995), Mahbub ul Haq writes “We are at an exciting juncture in our human journey. People now stand at the centre of development. They are taking command of their own destiny in one country after another. Many nations are beginning to recognize that their real security lies in investing in their people rather than in arms” (Haq 204). Mahbub ul Haq holds that the philosophy of development depends upon people’s choices, access to knowledge, better health, peaceful environment, freedom and a sense of participation in community activities. Mahbub ul Haq argues that “The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people’s choices...The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives” (Haq 14). Mahbub ul Haq’s idea of human development is consistent with true philanthropy. Mahbub ul Haq devises five principles of human development in his *Reflections on Human Development* (1995):

“First, people are moved to centre stage. Development is analysed and understood in terms of people. Each activity is analysed to see how much people participate in it or benefit from it. The touchstone of the success of development policies becomes the betterment of people’s lives, not just the expansion of production processes.

Second, human development is assumed to have two sides. One is the formation of human capabilities—such as improved health, knowledge and skills. The other is the use people make of their acquired capabilities—for

employment, productive activities, political affairs or leisure.

Third, a careful distinction is maintained between ends and means. People are regarded as the end. But means are not forgotten...the character and distribution of economic growth are measured against the yardstick of enriching the lives of people. Production processes are not treated in an abstract vacuum. They acquire a human context.

Fourth, the human development paradigm embraces all of society—not just the economy. The political, cultural and social factors are given as much attention as the economic factors.

Fifth, it is recognized that people are both the means and the ends of development. But people are not regarded as mere instruments for producing commodities—through an augmentation of “human capital”. It is always remembered that human beings are the ultimate end of development—not convenient fodder for the materialistic machine”. (Haq 14)

Indeed, the central thesis of Mahbub ul Haq’s human development theory is the premise that human beings are the ultimate end of development. Any development theory which does not consider the centrality of human beings is meaningless.

In contemporary Human Development Studies, Amartya Sen is the doyen, who developed the idea of human development as a capability approach. Sen’s human development theory is based on the idea of human freedom. In his work, *Development as Freedom* (2000), Sen argues that individual freedom and responsibility are not separated concepts. One is only responsible for something when one is free and has capability to do it. Furthermore, to have freedom and capability to do something, one is demanded a duty to decide what to do. Thus, freedom is both a necessary and sufficient condition for responsibility (Sen 293). In short, the idea of freedom is the crux of Sen’s capability theory. He asserts that the reasons for enhancing the capabilities of people are that they can live their lives as they value it (Sen 18). How are these capabilities to be enhanced? Sen argues “capabilities can be enhanced by public policy, but also, on the

other side, the direction of public policy can be influenced by the effective use of participatory capabilities by the public” (Sen 18). Policymakers make better policies with the participation of the public for whom the policies are to be made.

While almost a decade later, Sen illustrates his capability theory in *The Idea of Justice* (2009). Sen reiterates his argument that freedom provides the choice of decision with responsibility. However, it only applies to the chosen acts. In short, if a capability means the power to do something, there is responsibility. Capability and responsibility demand duties in a deontological sense (Sen *Justice*, 19). Indeed, Sen’s argument does not consider the particular individuals or groups for enhancing the capabilities but the whole human society. However, he caveats that it is not easy to develop a framework to settle the disputes between aggregative and distributive capabilities of people (Sen *Justice*, 232-3). One of the salient features of Sen’s account of capability approach is that it works where there is choice. If human beings do not have choice, the meaning of freedom becomes meaningless.

Yet Sen does not develop any list of human capabilities. In Sen’s tradition of capability approach, Nussbaum developed a list of human capabilities. In her recent book, *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal* (2019), Nussbaum enumerates and explains a list of ten human capabilities: 1. Maximum life expectancy, 2. Bodily health, 3. Bodily integrity, 4. Senses, imagination, and thought, 5. Emotions, 6. Practical reason, 7. Affiliation with others, 8. Relationships with other species, 9. Play and recreational activities, and 10. Control over one’s environment: political and material (Nussbaum 241-3). Nussbaum covers a wide spectrum of human choices of different nature which explain human with relations to other humans, human with relations to non-humans, human with relation to Nature or God. These characteristics have striking similarities with Goethe’s tripartite conception of reverence.

By analysing different human development theories, ranging from Mahbub ul Haq, Sen and Nussbaum, it is clear that human development is cardinal for better human prospects. Philanthropy has promising scope for human development. Consequently, the central argument holds that philanthropy takes ethical policies, planning and laws by considering the centrality of human beings to construct a better socio-political environment in which people can pursue their interests and meet their choices.

This article developed a nexus between philanthropy and human development. The central argument asserts that a particular standpoint of philanthropy, which is akin to its literal meaning, love for humanity, supports human development. This particular account of philanthropy is true philanthropy. In contrast, there is a limited account of philanthropy, which holds that only financial capital matters in philanthropy. This account is ubiquitous in contemporary epoch, which is limited in scope. McGuffey calls this standpoint, false philanthropy. I argued that the standpoint of false philanthropy is insufficient for human development. Instead, true philanthropy provides an overarching standpoint of philanthropy which supports an ethical attitude in political, economic and legal state of affairs for the service of humanity. The works of human development theorists, such as Mahbub ul Haq, Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, not only show the centrality of human beings in political and economic planning but also emphasise on the enhancement of human capabilities. Hence, philanthropy supports human development.

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