CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS
The entire Gulf region is in transition. Although the transition has been more marked in Iran and Iraq, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, are witnessing a deeper change since the nineteen sixties and seventies.

Viewed in historical perspective, these states did not exist in present form until the second half of the twentieth century. Territorial identity and effective government were all alien concepts in a society predominantly tribal with an extremely backward economy. However, Islam first united these people centuries back. But gradually tribal and sectarian elements along with economic competition and loss of political power complicated the situation. It was Saudi Arabia which first came into existence as a state in the twenties of the present century. The rest of the GCC states came into being only after the Second World War.

It was oil, more than any other factor, which was responsible for a rapid transition. Huge oil wealth caused rapid improvement in economic life of the people. A large proportion of migrants, at time more than the native population, and government's efforts to create a developed post-oil economy, are compelling the states to make effective use of human resources. Control over oil production and marketing have led to the strengthening of governmental role as owner and distributor of oil income. Tribal society is being transformed into modern society.
Political modernization is a recent phenomenon if the nature and extent of structural and informal transformations are taken into account. The experience of these states in nation-building and political modernization is very insignificant. For instance, in the Sultanate of Oman, it started only after the British withdrew their token presence from the Gulf in 1971. Except for Saudi Arabia, the other GCC states started modernization in the sixties and seventies.

It is too difficult to identify the variables, isolate them and consider them *vis-a-vis* other variables in the context of socio-political transformation and change. Still one can make a beginning, keeping in view the nature of processes, polity and society in the area.

The analysis of political modernization in the transitional societies is a difficult and complex task especially in the absence of a general theory to guide research. However, we have a general frame of reference built upon micro-analysis. The efforts to understand and analyse the political phenomenon in the Afro-Asian and Latin American states since their rise after the Second World War has generated a stream of literature.

All the approaches, namely, the tradition-modernity dichotomy, will and capacity approach, the systems approach, the theory of social process, the theory of componentional
change, the crisis change theory, the theory of complex change, have failed to evolve a viable theory of political modernization. The Third World represented a complex picture of political process which could not be analysed satisfactorily with these theories. Hence, a Third World view of political modernization is necessary. In this context the name of Helio Jaguaribe, a Latin American writer, is important. According to Jaguaribe, as a process political modernization involves increases in the operational variables of a polity namely, (a) rational orientation, (b) structural differentiation, and (c) capability, and political institutionalisation is the increase in the participational variables of a polity – namely, (a) political mobilisation, (b) political integration, and (c) political representation.

Political modernization in the Arab World, has specific connotations. The ideology of Islam is revelvant to view political change in these states. All the GCC states claim to have special attachment with Islam. Hence it is necessary to analyse Islamic principles of political modernization in these states.

Islam provides broad outlines of the system of government and political change. Islam's approach to government system and political process is merely in broad terms since the details can be worked out in the spirit of Islam in the changing times and keeping in view overall change of polity and society.
According to Islam, man is of contractual nature which is manifest in his contract with God. Political power is delegated to the ruler by consent. Hence the authority of the ruler is not inherent but rather delegated by the society. This is precisely the essence of constitutionalism in Islam. So far as the legitimacy question is concerned, the ruler should receive allegiance (bay'a) from the whole community, i.e., not only from the majority but also from the minority whose votes had been cast against him. It follows, naturally, that the authority of ruler is not unchecked. Freedom of speech is guaranteed within the above framework. Criticism of the wrong policies or even corrupt and unjust rulers is guaranteed.

Sharia is the basic source of legislation in an Islamic state. The primary source of legislation is the Quran and the Sunnah. However, as developed by the Prophet and the Caliphs, to ensure progressive legislation, two other legislative principles, namely, Ijtihad (the right of the learned individuals to interpret and elaborate the law) and the Ijma (the consensus of the community), had been established.

The head of the state should rule with consent. The ruler should elicit support of the masses; the ceremony is known as bay'a (pledge of allegiance). The functions of the executive is to enforce the laws passed by the legislature. The primary function of the judiciary is to ensure the rule
of Sharia. The executive and judiciary are totally separate. The independence of judiciary is ensured in an Islamic state. There is no strict separation between the legislature and the executive. In terms of contract, the ruler and the ruled are bound together which gives place to a sort of collectivism.

Consultation is the very basis of political life. Shura (consultation) is a genuine expression of the idea of a government limited by the consent of the people and the rule of law. In the context of present modern democracies, the principle implies that the executive should participate in preparing the legislative bills and in promulgating them. However, the head of the executive is bound by the legislation enacted by the legislature and also on the major question of policy. Moreover, the day-to-day administration is left to the discretion of the executive over which he presides. In case of difference in opinion between the executive and the legislature, the matter can be referred to a body of arbitrators - a kind of supreme tribunal. Such a tribunal is supposed to be composed of the best jurists - men having command over the Quran and Sunnah as well as fully informed on the worldly affairs.

Briefly, in an Islamic state, political power is not monopolized by any specific group; rather, it is practiced collectively according to the mandate of the electorate.
Education is an important variable in the context of political modernization. Education has broadened the base of political and social participation. It is bringing out attitudinal changes among the citizens in terms of cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations toward the political system in varying degrees in the GCC states.

The traditional education in the Gulf states, as in many other Muslim countries, was Kuttab education. The Kuttab system had informal organizational structure based on the absolute authority of the teacher. Children of both sexes under the age of ten years attended the Kuttab. However, along with the disintegration of the traditional educational system, there started emerging a new educational system in the Gulf area in the twentieth century.

It would be very important to note that the effort to modernize education especially girls education in the early 20th century did not get sympathetic treatment from the traditional ulema and the people and at times met with hostility. It was only after the states assumed the role of welfare states that smooth business in education was possible. The oil revenues encouraged the governments to provide a wide range of social services including health, education and social welfare facilities.

Since the early 1950s, the school curricula for both boys and girls have been undergoing revisions and modifications.
Nowadays the school curricula and most of the textbooks are designed and composed by the individual state authorities under the guidelines laid down by the Arab Cultural Unity Agreement. The main subjects in the primary schools in these states are still the Islamic religion, Arabic language and mathematics.

Unlike primary school education, secondary school education was almost non-existent until the early 1960s in the Arab Gulf states. From a humble beginning, however, secondary education has undergone considerable expansion during the last two decades. However, secondary education is still a weak link between the primary and the higher education in these states. So far its curriculum has neither been related to the everyday problems and needs of students nor has it been designed to promote the development of attitudes among students necessary for the achievement of national and social goals. So far as girls' education is concerned, it has progressively increased and today girls make half of the secondary school population. This is a remarkable achievement as modern education especially girls' education is a new phenomenon in the area.

So far as higher education is concerned, university education is available both at universities at home and abroad. Although university education in the form of national
universities has expanded rapidly during a short period of time, university education is still the main venue for Gulf students.

An overall review of some practices and policies in higher education being carried out in these countries provides sufficient evidence that the universities' authorities and academics are not consulted in the formulation of policies. It is important to note that whereas a university and its academics are traditionally regarded as having freedom of thought and expression, a complete lack of evidence that they have challenged government authorities on their illogical decisions suggest that they have not succeeded in achieving the necessary measure of autonomy.

Expansion of modern education has brought about subtle change in relationships between men and women. For example, the Kuwaiti men who had themselves received university education were the group most sympathetic towards women's cause and the feminist movement. Education also appears to have increased the trend towards a nuclear family structure. With the beginning of education and modernization programmes, women's societies started to emerge in the Gulf area in the late 1950s. However, they were mainly charitable and social in nature.

Substantial increase in the number of educated women do not seem to have produced clear results for the political
status of women. However, increasing awareness among women is noticeable. For instance, there are educated women and their societies who campaigned for political rights of women.

The education system has to go a long way to effect desirable political results. The text books are traditional in character. The subject matter of the text books does not provide challenging, stimulating or interesting material to enable the adults to adjust themselves to the changing society. Some of the values presented in the textbooks tend to modernize the adult population.

On the whole, education has produced some qualitative change. But that is very limited and it will take some more time to bring about desired social and political change.

Constitutionalism, introduced in different proportions in these states, marks a departure from the past. Instead of centralism and concentration of power in the hands of a few, division of power with checks and balances, an amount of people's association in choosing the representative or/and limited deliberative power to nominated persons have been introduced. Effective control over power and political freedom would be ensured if the rudimentary changes work properly.
The state as well as the government have legitimized themselves by rendering the function of a welfare state of high capability. Greater legitimacy ensures a peaceful transition. However, legitimacy is not total as is evident from occasional strains resulting from uneven distribution of national income, restricted scope of political articulation, denial of various political rights, failure to share power by ruling regimes, religious grievances and clash between tradition and modernity.

Three broadly defined phases of political change can be discerned in the Arabian peninsula: the traditional, the neo-traditional, and the modernizing or post-traditional. The modernizing phase was initiated by radical policies of socio-economic development, including the necessary restructuring of replacement of regimes and a redefinition or expansion of the scope and role of the state.

To the traditional pillars of legitimacy, the newly emergent states of the Gulf have added policies of distributing material benefits to nearly all sectors of citizenry, rationalist constitutional frameworks, newly institutionalized government structures generally responsive to popular demands and military-security apparatus capable of controlling the population. The written constitutions of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE place emphasis on Western-inspired principles
of sovereignty residing in the people, the separation of powers between the branches of government, and some degree of legislative power-sharing between the ruler and national councils, in addition to Islamic percepts. Saudi Arabia maintains that the *Sharia* provides its constitution.

By now the National Councils have become necessary, functional institutions in the Gulf states. These councils are not entirely rubber-stamp bodies, completely dominated and controlled by the head of the state or a small elite group, whether the ruling family or a party organization. Instead, they fulfill real and necessary functions, even if their power and responsibility fall short of similar bodies in Western democracies.

The National Councils have legitimized the regimes as a 'democracy'. The Gulf states require new or supplementary manifestations of their legitimacy in the face of rapid, drastic changes. Currently, the political systems of the GCC constitute a transitional stage between traditional authority and acquired authority.

The National Councils are rendering the functions of a formalized *majlis*. The councils are an attempt to preserve the traditional function of the *majlis*, by providing leading representatives of the community with a public forum for discussing important issues and providing the ruler and
the government with advice and recommendations. Besides, these councils are rendering some legislative role. The legislative work carried out by the National Councils have been limited to legislative review, rather than the initiation of major legislation. The extent of review has varied widely. In Kuwait, near-absolute review has been mandated both by the constitution and by the expectations engendered by history and recent experience.

Some measure of government accountability has been ensured by the Councils. The creation of complex, unfamiliar, and often inefficient bureaucracies has promoted National Councils to question, criticize, and force governments to execute corrections or changes in general policies and the specific actions of government agencies. Besides, the Councils provide a convenient safety valve for the expression of opinion and grievances. It has become acceptable to criticize aspects of government policy as a way of gaining public attention or support. The Councils are more than just a safety valve, but a formal substitute for traditional participation. Generally, however, speaking out in the name of the people is done with caution and often is done with ulterior motives. Political participation has become meaningful as minority or non-elite groups are being represented. They have participated fully in national councils, either through the election of representatives from the group or
through the deliberate allocation of seats from them by the ruler.

Clearly, the governments of the GCC states are not democratic in the sense that West European and the US governments are. It would be a mistake, however, to regard these states as autocratic, repressive or anachronistic. Instead of being relics from the past, all six governments have made drastic adaptations to the changing circumstances and expectations. As such, they represent transitional stages in the path of political evolution from traditional to modern societies.

In recent times, the role played by government administration in social and economic fields has grown regardless of the nature of the system. In the oil producing Arab Gulf states, too, the role of government administration is dominant for a variety of reasons, especially the nature of the economic structure and the absence of an active private sector. However, these states have not yet utilized the oil wealth in a way that can most efficiently serve the purposes of development. It is administration there that constitutes the decisive factor in the development process. The problem before the Arab Gulf states is that their governments have found themselves obliged to act in several fields and expand their own activities.
Bureaucratisation has swept the Arab world including the Gulf states since the 1950s. Practically, the bureaucracies of the Gulf have been created from scratch. Their main expansion has been an outcome of oil wealth, which moved the states towards large-scale social welfare programmes and ambitious economic development plans.

The bureaucracy in the Gulf is suffering from structural and behavioural defects of both external and internal origin. Terms like 'Bedoucracy' and 'Sheikhocracy' are used to designate the model of tribal bureaucracy. The bureaucrats try to maintain their position both with their kins, friends or tribe and with their superior. In case of clash between the two, their opportunism is revealed. In most of the cases, they are escapists.

There is hardly any delegation of authority in these states. Even when rulers and executives are prepared, under popular pressure or expert advice, to consider some measure of reform that involves delegation and decentralisation, they will tend to apply it in such a way that it is robbed of its participatory ethos.

Due to many reasons, the general quality of personnel in public institutions is low. Excessive public expenditure and social assistance have led to the underdevelopment of human energies in a society where illiteracy is prevalent.
and incentives for hard work and earning do not exist. Until recently, a large percentage of government personnel were either illiterate or holders of only primary school certificates. As a consequence, these states show a poor relation between development and the civil service.

Available data indicate that the majority of people are not satisfied with the civil service. Public apathy, bureaucrat's lack of sufficient concern for their clients, dependence upon foreign labour, and lack of technical and organizational resources, are the most frequently cited reasons for public services deficiency.

In most of the Arab Gulf states, the administrative systems were too weak to be effective, however modern they might appear. As a result, there was a large discrepancy between bureaucracy's state of deficiency and its expected role.

Some attempts at administrative reform have been made, but they have not received genuine political support. Almost all these states have been characterized by the absence of administrative reform and by the spread of administrative corruption in government and non-government agencies alike. Saudi Arabia, for example, suffers from many administrative difficulties such as extreme centralisation, overlap of responsibilities, obsolete procedures, rising costs in
the public services sector and the low standard of technology utilization. When changes in the administrative structure occurred in the United Arab Emirates, low performance was consequently identified and the need for reorganization arose. Some recommendations called for the investigation of the government organizational structure, for integration among the various organizational divisions, for the simplication of regulations and for the establishment of units for organization and methods in government agencies. In Qatar, as a result of lack of sound organization, some administrative problems emerged. Consequently, there were calls for the establishment of a central agency for administrative reform to prepare a general programme of reform, to follow up implementation and to make administrative reform a continuing process.

Some of the GCC states already possess all the structures of the agencies and units required for preparing programmes of administrative reform and simplifying regulations, but the end result is limited. A number of studies have been conducted for administrative reform but the end result has been unsatisfactory due to many reasons which include: the gap between foreign expertise and local conditions, imitation of advanced country model, inability of the agencies and units responsible for administrative reform,
the bureaucratic resistance to administrative reform, lack of political support for programmes of administrative reform and weak sense of loyalty to institutions.

A number of recommendations have been made in connection with the improvement of bureaucracy. Most important are: decentralizing decision making, spelling out objectives of public administration, improving administrative leadership through the implementation of administrative accountability, through effective programmes of administrative education and training, improving administrative methods, procedures, performance evaluation, and enforcement of government rules and regulations, encouraging, enlarging and improving public and private sector cooperation.

The development administration has a long way to go in the GCC states. Education and role of media are important in this context. The biggest obstacle is leadership as the political authority, in search for power, resists radical changes, excludes others from decision-making, and turns a deaf ear to legitimate demands.

The debate over regional integration and pan-Arabism has generated lively discussion. Both centripetal and centrifugal forces are emerging in the Arab world at various levels. Along with the individual states being coming closer regional links have been gradually forged. These range from simple
bilateral or multilateral cooperation in specific spheres to functional economic integration and even occasionally complete political amalgamation.

Regional integration is a form of micro-integration in the framework of macro-integration of the Arab world. Two factors, namely, language and religion are very basic in the analysis of Pan-Arabism. In political integration, Arabic plays a little role. But it certainly plays a significant role in the integration and unity of Arab identity. Islam is an integrated component of Arabism. Though the terms Arab and Muslim cannot be equated, they are central to the understanding of Arab national identity. Islam has moulded intellectual tradition of Arab societies.

There are certain obstacles to regional integration. The fitful settlement pattern has encouraged sub-regional particularism because, until recently, transportation links among population clusters were absent or deficient. Historically, the Arab countries were affected by colonial intrusion in varying degrees. The European colonial powers had diverse objectives and used different methods. Traditional ruling classes were bolstered in the newly created states by the colonial power, consequently developing their own vested interests by perpetuating the political fragmentation. Acute national integration problems within individual countries have also impeded Arab unity. Although the vast majority
of the Arab World is Arabic speaking and Muslim, there are significant linguistic and religious minorities in some countries of the Arab world. These groups generally view Arab unity with apprehension or hostility.

Political differences among the Arab states are by far the greatest obstacle to unification. The republics have been the main proponents of Pan-Arabism. Nevertheless, their record is no better than that of the monarchies. Even when regimes seem compatible, integration eludes them because of rivalries and jealousies. Political instability has also impeded regional integration. Unity schemes usually tie authoritarian regimes, not states and peoples, together. Thus, they are poorly equipped to withstand political change. Differing views about the solution of the Arab-Israeli problem have been another major source of political cleavage within the Arab world.

There are numerous obstacles to economic integration. Few Arab countries have reached the stage where the advantages of their unity would outweigh disadvantages. The differences among the Arab states is too glaring. Arab countries differ enormously in their population size, resource endowment, economic structure, labour force, development orientation, trade patterns and living standards. Differences in political economy and low level of inter-Arab trade are major obstacles to unity.
In the last four decades, a network of regional institutions have been established to promote cooperation and integration. Most of them have survived and constitute a framework on which Arab unity can be built. The League of Arab states have been the chief vehicle for institutionalized cooperation since 1945. Despite deficiencies the League has accomplished a great deal. In establishing cooperation, the League has often taken the initiative, notably in the economic and cultural fields.

From the very inception of the League, it was clear that it could not pretend to be the sole and exclusive regional grouping. The religious challenge to the official secularist, modern definition of the League was the first to be felt. A second challenge to the Arab institutional framework came from politically inspired groupings which tended to let the East-West conflict supersede the pan-Arab rationalist ideology. A third challenge to the Arab framework comes from local groupings of Arab states, organized along the lines of local geographical proximity.

The most realistic way to integrate the Arab world may be in stages, first forging links among sub-regional blocs of countries. The Maghreb, Nile valley, Fertile Crescent, and the Arabian peninsular countries can be regarded as natural groupings. The creation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in March 1981 is a milestone in the Arab efforts
to develop closer contact, not only politically, but economically. Although its original inspiration was political, dominated by the anxieties of Gulf rulers over security issues at the start of the decade, its most significant manifestation today is economic. However, the experience of the Gulf Cooperation Council shows that the spread of Arab groupings sharply curtails the power of the Arab League.

To conclude, the Arab Gulf states are facing numerous challenges to political modernization. Their experience in nation-building and modernization is very limited. Even the pace and direction of change is not clear enough. The coming few decades are crucial in their identity formation. Much would depend on the ruler's attitude in carrying out modernization and reform. However, one cannot differ with the view that these states are passing through a 'transitional' phase and this phenomenon is bound to accelerate the speed of change.