Chapter Two

Development and Modernization as Patterns of Social Change

2.1 Introduction

'Social change' in its broadest sense is change in social relations of a society. In this sense, social change is an on-going phenomenon in any society. The specific meaning of social change is described by various development and modernization theorists. Changes in a small group of people such as a village community are important at the level of the group itself. However, such changes are also important at the level of the larger society. Patterns of social change at the larger society become discernible only over a long period of time unless of course the society undergoes a revolutionary change which would change both its social structure and organization. Development and modernization theories describe the long-term and large-scale changing patterns of a society. As discussed in Chapter One, several structural changes have taken place during the post-independence period in Sri Lanka. How have these changes affected the urban and rural communities during the last half-century? Who has benefited from these changes? In what direction, are these changes taking the country, especially the rural society of Sri Lanka? These are some of the questions probed in this thesis. In this chapter some theoretical issues pertaining to the changes in Sri Lankan rural society will be discussed. The discussion in this chapter will broadly be premised on the theories of development and modernization.

2.2 Definition of Development and Modernization

The concept of development in its broadest sense includes economic
development and social and cultural changes that accompany it. Implicit in the concept of development (as has been traditionally formulated) is the notion that societies can be placed on an evolutionary ladder, with the Western developed nations at the top and the Third World (underdeveloped and developing) nations at the bottom. The concept of development represents the world as in "a state of linear progression and change in which the North is 'advanced,' and the South locked into static traditionalism which only modern technology and capitalist relations of production can transform" (Gardner and Lewis, 1996:1).

Modern social anthropology presents an increasingly critical attitude towards the concept of development. The social anthropology emphasises a highly complex series of variables, the analysis of which raises theoretical, political, and ethical problems. Especially, the post-modern theorists consider 'development' theory as a discourse of the West. The post-modern theorist, Escobar, says that the development discourse is defined much in relation to what can be thought, practised, or even imagined, on the future of Third World societies. Escobar (1992: 23) states:

[D]evolution can be described as an apparatus...that links forms of knowledge about the Third World with the development of forms of power and intervention, resulting in the mapping and production of Third World societies...By means of this discourse, individuals, governments, and communities are seen as "underdeveloped" (or placed under conditions in which they tend to see themselves as such), and are treated accordingly. According to this explanation, Third World has been described by the West as underdeveloped part of the world. Moreover there are several characteristics of this modern development discourse. Following are the tactical strategies on the Third World:

1. The intervention of power.

2. The professionalisation of development.
3. The institutionalisation of development.

It is agreed that these three steps of strategies have made an impact on the development discourse in the modern world. Networks of sites of power bind people into Western forms of thought and behaviour through the device of 'development.' Development is particularly effective because it appeals to the finest ideals of the western Enlightenment (often employing the most idealistic people in aid and development agencies) and to the aspirations for a better life by poor people. The post-modern anthropologists, Gardner and Lewis (1996: 25), defines 'development' as follows:

We use the term here to refer to processes of social and economic change, which have been precipitated by economic growth and/or specific policies and plans, whether at the level of the state, donor agencies or indigenous social movements. These can have either positive or negative effects on the people who experience them. Development is a series of events and actions, as well as a particular discourse and ideological construct.

Development is something to which we all aspire, and the ideas about the best means of achieving our own aspirations and needs are potentially as old as human civilisation. The concept of development in the modern sense started being used only since the 1940s when colonial territories began getting independence. The observation of 1960s as the first United Nations (UN) Development Decade was characterised by optimism and international co-operation. It was assumed that the development problems of the underdeveloped world would be solved quickly through the transfer of finance, technology, and experience from the developed countries. The force behind development was thought to be economic growth. It had been economic growth, which had taken the developed countries through to their own efforts.

However, in the light of rising world poverty and inequality in the 1970s (the second UN Development Decade), the optimism of such a speedy end to underdevelopment faded. Many developing countries achieved economic growth as
measured by Gross National Product (GNP). However, the population of these countries did not share this ‘development’ equally. During the third UN Development Decade of the 1980s, international co-operation and, to a lesser extent, optimism re-emerged within the literature on development. A better understanding of development patterns across the world and of the underlying processes that gave rise to those spatial patterns had highlighted the many ways in which the development prospects of all parts of the world were linked to each other. ‘Development’ in the 1980s was seen to be a multidimensional concept encapsulating widespread improvements in the social as well as the material well being of all in society. Moreover, it was recognised that there was no unilinear model for achieving development and that investment in all sectors including agriculture and industry was required. The UN defined the concept of ‘development’ as follows:

"...a more equitable distribution of income and wealth for promoting both social justice and efficiency of production, to achieve a greater degree of security and to expand and improve facilities for education, health, nutrition, housing and social welfare, and to safeguard environment... The qualitative and structural changes in society must go hand-in-hand with rapid economic growth, and existing disparities—regional, sectoral and social—should be substantially reduced. These objectives are both determining factors and end results of development” (Jones, 1981, cited in Gore, 2000: 05).

Furthermore, much improvement in the “quality of life” is expected through the development process. All societies have to construct a conceptual frame of need-structure to improve the quality of life. Dube (1990: 86) describes the following elements in such a need-structure:

1. **Survival needs**: with provisions for food, shelter, gainful employment, preventive and curative medicine, and protection of life and property.

2. **Societal needs**: involving promotion of community-ness and social cohesion; creation of effective conflict-resolving and consensus-building mechanism; and evolving and enforcing norms of social
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. 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.
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.
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 others 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
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).
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,
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.
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
on export markets of many countries within Latin America. These notions of dependency and underdevelopment gained widespread recognition with the work of Frank$^2$ (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: 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
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, 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. 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 Teripahve 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.
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.
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
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 Learner’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
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 Smelser’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 Smelser. 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
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 16th to 18th 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
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 cattles 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
centres had experienced great advantages of industrialisation by adopting 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
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.
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
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
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:

In their very success in challenging Goyigama supremacy, the KSD elites tended to pursue social prestige in a style that had been formulated by the
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
Goyigamaisation (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 Terutenne 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 Maluwegoda
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 Goyigamaisation 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.
End Notes:

1 For example, the Accelerated Mahaweli Development Programme (AMDP) in Sri Lanka – the largest multipurpose national development programme targeted to achieve self-sufficiency in food production is a failure today. Thousands of villagers displaced, resettled in newly irrigated areas, could not achieve their aspirations. However, the AMDP generates hydropower, that serves to the industrial and urban centres of the country.


5 E. B. Tylor makes the most famous definition. That is, “Culture or Civilisation, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” Ralph Linton called culture as social heredity focused by the process of learning.