

Unit 29

Theories of Modernisation and Modernity

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Learning Objectives

After having read this unit you will be able to,

- define Modernisation
- outline approaches, implications, and phases of Modernisation
- discuss Modernisation in India
- describe the phenomena of modernity
- outline the approaches to modernity

29.1 Introduction

The theories of Modernisation inform us about how the various parts of the world developed into industrial powers. The approaches/theories that describe and analyse how and why this happened are the subject of the initial part of this lesson. Thereafter we will turn to modernity and see how a presentation and analysis of the same helps our understanding of modern western society as also the social processes witnessed in some Asian societies. Thus Modernisation is an outcome of various social processes. The major events in this historical development began after the IInd world war and these include the emergence of America (US) as a superpower in the globe which had the result of trying to stymie the rise of communism. To bring about this aim of 'containment ' the US invested greatly in the strengthening of the economic base of certain countries including Western Europe, South Korea and Japan. Modernisation also stems from the growth of the communist movements in China Vietnam, Soviet Union (now no longer existing as a communist bloc) and Cuba. The third of these processes include the factors of decolonialisation in Asia and Africa and the termination of colonies controlled by European powers.

At this point of time the former colonies had to face the challenge of adopting some appropriate model of growth. In this they were assisted and helped by the US which sent vast teams of social scientists to study the

ground situation in the new nations states. The idea behind this move of the US was to see how capitalist ideologies could be used in the economic growth of these nations most of whom were poor due to the long period of colonisation which had greatly debilitated their resources and has been deeply exploited. This included the export of raw materials which were turned into products and commodities and reexported to the colonies so as to make great economic profits. This strategy of supplanting capitalism and capitalist ideologies was no doubt also an attempt to the influence of communist ideology and to destroy it over a period of time. There is thus a great dimension of political maneuvers and ideology which is involved in the process of Modernisation. Thus the scholars in all fields of social science studied these societies and their findings began to be published soon after the IInd world war. The main tools of analysis and of subsequent published included primarily the evolutionary theory and secondly the functionalist theory. Let us describe these approaches now so that the overall process of Modernisation begins to be clear. Thus evolutionary theory and theorists pointed out the several factors which comprised the view point of this approach found social change in these societies to be in a linear progression going from primitive to complex society. This was held to be so in all societies. Again this theory and the theorists associated with it held that such linear progress of societies was leading to a better world and represented the good of humanity and civilization at large. Further social change was envisioned as a gradual occurrence and was dissociated from any sudden and violent chain of events eg revolution. Change was slow and steady and not sudden and violent as the communist ideology upheld. This slow change considering the situation of modern societies was felt to take enormous spans of time running in to centuries, not just decades. Thus the functionalist theorists, foremost of whom was Parsons, built up various tenets to promote its view point the main ones being the analogy of society as being an organism which had various interrelated segments in societal institutions. In this organismic entity (society) each of the various institutions performed a particular part which contributed to the whole. This theory propagated that there were four main functions which the institutions performed. These were the functions of - (a) adaptation to the environment performed by the capitalist economic system. Then was the function of. (b) goal attainment which was a government function a function which encompassed liberal aims(Rojas 1996: p1). Next came the function of integration performed by legal and religious institutions, specifically the Christian religion. Finally there is the latency function performed by the family and by educational institutions.

29.2 Approaches to Modernisation

Thus Modernisation approaches distinguished between traditional societies and modern societies. Thus the traditional societies were such that they tended to have a large personal, face to face nature which was felt to be inferior in terms of market relations. On the other hand modern societies tended to be neutral and therefore much more capable of dealing with and exploiting the market and the environment.

One of the key institutions in the society is the family and the nature of this differed again in traditional and modern societies. Thus the family in traditional societies was responsible for many functions. That is to say it is multifunctional and covered issues of religion, welfare, education, reproduction also emotional scaffolding. On the other hand the modern family which the functions of the family are now the domain of the state.

In this theory social disturbances occur when any of the parts of society begin to malfunction or to fail to deliver what was expected of it to maintain the status quo. Disturbances include peaceful / violent agitation, revolution, guerilla warfare and now terrorism. However there is a disturbing side to these activities because any individual / institution that provokes the state and the status quo is deliberately and often violently desisted and resisted for doing so. These actions are deliberately viewed as action which is humanitarian. The question of human rights is a recent phenomena and organisations have be instituted to ensure that democracy is not violated at the cost of middle level disturbances whether by groups or by institutions.

Box 29.1: Mc Donaldization

If we equate formal rationality with modernity, then the success and spread of the fast food restaurant, as well as to the degree to which it is serving as a model for much of the rest of society, indicate that we continue to live in a modern world...

While there may be other changes in the economy which support the idea of a post industrial society, the fast food restaurant and the many other elements that are modeled after it do not. (Ritzer 1996, sociological theory. P:579).

Smelser's point of view differed somewhat from what we have been pointing out. He took as his point of attention the effect of the economy and related institutions on the overall social structure. He pointed out that in Modernisation process society developed from simple technology to complex ideology. Further this was a movement away from subsistence to cash crops so far as agriculture is concerned. Again Smelser indicated that machine power begins to dominate pushing aside simply human (physical) labour. Finally there is an emphasis on urbanisation and urban structures rather than development of the rural areas. Smelser however was realistic enough to realise that these developments were not simple and linear but that these processes took place at the same time (together) but not at the same rate (Smesler, 1969).

Also such changes would occur at a different pace at different social structure and societies. In other words there was not one single trajectory towards social change because the traditions were varied in different societies. They therefore provided different kinds of challenges. Similarly Rostow published a theory of Modernisation which took the terminology of aviation and proposed various stages of development.

This theory talks of a primitive society moving on to get preconditions for the pre "take - off" onto the "take- off stage", the drive to maturity and finally to a mass consumption society. Thus for Rostow (Rostow, 1960) economic development goes through various stages and that this is universal to all societies, and that Modernisation is a process of homogenisation, of Europeanization, irreversible progressive, evolutionary and transformative. This theory has some questionable implications. Thus following this theory it is implied that the nations which are traditional have as their ultimate model western advanced societies which they must emulate in every way to themselves reach an advanced state/modern state. This in itself implies that the capitalist state and ideology is the path to be followed by the under developed states. Thus Modernisation and theories explaining it accept

without hesitation that American policies of trade and foreign policy, and that of international relations have to be accepted and subscribed to because they are at the core of the modernising process.

29.3 Implication of Modernisation Theories

As you will have noticed that there is a heavy western bias in these theories and their implications. Modernisation theory itself is mostly a western product and sets up these societies as an ideal that the less developed countries must follow without hesitation including capitalist ideology because this “works” and works best. However dependency theory takes a wider global perspective. It points out that the problems faced in development are not just those of social structure in traditional societies but in large part due to world wide structures imposed by the Western world, or the North.

Reflection and Action 29.1

Do you think that the “metropolis-satellite” relationship between countries of north and south still exists? Give reasons for your answer.

Thus Andre Gunder Frank has pointed out that relations between North and South are arranged as a chain described by him as “metropolis - satellite” relationships. Thus we can see that there is an underlying hierarchy in world relations (Foster-Coster, 1985). At the top of the chain is the metropolis (US) that has no strong dependence on other regions. We then go on to the strong dependencies but are dependent on the USA (or other well developed Western societies) for aid or any other kind of help. The downward chain continues and culminates right down to states (nations) which are very highly or even totally dependent on the nations higher up in the hierarchy of dependencies for almost everything in food, fertilizers, clothes, automobiles, machines etc.

According to Frank such dependencies become a problem when a State wants to develop itself economically and socially. Thus such moves often call for sanctions against the satellite states by the metropolises on which the satellite is dependent. This means also that dependency of this sort stems the freedom to chose by the satellite states, and to try and evolve in their own way because whatever they have by way of economic wealth is consumed by the nations higher in the hierarchy.

This theory is readily witnessed in international relations and the aid to the third world by the North have the most exploitative terms and conditions, which ensure that the satellite states can never be free of the donor in economic terms. Frank opines that the dismantling of such relations can alone lead to development along the lines that the third world nations want. Thus dependency theory is opposed to Modernisation theory, but it is definitely an alternative explanation. Further such an explanation exposes some harsh realities of contemporary societies across the globe. Modernisation theory is more of an ideology whereas dependency theories exposes the harsh economic international realities. Neither of them has produced any specific development just attributable to them. It may be noted however that Modernisation has since the 17th century has had an affect, beginning with the Western countries, impacted all over the globe. To give an example let us turn to the field of communication. Thus Modernisation theories shed light on how the media is affected by these relatively recent changes both in relatively traditional and postmodern societies we may note that the

Modernisation theories we have been discussing can be seen to have evolved in three relatively distinct phases. The first phase of these theories began in the 1950s and 1960s and tried to explain how Western styles of living gradually spread all over the globe (world). There was also a spread of technological innovations and the ideology of individualism.

29.4 Phases in Modernisation Processes

- The economic aspect where the mass media helped to spread technological innovations that were at the core of Modernisation.
- Cultural development including education and literacy rates. This too was aided by the mass media which can promote modernity.
- Identity development especially a rational identity was also helped by the media including the process of nation building and elections.

However a basic shortcoming of these approaches to Modernisation was their Western bias. Now the second phase of Modernisation was linked to critical theory that held sway in the 1980s. These theories are in fact a critique of the western impact of Modernisation. Thus according to the media dependency theory there was a dependence of the developing countries on the mass media of the western world. That is to say the peripheral countries depended upon the core. Now we come to the third phase of the development of Modernisation theory beginning in the 1990s. These theories attempted to be neutral in their approach. Thus according to Giddens modern society (Giddens, A. 1991) and culture is marked by time space distanciation and disembedding features or characteristics. Thus while traditional society involves much face to face interaction by those living in proximity to each other in modern cultures and societies the space across which interaction occurs using mass media. Thus the disembedding process such as currency, symbols, the internet and English language all help bring the North and South into a clearer focus. We now turn to another area of Modernisation which has its presentation and analysis based on work in India.

29.5 Modernisation: The Asian Syndrome

Yogendra Singh points out at the beginning of his analysis that prior to Modernisation the traditions of India were based on the various principles of hierarchy, holism, continuity and transcendence. These were the basic aspects of tradition. These factors to some extent existed also in the traditional west. However as Singh notes Indian and Western tradition were in fact divergent to each other. This arose specifically from their own differing historical background their specific social and cultural heritage and overall social situation. Singh asks whether despite these differences would it lead to a universal model of Modernisation? Singh distinguishes between social change *per se* and Modernisation. Social change as such need not necessarily imply Modernisation. However the changes which were ortho-genetic and hetero-genetic were pre-modern. Thus the Islamic tradition in India was heterogenetic and was established by conquest. Thus endogenous change in Hinduism were confined to Sanskritisation. This in itself was based on a historical process which took many generations and was positional alone not structural. Modernisation in India commenced with its contact with the west which brought about vast changes in the Indian social structure. However it cannot be said that all contacts led to Modernisation. In fact Singh notes that in the process of contact with the west certain traditional institutions

also got further strengthened. Thus as Singh notes it would be misleading to think of a clear polarity between tradition and modernity, and he feels this is more theoretical than actual.

Box 29.2: Changes in Traditional India

The changes which thus occurred were confined to differentiation within the framework of traditional social structure and values; structural changes were way few, and those which took place were limited in respect of the type of roles Similar development in religious role structure and organisations partially followed the emergence of other traditions. But these changes by no means could be called structural, since differentiation of roles was segmental and did not alter the system as a whole. (Yogendra Singh, 1986, *The Modernisation Of Indian Tradition*: p:193).

During the British period Modernisation was selective and sequential. It was not in synchronisation with family caste and village. These areas were not of much concern by the British, more so after the revolt of 1857. British administration felt that these structures were not dynamic and were autonomous, especially the village and caste system. Caste was considered in the army and beurocrasy, and in the national movement of a communal electorate was introduced. Singh feels these factors influenced the post colonial Modernisation process. The process of Modernisation found expression and ground in the freedom struggle of India led by Mahatma Gandhi whose actions and mobilisation of the masses led to what Singh calls a new political culture of Modernisation. However, Gandhi was not able to avert the partition of the nation into two because the historical background of Islam and Hinduism was different.

Singh asks how Modernisation can lead to an integrative pattern which is rather a complicated one whether this is overt or covert. How can a society avert a structural breakdown. From here on in the answer we are on familiar ground (discussed earlier in this unit) as Singh turns to the main theories of Modernisation, that is the structural and the evolutionary theories of Modernisation. These approaches have been adequately discussed earlier and we will not repeat them again. The student can at this point go back to the beginning of the unit before reading further.

29.6 Modernisation Process as a Whole

In this analysis Singh now turns towards a discussion of Modernisation as a whole. He points out that Modernisation did not lead to institutional and structural breakdown because of the characteristics of society in India. One of these characteristics was the political structures. Further the caste system itself was also independent of the political system. Thus the various village areas had their own councils (panchayat) through which they attempted to solve village level problems. This type of inter structural independence was a great facilitator of Modernisation, but as pointed out earlier did not lead to societal breakdown. Thus Singh notes that modernity developed as a sub-structure and sub-culture rather an over arching entity. Over time however this segmental presence of Modernisation became 'encompassing' and the structural autonomy was no longer the prime 'shock-absorber'. Again changes in political systems made this pervade on society and stratification cultures. In its wake there are stresses on the entire cultural system. However it is clear that Modernisation requires adaptive changes in value systems which are non traditional in terms of values and

norms. Singh gives the example of the process of secularism and untouchability which are definitely part of the Modernisation process in present day India which is resisted by the traditional value system (Singh, 1986).

Reflection and Action 29.2

To what extent does Modernisation lead to the breakdown of inequality? Give reasons to support your answer.

Singh asks again whether society in India be able to avoid “structural breakdown” in what he refers to as the “second phase” of Modernisation? Further the absence of the structural autonomy creates serious problems or “bottlenecks” for the transition to modernity? Thus Singh opines that in the cultural area legislations have altered the overall landscape since they have been made with a view to terminate social inequality and its attendant exploitation and alienation, and pave the way towards democratic rights and other commitments made in the constitution of India. Such processes have pushed society in India away from the positional changes of Srinivas’s theory of Sanskritisation. In place of this process there has been a creation of new identities, caste associations and tribes. This process in itself is speeded up by the Great Traditions of Modernisation eg education, industrialisation and urbanisation. Further Singh notes that traditional structures are being mobilised for modern objectives and protest movements. Paradoxically tradition itself is strengthened because media and transport processes spread ritual structures, and help organise further the various religious groups and activities. Again religious sects and other religious groupings employ the bureaucratic approach and this is in part responsible towards the integration of sects from the overarching religious order. However Singh is careful to point out that in the post colonial period of Modernisation there have been several structural changes. Thus caste, family, village, and community retained their traditional identity. Caste especially has been witnessed to be extremely fluid and adaptive to new situations and has in no way been abolished so far as the ground reality is concerned. Further caste has adapted to the modern era in India by involving itself in many different areas such as democratic participation, politics and trade unionism, and is tenacious in its persistence more so in the area of joint family groups.

Modernisation in the colonial era was relatively homogenous in the elite structures. Thus the elite from industry, military and politics came from a background in caste and class stratum. These elites had access to modern education and had similar ideologies. It is clear then that the base for such elites was fairly delimited. In the post independence era this narrow base has increased. The result of this that there is a differentiation between the elites themselves, broadly the political and the non political elite. Singh points out that the political elite is less Westernized and identify much more with traditionality and symbols related to it. Singh also notes that the federal structure of a one party system has given way to a multiparty system, with the subsequent divergence in ideologies. Further the income created by the various FYPs has mainly benefited those who are already rich rather than the poor, especially rural masses. Thus the attempt to plan has accentuated the divide between the rich and the poor. Again the fast rate of growth in population has itself created structural tensions. Thus till recently the industrialisation process India remained what Singh calls a ‘rural-peasant’ type of society, except for pockets such as the metropolitans of India of which there are few in India.

These structural inconsistencies arise therefore from a variety of sources; these are:

- Democratisation without appropriate civic culture
- Bureaucratisation without universalistic norms
- Growth of the mass media.
- Aspiration growth without increased resources and distributive justice.
- Stress on welfare ideology only at the verbal level.
- Over urbanisation without inadequate and proper charges in the social strata.

Singh cites Gunnar Myrdal according to whom nationalism and democracy have grown in an uneven way in Asia. In western societies an independent state, effective government and adequate law enforcement preceded nationalism and democracy. In contrast in South Asia this was not the case and therefore this imbalance also created a economic dependence on developed countries. It also meant slow economic development and extremely tardy changes in institutions.

In India especially with a larger percentage of intellectuals and middle classes which are important for a real democracy, Modernisation did not proceed unimpeded. As Myrdal notes the "soft-state" approach meant a serious blow for social change which can be "circular" or "cumulative". Myrdal does not subscribe to evolutionary stages of growth which he feels is a teleological and conservative ideology. Thus the Modernisation process in India is moving towards a critical phase. However Singh is of the view that these stresses and contradictions will not lead to institutional breakdown. He feels that a 'constant coordination of Modernisation' is absolutely essential for a democracy based Modernisation in India. He is also of the view that Modernisation is not a single monolithic process and can and does differ from one society to another.

29.7 The Phenomena of Modernity

Let us now turn to a related concept and a related process to Modernisation viz. the phenomena of modernity. Thus the term modernity is a term employed to discuss the stage of a society that is more developed than another society. This term is usually employed to describe a society that uses world wide capitalism as the model to overall world development. Thus when a society is has the characteristics of modernity it is named a modern society. On the other hand the process of becoming a modern society is called Modernisation (as we have seen earlier). The defining features of such modern societies is:

- Emergence of nation state
- Industrialisation and capitalism
- Rise of democracy
- Heavier dependence on technological innovation
- Attendant urbanisation
- The overall development in mass media

In western Europe some of the defining features include:

- Renaissance and enlightenment

- Reformation and counter reformation
- French Revolution and American Revolution
- The Industrial Revolution

Many attempts have been made in sociology to try and define modernity. Some of the factors used to define modernity include:-

- Disenchantment of the world
- Rationalisation
- Mass society
- Secularisation
- Democratisation, and so on

Thus modernity is often contextualised by comparing modern societies to pre or post modern societies. This in itself creates some problems in terms of being able to define modernity. This is especially difficult when we try to construct a three stage model from pre modern to modern, and then onto post modernity. The features we have noted is a movement from somewhat isolated communities to more large scale integrated societies. In this sense Modernisation could be understood as a process which is not unique to Europe alone.

Box 29.3: Cultural Crystallisation

One of Germany's leading social philosophers in the Adenauer period following the second world war, Gehlen (1963) proposed the theory of "cultural crystallisation" to describe the modern situation. According to Gehlen in a famous phrase, "the premises of the Enlightenment are dead, only their consequences remain". In his view the institutional complexes of modern society have separated themselves from cultural modernity which can now be discarded... cultural ideas are no longer able to produce the "new" that was central to modernity (Genard Delanty 2000, *Modernity and Postmodernity*, p:73).

Thus large scale integration implies that there is a vibrant economy which reaches out to all parts of a nation state. This in itself is possible when mobility in the society has increased. Further these developments imply specialisation with is a society and linking up of sectors. However these processes can sometimes appear to be paradoxical. Thus a unique local culture loses its identity by these increasingly powerful influences of cultural factors eg. Folktales, popular music and homogenisation of cultures, food recipes. These factors are found to exist in a greater or lesser extent in all local cultures, and helps to diversify them. This is found to a greater extent in the metropolitan towns where mobility is higher.

Thus bureaucracy and hierarchical aspect of governments and the industrial sector are the areas which grow in power in an unprecedented manner. However the role of the individual still exists in such a society where there is dynamic competition and individualism, both exist side by side. This is then quite different from societies where the role of the individual is ascriptive. That is to say the individual in modern societies is influenced by more than family background and family preoccupations.

Now it is necessary to point out that such social changes are found at different

levels of social integration, and are not simply the features of European society at any particular point of time. These changes can happen when two communities merge together. Thus when two individuals develop a relationship the division of roles also tend to merge. Again in the process of globalisation we find the international flows of capital change the ground situation. Thus while it can be said that modernity has some apparently contradictory elements in reality these can be reduced to several simple concepts related to social change.

How then does this view of modernity explain the world wide influences of West European and American societies since the Renaissance. Initially, we can say that the internal factor is that only in Europe, that rational thinking began to substitute intellectual activities that were shrouded in superstition and religion.

Secondly, there was an external elements as well, and this was the factor of colonisation, which created an exploitation nexus between these societies, which were exploited and others which exploited the societies.

However we find that there are many traces of ancient societies which coexist within the umbrella of modernity. This includes joint families, small scale enterprise, vast income diversity and so on. It has however been argued that features many in fact be regarded as aspects of modernity itself rather than any threat to it.

Modernisation was very beneficial to society in many ways, especially in the field of health and in the field of nutrition. Thus fatal diseases were controlled or eliminated, and the values of egalitarianism began manifesting themselves.

However some drawbacks are also there and the picture is not just positive. This not only did technological advantages breed greater economic wealth but also developed nuclear bombs two of which were dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Nuclear technology still evokes negative responses, when it is proposed to be used for military purposes. Similarly the degradation of environment and overall pollution are well known. However decreasing biodiversity , climate change all result from a hyper individual society. Psychological problems and laxity of morals also create problems of modernity.

29.8 Approaches to Modernity

Thus as Taylor points out there are at least two approaches for the comprehension of how modernity came into being. These are ways of comprehending what makes the existing society so very different from that which enveloped man before modernity arose.

One method looks at the differences in contemporary western society and culture and medieval Europe as similar to the difference between medieval Europe and medieval India. So we can think about and analyse difference between civilizations, and their attendant culture. On the other hand the situation can be looked at from the viewpoint of change involving the end of one type of traditional society and the coming into being of modern societies. The latter perspective is the more influential one and it provides an analysis that gives a different perspective. The approach mentioned first is a **cultural approach** and the second an **a-cultural approach**. In the cultural approach there are many cultures, which have in them language and cultural

practices that help us to understand the self the other psychological sets, religion, morality and so on. These factors are specific to a culture and are often non comparable. Keeping the above in view a cultural theory of modernity outlines first and then analyses the transformation into the new culture. The present day world can be seen as a culture with specific comprehension of the self and morality. Thus this model of modernity can be seen and used analytically to contrast with the earlier aspects of civilization (Taylor, 2004). On the other hand, an **acultural** theory describes the entire process in terms of some culture neutral analysis. This implies that the entire process is not analysed in terms of culture that existed and then transformed into modernity. Rather it is considered too general an approach that can be seen as the process any traditional society would undergo. Thus **acultural theory** conceives of modernity as the rise of reason in different ways such as the growth of scientific consciousness, development of secular thought ways, instrumental rationality, fact finding and evolution.

Modernity can also be explained and accounted for in socio-cultural terms and also intellectual shifts. Thus transformation social, cultural, individual can be seen to arise from increased mobility, demographic changes, industrialisation and so on. In such cases as mentioned above modernity is conceived of as transformations which all cultures can go through and will undergo in due course of time.

Such changes are not defined in terms of individualism, morality, good and evil. They are instead talking of cultures and civilizations as a whole.

Box 29.4: Explanations of Modernity

...Explanations of modernity in terms of *reason* seem to be the most popular. Even social explanations tend to invoke reason. Social transformations, like mobility and industrialisation are thought to bring about intellectual and spiritual changes because they shake people loose from old habits and beliefs – religion or traditional morality – which then become unsustainable because they lack the kind of independent rational grounding that the beliefs of modernity – such as individualism or instrumental reason – are assumed to have (Charles Taylor, 2004, *Two Theories of Modernity*).

Thus any culture would be impacted by the increase in scientific consciousness, secularisation of religion and the growth of instrumental thinking. Modernity then, in this approach/theory issues from rationality which is culture-neutral. This is despite the fact that the theory can account for why modernity arose in one society rather than another; or why it arose in some societies first and other later. In fact the theory does not lay down specific points or stages into modernity but as something general that can take any particular culture as its input. So this operation/transformation is not to be seen as a perspective about human values or shared meanings. In the case of social explanations, causality is assigned to developments like industrialisation that do impact on values. Considering then the explanations in terms of rationality, this is thought to be the exercise of a “general capacity” which was ripe for maturing and unfolding. Given specific conditions, people see scientific thinking as having a place in society. They will also see that instrumental rationality is beneficial. Again religious beliefs are by no means universal or undisputed, and require a leap of faith. Finally facts and values are separated.

Now these transformations are facilitated by the presence of certain values and understandings and are hindered by other types of cultural values if they happen to be the dominant ones. These transformations are defined by the whole social and cultural context existing at any point of time.

We can see then that the dominant theories of modernity over the last few centuries have been of the acultural type. Modernity also involves a shift in the individual and community perspective. This is because until the viewpoint changes the society concerned cannot move from a pre-modern to modern and onto post modernity. On the other hand Weber paradoxically argues that the rationalisation (an important aspect of modernity) is a steady process, which was cultural general rather than culture specific. Similarly the process of pre-modern to modern in society was explained by Durkheim in terms of the transformation from mechanical to organised forms of social solidarity. This is also the aspect of Tocqueville's concept of "creeping democracy" in which there was a move towards greater sense and actualisation of equality among the various strata of society. These are all different but at the same time related activities.

29.9 Conclusion

Given all these types of explanations Taylor still feels that explanations and analyses of modernity focusing on reason are the most accepted ones. Explanations focusing on the social still tend to talk of reason transformations that are social. Thus the factors of mobility and industrialisation are felt to bring about intellectual and spiritual changes since they tend to create new layers of conditioning which by pass the old layers. That is they loosen old habits and beliefs, whether religion or the old morality including individualism and instrumental reason. There is however the question of negative theories of modernity which do not have the positive or beneficial view of modern developments and see society going into a decline with the onset and the maturing of modernity. Thus rather than seeing modernity as having unleashed many capacities in different directions, negative theories, see it as a dangerous development. These too are essentially acultural theories. Thus modernity is characterised by a loss of perspective, an erasure of roots, dependence on history or even God. Thus the negative theories of modernity see it as a loss of the previous state of overall well being.

That is to say that the arrival of modernity and all its various facets has to be seen as a mixed blessing. On one side are the positive socially relevant areas and technological development. On the other are the problems associated with the arrival of and settling down of modernity. Here the negatively oriented theorists point out that modernity has its own problems created by a fast developing technology that has its impact on the overall life of the people.

Thus while modernity began in the sixteenth century at the time of Enlightenment, it continued to develop until the beginning of the 20th century. In other words modernity has its "discontents" as well. Let us briefly mention what these are.

Firstly we must realise that modernity does have problems as we pointed out. The belief in development and progress, forward looking attitude, the dependence on rationality and reason have also given rise to optimism that was betrayed by doubts raised by post traditional thought. However we

must note that modernity achieved a lot of social structural changes.

Thus the routine behavior on day to day basis alters and changes as technology develops. This is because technological innovations and inventions since Enlightenment have altered the entire fabrics of the world, restricting itself to large well developed towns, cities, and metropolitans. It is capitalism which has basically been the power behind the innovations and inventions.

The airplane and motor car have from an initial slow start become integral parts of daily life the world over. Thus time and space have conceptually receded and nothing can be done in the modern world with precise timing and adequate space. Thus mechanical solidarity has given way to organic solidarity to use the terms coined by Durkheim. Weber's concept of rationalisation has pervaded the modern world and given rise to precise type of thinking. Further urbanism saw large scale migrations. Discipline, secularity, alienation, anomic and the iron cage of bureaucracy are all parts of the organic structure of bureaucratic organisation in the modern world.

29.10 Further Reading

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