

Modernization an Outlook

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Abstract

Modernization has many dimensions. It may be perceived at society level, group level or individual level. It may also be perceived as economic modernization, political modernization, social modernization, technological modernization, military modernization, police modernization, educational modernization, administrative modernization and so forth.

Economists perceive modernization in terms of man's application of technologies to the control of nature's resources in order to bring about a marked increase in the output per individual in the society. Sociologists examine it in terms of differentiation in the quality of life that characterizes the modern societies. They explore new structures created to perform new functions, or new functions assigned to old structures. They also study the dysfunctional consequences of the modernization process like mental illness, violence, social unrest, regionalism, and parochialism, and caste and class conflict, etc. Political scientists focus on the problems of nation and government building as modernization occurs. They also remain concerned with the ways in which political elite respond to the efforts of new participants in politics to share power and to make demand upon those who monopolize power (Myron, Weiner, 1963: 3)

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1. Introduction: Concept Of Modernization

Modernization is not a philosophy or a movement with a clearly articulated value - system. It is a process of change (Gore, 1982: 7). Earlier, the term 'modernization' was used to refer only to "change in economy and its related effect on social values and social practices". It was described as a process that changed the society from primarily agricultural to primarily industrial economy. As a consequences of this change in economy, the society simultaneously underwent changes in values, beliefs and norms (Gore, Ibid: 7). Today, the term 'modernization' is

given a broader meaning. It is described as "social change involving the elements of science and technology." It involves change based on rationality.

2. Various Perceptions Of Modernization

According to Alatas (1972: 22), modernization is a process by which modern scientific knowledge is introduced in the society with the ultimate purpose of achieving a better and more satisfactory life in the broadest sense of the term, as accepted by the society concerned. In this definition, the phrase 'modern scientific knowledge' involves: (i) the recourse to experimentation to assess the validity of suggested explanations, (ii) the assumptions of laws explainable in terms of a rational and experimental approach as distinct from religious dogma and philosophical explanation, (iii) the employment of definite methods in ascertaining the validity of facts, (iv) the use of concepts and signs, and (v) the search for truth for its own sake. An analysis of the modernization process has been divided into three aspects by James O Connell (1965:554) (i). Inventive outlook, that is, the scientific- spirit for a continuing, systematic and inventive search for knowledge pertaining to the cause and effect of the phenomenon, (ii). Invention of new tools and techniques, that is, search for varied inquiry methods that facilitate research and finding out new machines that make a different pattern of life necessary. The conviction of explanation given by the modern science makes religious rituals innocuous and unnecessary, and (iii). Flexibility of social structure and continuing identity, that is, a willingness to accept continuous change on the plane of both individual and social structures together with a capacity to preserve individual and social identity. The changes that occur with the transition from a traditional to a modern society according to James O Connell (1965:549) are:

- i. Economic growth increases and it becomes self - sustaining.
- ii. Occupations become more skilled and specialized.
- iii. A number of people engaged in primary occupations reduces while that of people

- engaged in secondary and tertiary occupations increases.
- iv. Old age agricultural implements and methods give way to use of tractors, fertilizers etc.
 - v. Barter system is replaced by the money system.
 - vi. A system of inter-dependence comes into being.
 - vii. The process of urbanization increases.
 - viii. Ascriptive status gives way to achieved status.
 - ix. Equality gradually replaces hierarchy.
 - x. Geographical distances are shortened with the use of new methods of transport and communication.
 - xi. Hereditary leadership gives way to elected leadership.

According to Pye (1969: 329) modernization is the development of an inquiring and inventive attitude of mind, individual and social, that lies behind the use of techniques and machines and inspires new forms of social relations. According to Eisenstadt (1969: 3) some of the indices pertaining to the structural aspects of social organization (or modernization) are : specialized roles are 'free floating' (that is, admission to them is not determined by ascribed properties of the individual), and wealth and power are not ascriptively allocated (as in traditional societies). This is associated with institutions like markets (in economic life) and voting and party activities in politics.

According to Eisenstadt (1969: 2), modernization refers to both (a) structural aspects of social organization, and (b) socio-demographic aspects of societies. Eisenstadt (1965: 659) has maintained that modernization requires three structural characteristics of a society: (i) (a high level of) structural differentiation, (ii) (a high level of) social mobilization, and (iii) a relatively centralized and autonomous institutional framework.

However, according to Myron Weiner, the main instruments which make modernization possible are education, communication, ideology based on nationalism, charismatic leadership and coercive governmental authority. Myron Weiner has also talked of opportunities and incentives along with value and attitude changes for the modernization of a society. Daniel Lerner: The socio-psychological approach considers modernization mainly as a process of change in ways of perceiving, expressing and valuing. The contract between modern man and the traditional man is the source of contract between modern and traditional society. The psychological formulations of modernization link this process with a set of motivational attributes or orientation of individuals which are said to be mobile, activist and innovational in nature. Daniel Lerner calls it "Psychic mobility", an adaptive characteristic in man to respond to his environment with a sense of

empathy, rationality and constricted participant style. Traditional man is passive, he expects continuity in nature and society and does not believe in the capacity of man to change or control either. Modern man in contrast believes in both the responsibility and desirability of change and has confidence in the ability of man to control change so as to accomplish his purpose. Yogendra Singh:- Modernization is a composite concept. It is also an ideological concept. The basic problematic of modernization in the third world nations is ideological, particularly when we examine the modernization ideology in India. In the book on "Essays On modernization In India" (1977) Yogendra Singh has analyzed the varied and complex process involved in the modernization in India, the forces released by it and their bearing on the stability, creativity and development in India as a dynamic nation and composite civilization. Y. Singh labeled social change as an ideology. He attributed social change to twin processes of sanskritization and Westernization (or Modernization) that social change in India has predominantly been interpreted with the dominant caste, serving as the lever of change. Traditionally social change in India was very slow but it accelerated after independence due to democratic system, secularism, economic development, social justices and socialism. To Singh social change has been observed much more in social, cultural, political and economic fields. Singh (1993:12) discusses two types of tendencies of social change in modern India. "First there has taken place a substantial change in the social structure without simultaneously bringing about a structural change in the society. Secondly there has taken place a sea - change in the subjective domain or the consciousness of the people in respect of social change". The direction of change is represented in a linear evolutionary form from traditionalization towards modernization. . All societies do not accept the process of modernization uniformly. Following Herbert Blumer (1964:129), five different ways may be pointed out in which a traditional society can respond to the process of modernization. These are:-

A. Rejective Response:- A traditional society may reject modernization at different points in different ways. Powerful groups, Landed aristocracy, a governmental oligarchy, religious fanatics etc may discourage modernization to protect their vested interests.

B. Disjunctive Response:- The co-existence of traditionalism and modernity occurs when the modernization process operates as a detached development, without affecting much the traditional life. In this way there is no conflict between modernization and the traditional order because the older system is not threatened.

C. Assimilative Response:-This response consists of an absorption of the modernization process by the traditional order without disruption of

its own organization and pattern of life. The example is the acceptance of the computer ideology by the employees in the banking system or use of fertilizers and tractors by the peasants in the villages.

D. Supportive Response:-This response takes the form of accepting the new and modern things because they strengthen or reinforce the traditional order.

E. Disruptive Response:- In this response, the traditional order is undermined at many points by the adjustments which are made to the situation introduced by modernization

3. Modern VS Tradition/Traditionalism:

In this connection it is necessary to understand the terms, tradition, traditionalism and traditional society. Tradition refers to the beliefs and practices handed down from the past. Traditionalism is the psychic attitude that glorifies past beliefs and practices as immutable (which cannot be changed). It is antithetical to change and development. Traditionalists see tradition as static. They urge that the traditional values and practices have to be adopted and preserved because they were found useful in the past. They are thus hostile to innovations that violate previous practices. In simple words, it may be said that while the traditional society is custom-bound, hierarchical, ascriptive and un-productive, a modern society is egalitarian, achievement-oriented and based on production-oriented economy. A traditional society is an immobile society. In a society of high mobility which is termed as open society, a person can change his position freely, utilizing his abilities, potentialities and opportunities. On the other hand in an immobile or closed society, an individual remains from birth to death in the same relative position. By modernization we mean creation of an open society or the creation of new institution and accepting change which takes place in institutions, ideas and social structures of society. Skills has maintained that the traditional society is not by any means entirely traditional and modern society is by no means free of tradition.

4.Characteristics/Features of Modernization

Broadly speaking, modernization has the following important characteristics.

1. A temper of science.
2. Rationalism and reason
3. Secularism
4. Achievement oriented and high aspirations.
5. Transformation of attitudes, norms and values.
6. Creation of new functional institutions.

7. Investment in human resources.
8. A growth oriented economy.
9. A mobile personality in an open society.
10. A natural interest rather than kin, caste, religion, region or language oriented interests.

The absence of these features in any society will become an obstacle to modernization.

5. Pre-requisites of Modernization:-

If the transition from traditionalism to modernization is to occur, following pre-requisites of socio change and modernization must be present in the society. These are:-

- i. An emotional preparedness for self-imposed tasks and sacrifices.
- ii. An awareness of purpose and an eye on the future.
- iii. An awareness of existence beyond one's own world of many other societies.
- iv. A sense of urgency.
- v. Availability of variety of opportunities and roles and
- vi. Emergence of devoted, dynamic and committed leadership.

6. Impact of Modernization in India.

The greatest impact of modernization along with westernization in India has led to the end of colonial rule in India, development of individualism liberty, equality, justice, secular system, nationalism, new economic order, a modern state etc. On the other side, it has eliminated historical vices like Sati system, Purdah system, Caste system etc.

7. What makes man a modern man.

If the man has decent standard of living and is socially, economically, politically and culturally mature, he can be called a modern man. Alex Inkeles holds that a modern man is less likely to work as a farmer and is more likely to seek employment in a larger and complex productive enterprise based on the intensive use of power and advanced technologies which gave him higher position of status in the society. He prefers to live in city, become member of clubs and organizations for his expression and recognition etc. Alex Inkeles, has identified certain traits which a modern man has. These are:-

- i. He should be ready for new experience and should be open to innovation and change.
- ii. A modern man is oriented more to the present and future than to the past.
- iii. A modern man is more oriented to planning and believes in it as a way of handling life.

- iv. A modern man is open to learning so that he can dominate the environment rather than being dominated entirely by that environment.
- v. A modern man is a great calculator and believes in a reasonably lawful world under human control.
- vi. A modern man has more faith in science and technology.
- vii. A modern man believes in democracy and distributive justice and shows more respect and dignity in his dealing with others.

8. Conclusion:-

Modernity can not be imposed upon the population. Modernization has to be professionally directed. (The good features of traditional institutions can be retained by suitable adjustment in the process of developments). A society is tension-free only when it is a closed and an immobile society. A developing society functions on the basis of built-in resistances and tensions. Tensions exist because of an inherent clash between tradition and modernity. The process of modernization involves clearing away social structure resistances. Yogendra Singh is of the opinion that a unique feature of modernization in India is that it is being carried forward through adaptive changes in the traditional structures rather than structural dissociations or breakdown.

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