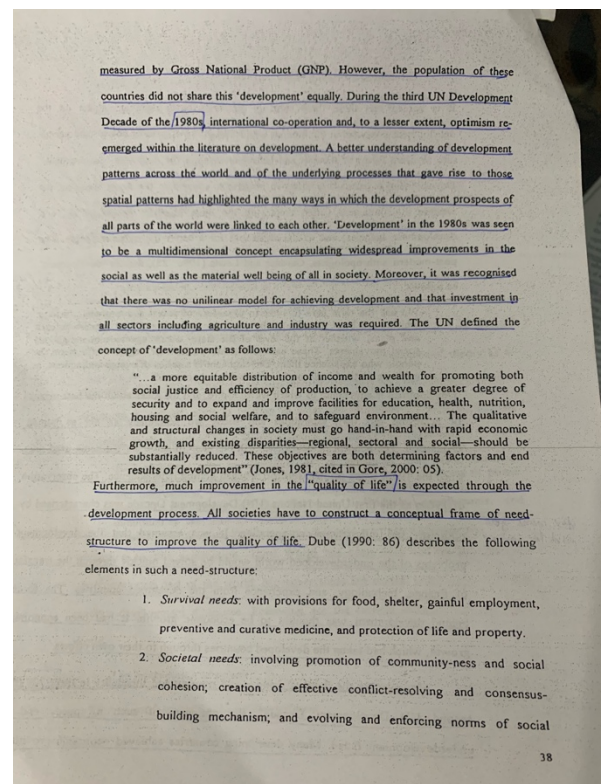
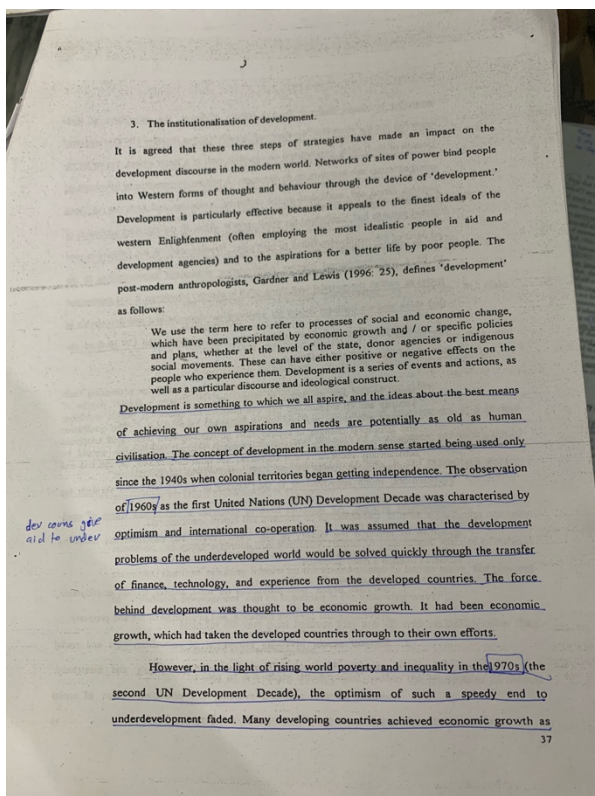
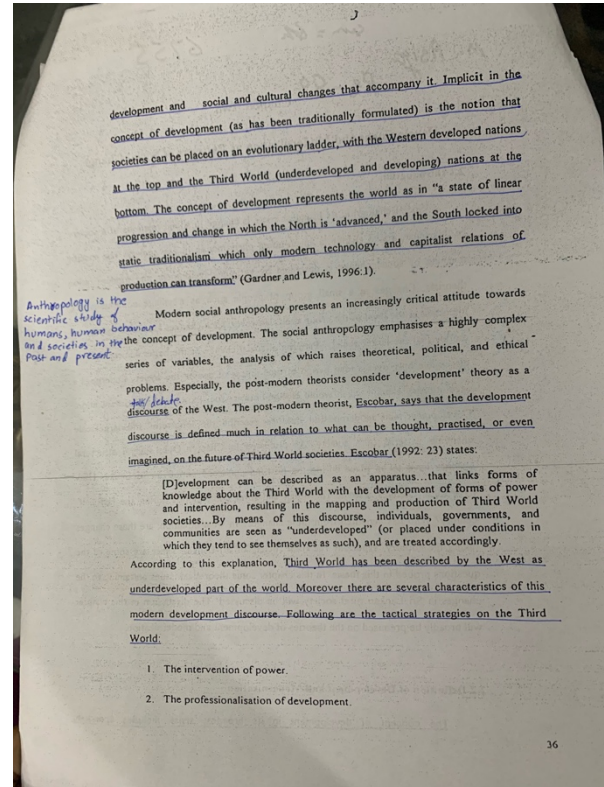
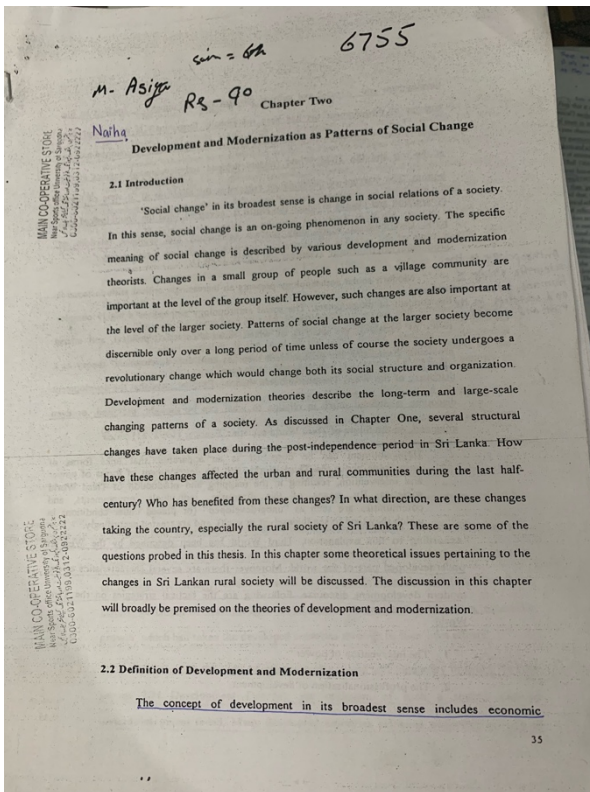


WEEK 4: Socio-Political change and Modernization, Major Theories and Implications



discipline.

3. *Welfare needs*: including measures that offer a fair deal to the weak, the disabled, the handicapped, and the vulnerable.
4. *Psychic and cultural needs*: including provision for personal freedom and privacy; leisure and its creative utilisation; and equal opportunity for advancement and general development.
5. *Adaptive needs*: requiring mechanism for scanning the social, cultural, psychological, and physical environments as well as for identifying and effecting modifications necessitated by changes in these environments.
6. *Progress needs*: involving sharpening of problem-anticipating and problem-solving capabilities; growth of scientific and technological research; and development of human engineering skills.

These types of needs can be identified as prerequisites of development. If a society has this type of need structure, it will pave the path of development towards a life of quality and a resolution of the basic problems in society. It can promote a suitable atmosphere for social development in the society.

Development brings the question of sustainability. ^{in/around/surround} It must encompass not only economic and social activities, but also those related to population, the use of natural resources, and their resulting impact on the environment. In broad sense, the concept of 'sustainable development' can be explained in the following ways:

1. Help for the very poor because they are left with no option other than to destroy their environment.
2. The idea of self-reliant development, within the constraints of natural resources.

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3. The idea of cost-effective development using differing economic criteria to the traditional approach, that is to say, development should not degrade environmental quality, nor should it reduce productivity in the long run.
4. The great issues of health control, appropriate technologies, food self-reliance, clean water and shelter for all.
5. The notion that people-centred initiatives are needed; human beings, in other words, are the resources in the concept.

However, according to these various explanations and definitions, development is a process of planned change of a society. And it is unique to each society. Therefore, the development should not be a unilinear process of development in the Third World that is dominated by the West. It should be a multilinear process of social change.

Like the concept of development, 'modernization' is another important concept for understanding the patterns of social change in the society. Modernization is an all-encompassing and global process of cultural and socio-economic changes whereby developing countries seek to acquire some of the characteristics common to industrially advanced countries. This process is stimulated by international contact and inevitable comparisons between rich and poor nations with respect to technological achievement, military power and standards of living. The quest for modernity is evident in practically every underdeveloped country, and the consequences of this process represent one of the world's most vital concerns.

When we see the history of the Europe, most of the sociologists and anthropologists can be found to discuss three main factors of modernization of the Europe.

1. Industrialisation based on discoveries and innovations.

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2. Religious reformation (Protestantism) based on rationalisation.
3. Political reformation (French Revolution) based on democracy and capitalism.

Most of the modernization theories that we discuss today are based on these social changes that occurred in Europe. All this implies that the main theme of this modernization is the societal change from the traditional to the modern one. In other words, "modernization is a 'total' transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society into the type of technology and associated social organisation that characterise the 'advanced' economically prosperous and relatively politically stable... [society]" (Moore, 1965: 89). Furthermore, it refers to the interactive processes of economic growth and social change whereby historical and contemporary underdeveloped societies are thought to have become developed or remain underdeveloped.

Another aspect of modernization is described by Lerner (1958). "Modernization is the current term for an old process - the process of social change whereby less developed societies acquire characteristics common to more developed societies... Modernization, therefore, is the process of social change in which development is the economic component" (Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences: 386-387). According to Lerner, development is the economic component of modernization that follows the western model. It is true that the economic development is more important in the process of social change. Modernization theory typically deals with the effects of economic development on 'traditional' social structures and values, and conversely with the manner in which traditional social structures and values can either hinder or facilitate successful economic development.

The work of Rostow an economist, illustrates the concept of modernization. In his explanations of economic growth (1960a, 1960b), the forms of growth already

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experienced in the West can be taken as a model for the rest of the world. While economies are situated at different stages of development process, all are assumed to be moving in the same direction. Traditional society is poor, irrational and rural. The 'take off' stage requires a leap forward, based on technology and high levels of investment; precondition for this are the development of infrastructure, manufacturing, and effective government. After this all societies reach a stage of 'self-sustaining' growth; in its 'mature' stage, technology pervades the whole economy, leading to 'the stage of high mass consumption,' high productivity; and high levels of urbanisation.

After the total transformation in the Western Europe, the similar model has been employed to the non-western countries by the colonial administration under colonial regime. Especially, this was happening in Sri Lanka since nearly the last four hundred years. The West dominated the concept of development in the modern world and the same model can be brought in here too.

Ethnocentric assumptions behind both modernization and development are explicit. "Modernization, as both a theory and a set of strategies, is open to criticism on virtually every front. Its assumption that all change inevitably follows the western model is both breathtakingly ethnocentric and empirically incorrect... Indeed, anthropological research has continually shown that economic development comes in many shapes and forms; we cannot generalise about transitions from one 'type' of society to another" (Gardner and Lewis, 1996: 14). The post-modernist anthropologists like Gardner and Lewis try to link the modernization theory with development theory. They assert that "theories of modernization assume that local culture and 'peasant' traditionalism are obstacles to development..." (Gardner and Lewis, 1996: 15).

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Basically, these 'obstacles' to development are associated with two reasons. Dube, an Indian social anthropologist has clearly pointed out one characteristic related to the modern history of the Third World. He said: "The developing countries do not have a very clear image of modernity. Nostalgia for the past pulls them back powerfully toward tradition. Many of these countries have acquired national independence through struggles that were intensely anti-Western... Even their elite does not clearly know how ultimately the elements of tradition and modernity are to be synthesised in the emerging national pattern" (1990: 216). The other aspect is the bad experience of the masses due to mismanagement of various development projects. Chambers (1983) attacks the biased preconceptions of development planners, most of whom have a very shaky understanding of rural life in the so-called developing societies. Any development and modernization effort should benefit the majority of the masses and it should be less disadvantageous to the people.¹

After the brief discussion on 'development' and 'modernization,' one finds it difficult, as far as the meaning of these concepts is concerned, to draw a clear-cut distinction between the two. What is more important is to identify the commonality and differences in the approaches of different theorists. Huntington (1976) states nine characteristics equally applicable to both development and modernization. They, as cited in Dube (1988: 3-4) are:

1. Modernization, and by implication development, is a revolutionary process. Efforts are now being made to transform rural agrarian cultures into urban industrial cultures.
2. The process of both modernization and development are complex and multidimensional. They involve a series of cognitive, behavioural, and institutional modifications and restructuring.

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3. Both are systemic processes. Variation in one dimension produces important co-variations in other dimensions.
4. They are global processes. Ideas and techniques are diffused from the centre of origination to other parts of the world.
5. They are lengthy processes. Time is important in both modernization and development. There are no known methods of producing them instantly.
6. They are phased processes. Historical experience indicates that the movement toward the goals of modernization and development takes place through identifiable phases and sub-phases.
7. They are homogenising processes. As modernization and development move to advanced stages differences between national societies are narrowed and ultimately a stage is reached when the "universal imperative of modern ideas and institutions prevail, leading to a point at which the various societies are so homogenised as to be capable of forming a world state."
8. Both are irreversible processes. There is no going back from modernization and development, although there may be occasional upsets and temporary breakdowns.
9. They are progressive processes. Modernization and development are inevitable as well as desirable. In the long run they contribute to human well being both culturally and materially.

This is a very optimistic explanation on development and modernization. However, the post-modern theorists do not take these progressive interpretations for granted. Such a linear and progressive conception is questioned. For instance:

The most fundamental criticism of theories of modernization [and development], however, is that they fail to understand the real causes of underdevelopment and poverty. By presenting all countries as being on the same linear path, they completely neglect historical and political factors,

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which have made the playing field very far from level. Europe during the Industrial Revolution and Africa or South Asia in second half of the twentieth century are not, therefore, comparable. These points have been forcibly made by what is generally referred to as dependency, or neo-Marxist, theory (Gardner and Lewis, 1996:15-16). Though these arguments on the nexuses of development and modernization coincide with both critical and constructive notions, the world is bound together by discoveries and innovations of modern technology, and the process of globalisation has been continuing. These are some other features of development and modernization. However, each and every process of development and modernization in the world today would be affecting all societies. Especially, a rural society like Sri Lanka has been familiar with modern technology and mass communication that diffuse from the developed countries.

I have discussed briefly the concepts – development and modernization – as patterns of change. However, there is a very important question that how these two concepts are relevant to the rural society of Sri Lanka. These two concepts are concerned with the processes of social change of a society. However, we can very well say that development is related to planned change, and modernization is related with the entire process of change. Modernization refers to how a society transforms from one stage to another. As discussed briefly in Chapter One (the details in Chapter Three), Sri Lanka introduced several structural changes during colonial period, and the trend is further accelerated after the independence. Most of the development programmes planned for the rural Sri Lanka, and the modernization efforts introduced at the national level have influenced the rural society to a considerable extent. In this sense the two concepts are relevant for the study of social changes in the rural society of Sri Lanka.

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2.3 Theories of Development

There are many theories on development related to the various disciplines. But all these theories are not applicable to each society in the world. Some of theories are valid and some of them not. There are several theories on underdeveloped Third World. According to the UN statistics, Sri Lanka is a developing country, ranked 84th among 174 countries with a medium level Human Development Index (HDI) in 1999. As discussed in Chapter One, the Sri Lankan economy has been changing towards capitalist mode of economy since the colonialism. Therefore, when we study changes in the rural society of Sri Lanka, the theories on underdevelopment and formulation of capitalism will be found more appropriate than any other. The argument of this study discusses the influences of national and regional level changes towards the rural communities or villages in Sri Lanka. Then, if there is development of capitalist mode of economy at the national level, it would affect the rural society. This is a common factor in the world economy today. Under these circumstances, it is interesting to see how the dependency theory explains the Third World development and modernization or social change.

2.3.1 Dependency Theory

The school of dependency theory has radically affected the development studies during the 1970s. However, the history of these types of studies had started in 1948. The Economic Commission of Latin America was established in 1948 by the United Nations; by 1950s, this had become a group of radical scholars whose outlook was deeply influenced by Marxism. They drew attention to the structure of underdevelopment: the unequal relationship between the North and South. They identified the protectionism of many Northern economies and the dependency

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on export markets of many countries within Latin America. These notions of dependency and underdevelopment gained widespread recognition with the work of Frank² (1967). His publication *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution* (Monthly Review Press, 1969) presented the 'dependency theory,' and his later publications elaborated it subsequently. He (1975: 1) says:

Underdevelopment is not just the lack of development. Before there was development, there was no underdevelopment. This relation between development and underdevelopment is not just comparative one, in the sense that some places are more developed or underdeveloped than others: the development and underdevelopment are also related, both through the common historical process that they have shared during the past several centuries and through the mutual, that is reciprocal, influence that they have had, still have, and will continue to have, on each other throughout history. This implies that historically the development of Western capitalism has not been an independent process but one, which has depended upon colonialist exploitation and the consequent impoverishment of Third World. Frank's thesis is that "underdevelopment as we know it today, and economic development as well, are the simultaneous and related products of the development on a world-wide scale and over a history of more than four centuries at least of a single integrated economic system: capitalism" (Frank, 1975: 43). Even political 'independence' and decolonisation have not brought with them greater economic independence or accelerated economic development in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Moreover, he points out several forms (nine stages) of capitalism in the world history as the stages of gradual development of capitalism. Nevertheless, the last two stages he suggested are the ultimate solution to the underdevelopment of the Third World. These are the transformational stages of the world capitalism. Exploitation is the central outcome of this order. However, he believes that exploitation and underdevelopment, being integral parts of the system, can be eliminated only by destruction of, or escape from, the system. Socialism has so far proved the only effective way of doing so.

In the ultimate analysis, underdevelopment is the result of exploitation of the underdeveloped for the development of the developed. Partial and restricted development of the underdeveloped may occur where the natural resources of the underdeveloped need to be incorporated in the world economy of the capitalist system. His ideas basically are that with the emergence of a single world capitalist order, all established governments, whether socialist or capitalist, tend to become integral part of the capitalist world system. The latest development of socialism in Russia, East Germany, China, and some other communist countries prove this fact, even though these countries have introduced several structural changes before the growth of world capitalism (Gardner and Lewis, 1996: 17).

In spite of these developments in the modern world, as Frank stated earlier, "Latin America and all the rest of the periphery including Africa demonstrate that history, and especially the development of underdevelopment, does not permit us to start again at zero. We can only 'start again' where history has left us off" (Frank, 1975: 109). He puts the case most forcefully:

Is it still possible or sensible to argue that there was a qualitatively different 'transformation' to and creation of a 'modern-world-capitalist-system' around 1500? Or that this 'transition' arose essentially out of the 'transition from feudalism to capitalism' in Europe? No and No again! It is time to relegate the latter debate to the parochial European history to which it rightly belongs... Then is it still sensible to hold on for dear life to the supposedly scientific historical categories of...feudalism, capitalism, socialism – or indeed any such 'scientifically' defined 'mode of production' or ideologically defined 'system' and 'isms'? I believe NOT! (cited in Sanderson, 1995: 163)

In this dependency theory stands underdevelopment as embedded within particular political structure. Indeed the improvement policies advocated by development and modernization theories can never work, for they do not tackle the root causes of the problem. Compared to the development projects, which ease the short-term miseries of underdevelopment and support the *status quo*, dependency theory suggests that the only solution is radical structural change. Especially, the socialist path of

