

## **Humanising development: Bringing home homeless humans and dogs to the development discourse in Sri Lanka**

K.K. Kumara

*Department of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

The discourse of development has been humanised in its meaning by research in humanities and the social sciences, with the addition of equity and welfare and human well-being to its original exclusive focus on material wealth and income. Amartya Sen introduced the 'Capability Approach' to the UNDP's Development Index, adding health and education as indicators to income, leading to the Human Development Approach. The Capability Approach focuses on quality of life of, and opportunities for people to live as equals in society. Here 'development' is understood as expanding capability to live a good life. Martha Nussbaum has theorized that ten capabilities are central to living a good human life: Life, Bodily Health, Bodily Integrity, Senses, Imagination, and Thought, Emotions, Practical Reason, Affiliation, Other Species, Play, Control over One's Environment. The capability, "the Other Species," refers to nature and the meaning of human relationships with plants, animals, and the natural world, and is defended based on prevailing human values. This paper examines values found in Sri Lankan society that support "the Other Species Capability," specifically the basic affinity between humans and the rest of the sentient world found in Buddhism and the Buddhist conscience and the compassion born out of it. It will examine how the development discourse in Sri Lanka has excluded its homeless humans and dogs, thus emaciating our understanding of development. The study is theoretical and is based on secondary literature. It takes into consideration the Megapolis development project and the attempts made to remove community dogs from the premises of two universities as case studies. The public debate surrounding these cases indicate that Sri Lankan values that support Nussbaum's "Other Species Capability" act as a corrective to the dominant notion of development. Among such values are compassion, belief in rebirth and merit, and the modern notion of love.

**Keywords:** *humanising development, capability approach, other species, Buddhist values*