

Theorizing development

Modernization: - In one sense, modernisation and modernity convey a classification of the history of mankind, into Ancient, Medieval and Modern. Here modernity refers to the 'stretch of time', and each aforesaid phase, carries its specialty. But, modernity in relation to time is also confusing, because, it may mean one thing in India and another thing else-where on the earth.

Modernity is distinguished from traditionalism and a modern society also differs from a traditional one. It is equally difficult to define precisely what 'Tradition' is yet, both 'tradition' and 'modernity' are systems of ideas, values and Institutions, which are different from one another. But there is no society, which is either 'purely traditional' or 'purely modern'. Both cannot be rigidly compartmentalized.

The term 'Tradition' has been defined by Dr. Yogendra Singh as "a cumulative heritage of a society, which permits though all levels of social organisation, such as the value system, the social structure and personality structure." Thus, tradition is a social and cultural heritage and a traditional society, therefore, contains three basic elements of tradition like value system, social structure and structure of personality, which are more or less permanent.

Modernity typically refers to a post-traditional, post-medieval historical period, one marked by the move from feudalism (or agrarianism) toward capitalism, industrialization, secularization, rationalization, the nation-state and its constituent institutions and forms of surveillance.

Modernization is a continuous and open-ended process. Historically, the span of time over which it has occurred must be measured in centuries, although there are examples of accelerated modernization. In either case, modernization is not a once-and-for-all-time achievement. There seems to be a dynamic principle built into the very fabric of modern societies that does not allow them to settle, or to achieve equilibrium. Their development is always irregular and uneven. Whatever the level of development, there are always "backward" regions and "peripheral" groups. This is a persistent source of strain and conflict in modern societies. Such a condition is not confined to the internal development of individual states. It can be seen on a global scale, as modernization extends outward from its original Western base to take in the whole world. The existence of unevenly and unequally developed nations introduces a fundamental element of instability into the world system of states.

Definition of modernization: -

As per Cambridge Dictionary, “the process of starting to use the most recent methods, ideas, equipment, etc. so that something becomes or seems more modern.”

The term modernisation has been severally defined by several eminent scholars and one of them is the Indian sociologist Prof. Y. Singh who writes, “Modernisation symbolizes a rational attitude towards issues and their evaluation from universalistic, not particularistic point of view. To him, Modernisation involves diffusing scientific and technological know-how.”

According to Krishan Kumar, Modernization: in sociology, the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society.

According to Alberto Martinelli, “By modernization we mean the sum of the processes of large-scale change through which a certain society tends to acquire the economic, political, social and cultural characteristics considered typical of modernity.”

C.E. Black in his book ‘Dynamics of Modernisation suggests modernisation as a process by which historically evolved institution are adopted to the rapidly changing function that reflect the unprecedented increase in man’s knowledge, permitting control over his environment in the recent centuries that accompanies the scientific revolution.

Origin: - The current modernization theory originated with the ideas of German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) regarding the role of rationality and irrationality in the transition from traditional to modern society. Weber's approach provided the basis for the modernization paradigm as popularized by Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902–1979), who translated Weber's works into English in the 1930s and provided his own interpretation.

After 1945 the Parsonian version became widely used in sociology and other social sciences. By the late 1960s opposition developed because the theory was too general and did not fit all societies in quite the same way.

Characteristics: -

(i) Intellectual characteristics are like emphasis on science and technology, reason and rationality, belief in progress and human development, control over environment and avoidance of superstition and orthodoxy.

(ii) Political Characteristics, include marginalization of religious influence from State/Political matters, and rise of secular democratic polity, universal adult suffrage, democratic values.

(iii) Religious Characteristics constitute a secularized society free from religious orthodoxy and decline of religiosity.

(iv) Social Characteristics include decline of a traditional social order, decline of Joint family system, alienated kinship ties.

(v) In relation of education, it involves literacy, emphasis on knowledge, trained skill and the like.

(vi) Economic Characteristics include changing over to commercial agriculture, use of machines and advanced technology in agriculture, growing industrialisation and urbanisation, improvement in commerce, industry and growth of Market etc. Thus, modernity implies a bunch of new socio-economic, politico-religious and intellectual system, totally separated from the traditional one.

Dr. Lerner, has also identified five other features of modernity, such as:

1) Urbanization

(2) Literacy

(3) Mass-Media and mass communication

(4) growing political awareness,

(5) Skilled man-power to support economic development and technological advancement for faster industrialization.

Thus, modernisation is a process which involves changes in all areas of human thought and activity. It aims at socio-economic and political transformation to achieve progress on development.

Dimensions of modernization:

Modernisation is multi-dimensional in character. One may categories it into social, psychological, intellectual, demographic, cultural, economic and political dimensions.

Modernisation at Political level is also known as Political modernisation or Political development. Political modernisation has its own distinct features. It rejects the traditional authorities like Feudal lords, religious heads & god-heads and Traditional community leaders.

Rather it implies the emergence of a single secular rational authority in a political system to which people render habitual obedience. Political modernisation, therefore involves increasing people's participation in the political process through Business groups, interest groups, political parties, N.G. O's and voluntary organizations.

Thus, political modernisation includes:

(a) Increase in the capacity of the political system to find and utilize the resources of the society.

(b) Increase in the need for coordinated social action to solve all kinds of problems that a political system faces and

(c) Increase in political participation.

Broadly speaking, modernisation has following salient features:

(1) A Scientific temper outlooks.

(2) Reasoning and rationalism

(3) Secularization

(4) High aspirations

(5) Total change in attitude, norms and values,

(6) Developed economy,

(7) Broader national interest

(8) Democratization

(9) An open society.

(10) A challenging personality and finally

(11) Dynamic leadership to organize socio-economic cultural & political movement and undertake reforms.

DEPENDENCY THEORY

Dependency theory differs from most Western approaches to studying political development. One difference is that this approach originated in the Third World (primarily Latin America), rather than among Western academics. Third World dependency thinkers were concerned with explaining the unequal and unjust situations in which they and their nations found themselves. Third World countries were poor while "developed" countries were rich. Third World countries had bad health conditions, while other countries had good health conditions. Third World countries had little military power, while other countries had tremendous military resources. Third World countries faced starvation, while citizens of other countries had to worry about losing weight. Third World economies were non-productive and agriculturally based, while economies in developed countries were diversified and industrialized. By almost any conventional socioeconomic measure, Third World countries were at the bottom of the scale. They had less education, less wealth, poorer health, less military power, and were dominated politically and economically by the First World. Dependency theorists asked why such inequalities existed. Their central concern was to understand the causes of inequality. They felt that such

inequalities were unjust, and sought to explain inequalities in order to change them and achieve their goal of increased equality among nations and peoples. Dependency theory has always been quite controversial: it incorporates some Marxist concepts; it addresses the sensitive issue of inequality, blaming inequality on the developed nations; and it originates in the Third World. Some aspects of liberation theology and world systems theory are related to dependency theory.

MAJOR PROPOSITIONS OF DEPENDENCY THEORY

1. Third World countries do not exist in isolation. They can only be understood in the context of the world economic and political system. Political events in Third World countries are directly related to events in First World countries. However, relations between First and Third World countries are asymmetrical. The flow of power and control is from the First World (centre or core) to the Third World (periphery). Political and economic events in the First World have a huge impact on the politics and economics of Third World countries, but Third World political and economic events usually have little impact on the First World.

2. Within the world political and economic system there is a tremendous amount of interaction among core countries and peoples, and between the core and the periphery. There is very little interaction just among periphery countries. The consequences of this are great, resulting in an isolated and weak periphery country having an unequal relationship with the united and strong core.

3. Politics and economics are related. They cannot be understood apart from each other. Economic ties and relationships between core and periphery countries are particularly important. These are advantageous for the core, and disadvantageous for the periphery. Core-periphery trading patterns result in continuous growth of political and economic power for the core at the expense of the periphery. Economic trade causes a widening of the gap between developed and developing countries, rather than a narrowing of that gap. Historically, lower priced raw materials have been exchanged for higher priced finished goods.

4. It follows from #3 that underdevelopment is not a natural state, but rather a condition that is caused. The fact is that developed nations are actively underdeveloping Third World countries as a result of the systems of interactions between them.

5. Put another way, the underdevelopment of weak Third World countries is directly related to, and makes possible, the "development" of the powerful countries of the industrialized core. Both the centre and the periphery are part of the world political-economic system, and neither would exist without the other.

6. Furthermore, so long as capitalism remains the dominant world economic system, there is no reason for the situation of developed and underdeveloped countries to change. Underdevelopment is not a temporary condition, as had been thought in the past, but is a permanent condition. In fact, if the present world system does not change, we can expect the core to become more powerful and the periphery weaker in the future. Rather than "catching up" to the developed countries, most currently underdeveloped countries will fall farther behind. (In a limited number of cases, where exceptional circumstances exist, it may be possible for an underdeveloped country to move from the periphery to the core.)

7. The worldwide system of relationships is duplicated within individual Third World countries. There is a core area (usually the capital) which dominates and exploits the periphery (interior) of the country. The nation's centres of economic, political, cultural, and military power are found in the national core, and the core's power and wealth grow more rapidly than that of the interior as a result of contacts and interactions between the two areas. The urban sector becomes increasingly powerful, while the rural sector becomes increasingly weaker. Resources flow from the periphery to the centre. The core profits at the expense of the periphery as a result of the movement of products and resources. The passage of time does not bring a growing equality within the country, but rather brings about an increasing gap between life in the capital and that in the countryside. 8. In a sense, national leaders in the capital exploit the people for their own personal benefit and power. Consequently, these "national" leaders could really be conceptualized as agents of the international system. Their national power and prominence derive from their international contacts. It is they (the military, government officials, and commercial and financial leaders) who act as links between the Third World country and the world political and economic system. They direct the country's contacts with the world, and they direct those contacts in such a way that the world core benefits more than their own country, although they themselves clearly benefit at a personal level. These national leaders may actually have more in common with their counterparts in

London or New York than they do with interior citizens of their own country. (Style of dress, food, literature, housing, travel, economic interests, etc.)

SOLUTIONS

Not only do dependency theorists present a conceptual framework for analysing Third World politics, they also suggest several "solutions" for the central problem of inequality. The range of solutions is wide, for there is a great deal of variety among dependency theorists. At one extreme are those we might call the "moderates," including men such as Raul Prebisch. They argue that Third World countries can take steps to improve their situation. One suggestion would be the formation of common markets, trading blocs, or cartels. The idea is that Third World countries share many common economic and trading problems in their relations with the industrialized core. By joining together and presenting a common front to the core they will gain leverage, and be able to secure greater advantages from their interactions with world core countries. By forming groups or cartels the periphery nations will have more power than any individual Third World country has in its relations with the core. (So far this "cartel" solution has proven elusive, due to technological innovations which replace natural products, flexible demand at the core, and cartel "cheaters".)

A second suggestion for improving the situation is to force Third World country elites to confront their country's condition of dependency, and take voluntary steps to alter it. Thus elites in the capital might be convinced to use some of their wealth to invest in national construction projects or literacy programs, rather than importing luxury automobiles or taking expensive vacations abroad. The goal is for the elites to suspend their selfish habits of conspicuous consumption, and to use their wealth for national development. The elites would be encouraged to invest in their home countries, rather than abroad. Attempts to change elite behaviour have generally not been very successful.

More radical dependency theorists call for revolutionary solutions. They argue that it is unrealistic to expect those currently in positions of power to take voluntary actions which would be personally disadvantageous. Altruistic solutions are nice in the abstract, but are unlikely to be implemented in reality. The only realistic solution is revolutionary action to rid the country of those leaders who have betrayed it, and to institute sweeping revolutionary change to end inequality.

It should be noted in conclusion that the dependency position is fundamentally anti-status quo. Dependency theorists argue that existing national and international economic and political systems are the cause of their unjust situations. They call for systemic change to solve the problems. They want abrupt, non-linear, fundamental change. Rather than endorsing and embracing stability, they call for radical change. Their perceptions, analytical approach, and solutions are vastly different from those of diffusion or order approach theorists. Stability is the solution for order theorists; stability is the problem for dependency theorists.

Diagram 1. Dependency Theory View of the World

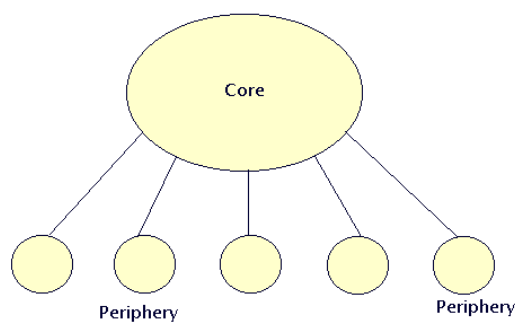


Diagram 2. Dependency Theory View of the Relationship between the National Core, the Rest of the Nation, and the World System

