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Alternative paradigm: Synergizing access, assurance, ability and attitude

The 4-A model [1995] implies linking access, assurance, ability [skill] and attitude with resources, institutions, technology and culture. The 'attitudes' are both endogenous as well as exogenous in nature. In Bhutanese society, the attitudes have been shaped by the community values leading to very high return rate of youth which goes abroad for education, extraordinary level of conservation of forests and other ecosystem and practically non-existent crimes against women.

Nature, society and education can lead to a happy society in the way Bhutan has achieved. But, the differences in the access different sections of society have to various resources, institutions, technologies and cultural platforms may determine how much ability they have to convert access into investments through inclusive institutions and culture.

While natural, social, ethical and intellectual capitals [Gupta, 2003] converge to create sustainability space, not everybody gets a chance to explore individual or collective future in these spaces. We need to develop matrices which will help track the growth of the access, bridging of differential, generation of assurances, recognition of innovations [technological as well as institutional] with reinforcement of culture of creativity, compassion and collaboration.

The present indicators do not measure the growth of various capitals in a manner that convergent spaces and their accessibility to different parts of society can be monitored. Happiness requires more and more shared spaces and the consumption dynamics of growth does not provide indices of residuals for nature, other beings and future generation.

I hope that we can start using a common lexicon for measuring, monitoring and managing the transition of society towards an alternative developmental paradigm.