
CHAPTER - II

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The study of social change has been one of the two basic divisions of sociological investigations since the days of August Comte. However, the social change is understood and interpreted in many ways and in that process quite a few concepts have been developed. Modernization is one such concept recently formulated.

Modernization is a multi-dimensional process. It is not merely an economic process concerned with maximization of physical power and improving of tools to increase the productive potential and thereby increase the levels of living of a given society. It is a political, social and cultural process as well. It is a complex process which touches the entire life of the members of a given society. It is a process which frees the potential in them in various spheres of their lives and maximizes their ability to share in defining the goals of their society, to internalize them and to participate creatively and effectively in their realization in the wider society.¹

" Modernization " is seeking to supersede several other earlier concepts as a comprehensive concept aimed at capturing, describing and evaluating the profound, qualitative and quantitative changes that have been taking place in human society

from the sixteenth century onwards. These changes have inaugurated, according to Professor Black and others, a new epoch in the history of mankind. Concepts like Anglicization, Europeanization, Westernization Urbanization, evolution, development, progress, etc. are either being replaced by " Modernization or are being fitted into the matrix of this concept.²

The term " Modernization " seeks to define and delineate a gigantic and rapid process of change, involving directly two-thirds of humanity, which was inaugurated after world War II in the ex-colonial and semi-colonial countries which have formally liberated themselves from the political tutelage of imperialist capitalist countries of the West.²

Daniel Lerner has pointed out why this concept is used to understand the changes taking place in a non-western country by contact, direct or indirect, with a Western country. After considering the comparative suitability of " Westernization " and " Modernization ", he has opted for the latter. According to him " Modernization " includes a " disquieting positivist spirit " touching " public institutions as well as private aspiration ". But the positivist spirit is not enough; a revolution in communications is essential. Modernization is also marked by increasing urbanization which has, in turn,

resulted in the spread of literacy. The latter again has tended to enhance " media exposure ", and finally, " enhanced media exposure " is associated with wider economic participation (per capita income) and political participation (voting). Modernization also implies social mobility. A mobile society has to encourage rationality for the calculus of choice shapes individual behaviour and conditions its rewards. People come to see the social future as manipulable rather than ordained and their personal prospects in terms of achievement rather than heritage.³

According to Surinder Jetley, " the traditional society is predominantly rural, nature-bound, ritualistic, sacred and non-rational, where as modern society is rational and secular."⁴

There is also a sort of unanimity among the scholars⁵ about the ideals of modernization. Gunnar Myrdal has listed these ideals-rationality, development and planning for development, rise of productivity, rise of levels of living, social and economic equalization, improved social institutions and attitudes, national considerations, national independence, political democracy in a narrow sense, democracy at the grass root and democratic approach in planning.

This process of Modernization, Reinhard Bendix⁶ observes, is unique in every society. Modernization cannot occur

twice in the same way in any society. Even the consequences of modernization and industrialization will be different in different societies.

" Modernization ", according to many eminent scholars,⁷ including Weiner, Apter, Lerner, Black, Inkeles, Bendix, Marion Levy, Smelser, Eisenstadt, Netti and others, is both a process and product. Compared to urbanization, industrialization, Westernization or Europeanization, Modernization conveys the picture of a more complex process and also implies an equally complex product in the form of a particular type of society. The process called modernization is not restricted to one domain of social reality but envelops all the basic aspects of social life.

Thus, in the economic sphere it results in industrialization which brings in large-scale production and large-scale organization of men, money and materials, mechanization, monetization and urbanization. It emphasizes distinctions between private and corporate property and separates place of work from place of residence. It provides individuals freedom of choice of occupation and requires them to be rational and mobile. It expects them to develop new attitudes to earning, purchasing, saving and investing in consonance with the goals of society.



In the political sphere it develops a secular and welfare state with enlarged functions to include concerns such as education, health, housing employment etc. It establishes the rule of law and provides to all equality before the law. It gives freedom to people in choice of rulers and form of the government as well as freedom to change them.

In the social sphere it emphasizes equality of opportunity for all and lays stress on individual freedom in matters of family, marriage, occupation, religion etc.

In the individual sphere it emphasizes changes as a value and encourages individuals to have faith in the efficiency of human effort for bringing about desirable social changes. It expects them to be secular, cosmopolitan, rational, scientific and universalistic in their outlook and approach to life and its problems, equalitarian and democratic in their relationships with others, and innovative and creative in their contribution to societal problems and development.⁸

Modernization in the intellectual sphere exhibits itself in the new awareness that it is " possible to seek a rational explanation of physical and social phenomena ". This approach presumes that physical, social and psychological phenomena are law governed, have regularities, uniformities

and casual relationship and could be understood, and therefore, could be modified or regulated by human reason. The rational attitude is the core process of modernization.⁹

As Dr.Gore precisely puts, " modernization involves a process of change - social, economic and political. Actually, the change goes even deeper and encompasses cultural values and personality orientations as well."¹⁰

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