

## Week 5: Major theories and Implications continues..

development is understood to eradicate the underdevelopment or overcome the capitalism.

There are also some other theories on dependency that emphasise the different degrees of dependency. These theories can be divided into two versions: *strong or hard* dependency theories and *weaker or soft* dependency theories (Sanderson, 1995: 208). The strong-version, associated most closely with Frank and Amin,<sup>3</sup> tends to see economic development as impossible so long as a condition of dependency exists and views core capitalism, as always detrimental to the less-developed world. The weaker or soft version is developed primarily by Cardoso and Evans.<sup>4</sup> Cardoso introduced the concept of 'associated dependent development' or simply 'dependent development.' This is a type of economic growth that occurs in underdeveloped countries as a result of the operation of foreign transnational corporations. The argument is that a certain degree and type of economic development is not incompatible with the continuation of dependency. The soft dependency theorists are able to point out such countries as Brazil and South Korea as examples of dependent development in recent decades. Sri Lanka also has been following the capitalist path, more prominently since 1977 (the open economic policy introduced by the UNP government). As Sri Lanka introduced open economic policy, many transnational or multinational corporations are leading the national economy today. However, the Ceylon Tobacco Company (CTC), a branch of the British American Tobacco Company that is directly related to the Teripah village economy was formed in 1950s. Today, there are several other multinational corporations related to the village economy in Sri Lanka.

### 2.4 Theories of Modernization

The same explanation of various theories on development is valid here too.

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Most of the modernization theories are complex and ambiguous like development theories. However, "the anthropologist distinguishes himself from his colleagues in these other disciplines in at least three respects" (Magnarella, 1974:5-6). They are:

1. He [anthropologist] is interested in all the topics covered by the social sciences. Because of his holistic perspectives, the anthropologist is concerned with the interrelationship of economic, cultural, social, and psychological variables.
2. Anthropologists generally investigate the empirical realities of modernization in diverse societies by working on the microscopic level. Equipped with the methods and concepts that facilitate the intimate analysis of small communities, anthropologists can provide rich descriptions of the various social institutions in the process of change and apply the major models and hypothesis of modernization to the empirical realities of the communities being studied.
3. The anthropologist combines a social scientific approach with an effort to empathize with the subject people and fully appreciate their own perceptions of change and what change means to their lives. The anthropologist benefits from the concepts, methods, and theories of all the disciplines concerned with modernization, but he uses them to gain a deeper understanding of the human drama, with its happiness and grief, its successes and failures.

According to these factors, anthropologists are more capable to study the social changes, especially in the small communities. In this study, I am also interested in identifying social changes in rural Sri Lanka with special reference to a village community. However, I am more specific with the social changes related to development and modernization.

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Most of the sociologists and anthropologists define modernization as a process of change from traditional form of society to modern society. The tendency of modernization is towards the modern stage, but the destination of the dichotomy is not much clear. On the one hand the traditional form is related to the past, and on the other, the modernity represents future. In between there is a transitional form or stage. Therefore, the changes in the rural society of Sri Lanka are not a complete form of modernization. It might be in the transitional stage. In this sense, there are three stages of transformation of human society. Lerner (1958: 71) explains these stages as follows:

1. Traditional stage
2. Transitional stage
3. Modern stage

He primarily studied Turkey along with several other Arab countries (Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iran). He finds four causes behind the transformation. They are:

1. Urbanization
2. Literacy
3. Media Participation
4. Political Participation

These causes or factors had transformed the Arab countries into the transitional or modern society. However, Lerner's model/theory was formulated in 1950s, and it is problematic. We can employ a new model or theory that developed later than the Lerner's model. Magnarella, an anthropologist who studied the same society (Turkey) in 1970s had employed Smelser's model of modernization. In this study also, were employ a general model to study the modernization in the rural Sri Lanka which has

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been borrowed from Smelser (1968). Magnarella (1974: 6) explains Smelser's model as follows:

Although Smelser presented his model or partial theory as an ideal construct in the tradition of Max Weber, the model has general cross-societal validity; the processes comprising the model are being experienced currently by many countries in the Third world. The reason for the use of Smelser's model is that it is equipped with four interrelated sub-processes. The sub-processes are more relevant to Third World countries than Lerner's model. They are:

1. *Technological Development.* The developing society moves from the near exclusive application of simple and traditionalised knowledge and techniques towards the greater application of scientific knowledge and techniques borrowed primarily from the west.
2. *Agricultural Development.* The developing society moves from subsistence farming towards commercial farming, emphasizing the production of cash crops, agricultural wage-labour, and a greater reliance on a cash economy and markets for the sale of farm products and the purchase of manufactured goods.
3. *Industrialization.* The developing society progressively industrializes, placing greater emphasis on the use of inanimate forms of energy, such as oil and electricity, to power machinery, and less emphasis on human and animal power and handicrafts.
4. *Urbanization.* The developing society experiences population movements from rural communities to growing urban centres. Those who migrated to the urban centres from the rural areas work as change agents.

These four interrelated factors will be helpful to understand the process of social change in the rural Sri Lanka. However, this model is also not sufficient to study the process of change in the rural society of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is a country which has

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high literacy rate, high health enrolment, lower population growth rate and high political participation. The reasons for this betterment were government sponsored welfare system and party politics that accelerated after the independence. These had directly influenced the rural society of Sri Lanka. This was very complex process and it is still continuing in the country. Therefore, I would like to employ the term for this complex process, 'state intervention.' The process of state intervention caused structural differentiation as well as integration in the Sri Lankan socio-economic, political and cultural matrices. (I will discuss the process of state intervention in Sri Lanka in the next chapter in details with special reference to the rural society.) I would like to make an assumption that the state intervention has made more avenues for social change in the rural society of Sri Lanka. With the Swales's model of modernization I will use this assumption to understand the social changes in the rural society of Sri Lanka. The assumption of 'state intervention' will be used as part of the model of modernization borrowed from Swales. I believe that this assumption will relate with the process of development also.

The theories, models, and assumptions are essential entities of the anthropological discourse. There are many other interrelated factors that help to prove them. However, here I would like to discuss a very important factor related to both development and modernization theories employed in this study. That is technology. Technology has been influencing all aspects of the social and cultural life of a society. It is visible in the rural Sri Lanka too.

### 2.5 Technological Innovation

The technology of a human group is the total system of means by which the group interacts with its environment. This includes the use of tools, the pattern of

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work, the information or knowledge employed and the organisation of resources for the productive activity of the society. Technology is thus a broader term than material culture, which refers to the inventory of material artefacts characteristic of a given population. It is difficult to separate technology from the economy and the social organisation, and is also dependent on the cultural classification of relevant resources in the natural environment. Theories of socio-cultural evolution that emphasise on the importance of certain innovations or discoveries in the field of technology or material culture may be termed 'technological determinist' theories, and should be distinguished from economic determinism, which emphasise rather on the total organisation of the economy including the social organisation of productive relations as opposed to simply technological innovation.

Technology is linked on the one side to social organisation and the economy and on the other to the environment. By referring the modern anthropological notion of techno-environmental systems, it is an error to regard technology and environment as separable and mutually interacting systems. The interpenetration of technology and environment is in fact so great that they form a single system. However, the attempts of development and modernization by use of the modern technology have generated critical problems to the eco-system of the world. It is more critical to the small countries like Sri Lanka. As I understood, the economic development plays the major role of social change in all societies. For this, the industrialisation is the way that developed countries have experienced. During 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries the Europe experienced this type of economic development through the industrialisation which based on technology. With the logic of industrialisation and development, they have initiated massive projects in the Third World too. But, should all countries achieve the development and modernization through industrialisation only? Don't they have any

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other path of development and modernization that is friendly with environment? These are certain issues to be probed.

During the colonial period the British have introduced the plantation economy in Sri Lanka. However, it remained the main income resource until the recent economic reforms under the open economic policy, introduced in 1977. After the independence in 1948, all the governments introduced several agricultural reforms to revitalise the rural society. In the case of reforms, the green revolution became prominent and it unleashed the forces of technology. Under the open economic policy also, the government launched massive agricultural development projects like Accelerated Mahaweli Development Programme (AMDP) for development of the rural society in Sri Lanka. It was another landmark in using the modern technology in rural society. They have been experiencing new road networks, town complexes, housing schemes, government bureaucratic processes, bulldozers, water canals for agriculture, and modern equipments for farming such as tractors, harvesting machines, and grinding mills that are familiar to rural life now. There is not much value attached to cattle and bullock carts in these areas. They have shifted from consumerist agriculture to commercial agriculture. The same pattern of change based on technology in the rural society can be identified in Srinivas's restudy (1996: 138) of Rampura village in South India.

When I revisited the village in the summer of 1952... there was promise of further change. There were two rice mills, two buses and a 'complete' middle school... A school building was being built and plans were ready for constructing a hospital. The number of buses on the Mysore-Hogur road had increased and many village youths were studying in Mysore in high schools or colleges. It already emphasises the fact that technology is one of the predominant reasons for social change in the rural society.

In contrast to the rural society, other sectors like the plantations, and urban

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centres had experienced great advantages of industrialisation by adopting the modern technology. For example, Sri Lanka introduced Free Trade Zones, where multinational corporations started various industries in the several urban centres under the open economy. The emphasis on technology in a country like Sri Lanka with a predominant rural (73 per cent) and agricultural economy shows that the country believes in industrialisation as a path of development. Industrialisation is associated with modern technology.

Unlike industrialisation for economic development, social and cultural development is visible through consumerism of the society. For this consumerism, technology helps and emancipates the cultural barriers. There can be no doubt that the rise and spread of new technologies bring about new forms of social relations and new cultural patterns. In other words capitalist political economy has penetrated the cultural barriers, and the new culture belongs to the technology today. This culture provokes the people for secularist consumerism like the developed west.

The technology is a critical factor of modernization. It always helps to diffuse modern social and cultural traits that originated in the technologically advanced countries. Moreover, this advance technology has made avenues for globalisation and the modern culture has been penetrating the underdeveloped countries easily through the globalisation. The impact of globalisation is explained by Giddens (1990: 175). "One of the fundamental consequences of modernity... is globalisation. This is more than a diffusion of Western institutions across the world, in which other cultures are crushed." Then technology is a dominant factor of social change. However, most of technological innovations come from the developed world. For example, the television sets that the villagers have been using in Sri Lanka are basically products of Japan, and by watching television programmes they are getting the sense of global

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culture. That means, the use of modern technology not only welcomes the pure technology, but also the modern culture. This situation can be identified in the rural Sri Lanka also. The development of mass communication during the last two decades has influenced the village life of today. Most of the villagers are spending at least three hours to watch television daily. Especially, they are watching news, tele dramas, films, cricket match, etc. in the evening. They have changed their life patterns according to these programmes. Those who migrated to the urban centres for various purposes from the village are influenced by the mass communication based on technology. They are changing with the new attitudes of the modern social and cultural world.

## 2.6 Culture and Social Change

The process of social change along with development and modernization will change the economy, institutional matrices, social values, attitudes and ultimately the way of life of people in the society. That means there are direct links between social change and the culture of a society. Culture is a dominant concept in anthropology and it is not worth if we are not concerned with the cultural impact of social change in this study. Especially when we study the rural community, this concept is important.

What is the meaning of social change? It is very difficult to explain the concept in few words. Both natural and man-made reasons are behind social change. However, it is directly linked with the culture of a society. The extent, direction, and causes related to the social change lead to the culture of a particular society. All types of social changes affect and reshape the culture. That means, culture is a very important criterion to understand the social change in every society. The next question is culture. Here we should not go for the most popular and descriptive definitions!

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given by the anthropologists and sociologists. We can simply say 'culture is the way of life of a particular society or community.' Culture is society, and *vice versa*. Culture always shows the way of life to the member of a society or community, and the culture develops by its members' productive innovations of material and non-material things and even by diffusion of things with other societies or communities at times. "According to the culture theory, people do things because of their culture; on the sociality theory, people do things with, to, and in respect of each other, using means that we can describe, if we wish to, as culture" (Carrithers, 1992: 34). In this sense cultural representation and cohesion are very important to the society and its social order. For social change, what kinds of factors are most relevant? The process of adaptation, diffusion, and conflict are the vital factors in the transformation of all societies. These are the factors for cultural change too.

The cultural change is similar to the social change. It is a shadow of social change. There is some interruption between cultural and social change. This is cultural lag. But both move together. "Cultural change or cultural evolution does not operate on isolated societies but always on interconnected systems in which societies are variously linked within wider social fields" (Wolf in Carrithers, 1992: 118-19). Cultural links with various societies make some clues for change. However, these clues operate through the processes of adaptation, diffusion and conflict. These three factors of social and cultural change can be discussed under two concepts. These two concepts are westernisation and sanskritisation.

Westernisation is the phenomenon of adapting the western cultural traits by the Sri Lankans after the European invasion. During colonial regime, especially under the British, the Sri Lankan Society has assimilated many western cultural traits. Not just technology, customs, values, dress, bureaucracy, we have also taken their

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language and religion. Westernisation is not limited to the Sri Lanka itself. It is very much related to other Asian societies. Srinivas explains how it affected the Indian society. "It was unlike any previous period in Indian history as the British brought with them new technology, institutions, knowledge, beliefs, and values. The new technology, and the revolution in communications which this brought about, enabled the British to integrate the country as never before in the history" (Srinivas, 1972: 46). This is a traditional way of thinking of westernisation in the third world countries. It must also be remembered that westernisation is never a finished product. It is continuous engagement, an unending project. Gupta (2000: 14) describes the utility of the westernisation.

When westernisation implies respect for others, it should not be seen as a purely voluntary act. It is by respecting others that greater social mobility and citizenship rights can be protected. When relations between people are governed in the main by universalistic norms, then regardless of personal motivation, achievements orientation and popular participation become standard norms in society.

This is a critical condition of the process of westernisation in the Asian context. We have failed to protect such universalistic norms in our society. There is much discrimination among various strata in the society. In the sense of development and modernization, urbanised centres get its benefits, but rural communities are losing their way of life and culture. They have to follow westernised urban communities, which blindly copy the West as their model of behaviour. There are no clues of modernising their own tradition in the rural society. However, by migrating to the urban centres any body can change their social and cultural life and they can modernise their tradition too. For example, in Sri Lanka, a person from the Tom-Tom Beaters or Drummers caste can start his own cultural centre in an urban centre and earn sufficient money by performing at the stage. If not, he has to follow the customary and ritualistic role in the village. In this manner, westernisation is a rapid

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way of social and cultural change.

Sanskritisation is a term used by Srinivas (1972: 6) to describe the process of social and cultural change in the traditional social structure of India. According to him:

Sanskritisation is the process by which a "low" Hindu caste, or tribal or group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, "twice-born" caste. Generally such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community.

The concept of sanskritisation basically implies the changes of low caste communities in Indian villages. This process is more precisely explained by Singh (1999: 6):

Sanskritisation is the process of cultural and social mobility during these periods of relative closure of the Hindu social system. It is an endogenous source of social change. From a social psychological point, Sanskritisation is a culturally specific case of the universal motivation toward 'anticipatory socialisation' to the culture of a higher group in the hope of gaining its status in future. The specific sense of Sanskritisation lies in the historicity of its meaning based on the Hindu tradition. In this respect, Sanskritisation is a unique historical expression of the general process of acculturation as a means of vertical mobility of groups.

Though it is relevant to the changes of Hindu caste system in India, it can be used to study the changes of caste system in rural Sri Lanka. Michael Roberts argues that there is such process of Sanskritisation among the low caste communities in the maritime regions in Sri Lanka. "Despite the absence in Sri Lanka of a Brahmin community perpetuating a ritualised life style for laymen, one can pinpoint certain practices which bear comparison with the process of Sanskritisation" (Roberts, 1982: 221). During colonial period, the most affected area - western maritime region had undergone several social and cultural changes. One of them is the rise of social mobility of Karava (fishermen), Salagama (weavers and cinnamon peelers), and Durava (toddy tapers) castes (KSD communities). The process of upward social mobility of the KSD communities of the country can be explained as follows:

[I]n their very success in challenging Goyigama supremacy, the KSD elites tended to pursue social prestige in a style that had been formulated by the

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Goyigama aristocracy and to turn themselves into something like their arch opponents. In this qualified sense it may not be going too far to speak of the Goyigama-isation [Sanskritisation] of the Karava, Salagama, and Durava elites (Roberts, 1982: 224). Sanskritisation is concerned with the social and cultural changes among the elites of low castes. Besides following the upper caste community, they have gone beyond their life style by adopting the new opportunities in professional fields such as medicine, law, politics, and administration. However, the other members too are mobilised accordingly during this period. Furthermore, if there is a process of Goyigama-isation (Sanskritisation), there are also no restrictions for any other low caste community to follow the upper caste occupation – mainly farming. They always followed the social and cultural status of upper caste Goyigama. This is all the more so in the rural society of Sri Lanka. Yalman (1967: 56) explains:

The Washermen and the Blacksmiths, on the other hand, did much better business and were, relatively speaking, quite well-to-do. The Blacksmith family of Teruteene was one of the largest landholding groups, and the Washermen were not far behind. In fact, one of the Washermen, Kiriunga, had done so well that he had paid for part of the reconstruction of the Maluvegoda temple near the Washermen's hamlet. This emphasises that landlordism and farming are not confined to Goyigama upper hierarchies in the rural Sri Lanka. There are caste etiquette or traditional rules, which differentiated between high and low castes and expressed differences in status within each caste. However, these etiquette are diminishing because of the process of Westernisation and Sanskritisation or Goyigama-isation in Sri Lankan rural society. In this way, we can use these concepts to understand the patterns of change in the rural society of Sri Lanka.

**2.7 Chapter Summary**

Development and modernization are different concepts with some similarities as well as dissimilarities. However, both concepts emerged with the Western

experiences of social change. Then, on the one hand, most of the anthropologists and sociologists pay attention to articulate the theoretical paradigms for analysing the Western social change, on the other hand, they replicate their theoretical discourse for Third World countries. This development discourse has accompanied the process of colonialism and post-colonialism. However, with the development of capitalism and world hegemonic power of the West, the third World has to follow the capitalist path of development and modernization today. In other words, the other countries have to make several changes in their economic and social structures for survival. Sri Lanka as a dependent or peripheral country follows the same path of development and modernization as it did before independence. The governments after independence have accelerated the structural changes through the path of development and modernization. The efforts of development and modernization followed during the last 50 years attempted to change both the urban and rural societies. Therefore, I will use a theory on development and a model of modernization with my own assumption – 'state intervention' – to study the social changes in rural society of Sri Lanka.

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Exam CSS      state building      Distribution      Participation