CHAPTER II

CONCEPT OF MODERNITY

➢ SANSKRITIZATION
➢ WESTERNIZATION
➢ MODERNIZATION
➢ HEALTH MODERNITY
Social change has been a centre of curiosity since the Indian society has changed from an agricultural society to an industrial society, from a colonial society with emperors and monarchs to a republican society, from a society based on caste and class to a society which aims to be a casteless and classless with equality of opportunity to every citizen guaranteed by the Indian Constitution adopted in 1950 (Kuppuswamy, B, 1972). India with her long history and varied heritage is one of the traditional societies with its structure deep reported in traditions. India’s transition towards modernization has been a slow and continuous process. This transition towards modernization in India can be adequately explained through the concepts like Sanskritization and Westernization.

Sanskritization

According to M. N. Srinivas (1952, 1966), Sanskritization is a process of cultural mobility in the traditional social structure of India. It is “the process by which a low caste or tribal or other group changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently ‘twice born’ caste”. However, the mobility associated with Sanskritization results only in ‘positional changes’ in the system, but does not lead to any significant structural changes. Hence the concept serves very little purpose in understanding the contemporary social changes in Indian society.

Westernization

With the establishment of British Raj in India, the impact of Western Philosophy and science referred to as ‘Westernization’ introduced reason in to daily habits and made Indians realize meaninglessness of many ancient prejudices and customs. Westernization in a way changed the life patterns of Indians and created new values. The vision of the average Indian, so long closed and severely confined was
enlarged and liberalized to some extent. Exposure to English literature, history and political institutions made them to adopt humanitarian outlook and promoted in them an active concern or welfare of all human beings (Kuppuswamy, 1972). It brought many changes in the Indian elite ranging from their speech, clothing, and food habits to certain value changes like humanitarianism, egalitarianism and secularism. Western influence thus has been a very important source of social change in India. However, the process failed to bring about basic changes in the masses. The process did not foster any changes in the value orientation and attitudes of the broader strata of society. Thus the changes instituted by Westernization had an elitist bias and failed to touch the broad local and grass root levels of the people (Eisenstadt, 1966). Also the changes introduced as a result of Westernization are too narrow to stand for the wider and complex processes of modernization in developing countries (Chekki, 1974).

**Modernization**

The concept of Modernization is much more comprehensive and has greater explanatory power and better diagnostic insight into the contemporary social changes taking place in our Indian society. The process of modernization describes the profound qualitative and quantitative changes that are taking place in the contemporary human society. A series of interpenetrating and interdependent transformations are inherent in the complex process of modernization.

The problem of modernization is not external alone; it is internal too and as such it is intimately associated with human personality. The process of modernization involves not only enormous institution building in the social, economic, political and other spheres of the life of people but also a basic change in the personality structure of the individual. Indeed the two changes are complementary and Inkeles, A. and
Smith, D.H. (1974) rightly remark that ‘nation building and institution building are only empty exercises unless the attitudes and capacities of the people keep pace with other forms of development’. Thus modernization entails internalization of positive attitudes and value orientations like those of achievistic norms, specificity of roles and relationships, secular and rational outlook, belief in the efficacy of human efforts in goal attainment, participation in political processes as responsible citizens, development of personal opinion on public issues, readiness to play new roles according to new relationships and so on.

Modernization signifies a movement from traditional values to modern rationalist values. Lerner (1958) believes that modernization has its roots in ‘rationalists’ and ‘positivists’ spirits. According to Weiner (1966), modernization is the growth of rationality and secularism; and a process by which men broke away from the constraints of tyrannical regimes as well as the constraints of superstition. Modernization is a mass process to bring about fundamental, deep rooted and widespread changes in attitudes, values, motivations and behaviour of people. It is a desirable state leading to better living conditions.

Although the process of modernization is desirable, pervasive, and transformative it may fail to reach every section of the society due to some structural obstacles, caste or ascriptive stratification or some regressive elements of tradition or fatalistic attitudes of individuals in society. But for the process to be more effective it should reach a major segment of the population of the society.

The concept of modernity

The term ‘Modern, Modernity and Modernization’ have many denotations. The three terms are distinct, but intimately related to each other. Modernity is an end state not a process. Both end and process are analytically distinct concepts. The end
quality of being modern is denoted by modernity, whereas the process of becoming modern is denoted by modernization.

The common usage of the term modernity means anything that is ‘current’ or contemporary. But this envisages a very narrow meaning of the concept and does not convey the proper meaning of modernity as it has been used and explained by social scientists. The qualitative meaning of the concept modernity is ‘a particular outlook or perspective of mind and a system of particular ideas and values that have gradually evolved in the course of social development’ (Ray, 1968). This involves the acceptance of scientific rationality and shunning of old dogmas and traditions. It is in this sense of connotation that the social science disciplines have sought to develop and use the concept of modernity. Researchers on modernization however have used the concept of modernity as involving qualitative changes in both society and the individual. There are two different approaches to the analysis of modernity on this basis: the societal and individualistic. The societal approach places society at the centre of attention and focuses on the changes occurring at the level of the social system; whereas the individualistic approach places the human individual at the centre of attention and focuses on the attitudes, values, motivations and behaviour patterns of an individual that make him modern.

Researchers like Lerner (1958); McClelland (1961); Inkeles and Smith (1974); Kahl (1968); Schnaiberg (1970); Atal (1971) have focused on the modern man as the individual analogue of modern society. Their emphasis has been to identify certain motives, attitudes and value orientations as the characteristics of modern man that have developed as a result of his interaction with the environment in the course of transformation of the social order. The concept of attitudinal modernity as Klineberg (1973) says, has been one of the master themes in the psychological analysis of social
change. The modernization process brings about distinctive psychological changes in attitude, values and behaviour patterns on the part of individuals exposed to it.

According to Bellah (1968) modernity when used to denote a modern man means "not a form of political or economic system but a spiritual phenomenon or a kind of mentality." However, the psycho normative approach sees modernity also as 'a temper', 'a spirit' or 'an ethos' of modern age- a sense in which Weber (1958) conceived of the "Spirit of capitalism." When conceived of in this manner, modernity refers to a mode of individual functioning or a set of dispositions to act in the ways that 'better' fit him for life in a modern society. Some scholars like Shils (1966) and Anderson (1966) emphasize technical skills, capabilities and a spirit of creativity as core elements of modernity which enables the individual to take up several roles in modern polity, society and culture. Scholars like Elack (1966); Smith (1965); and Alatas (1972) consider modernity to be accompaniment of science, which leads to unprecedented increase in man's knowledge thereby enabling him to control his environment both natural and human.

McClelland (1961) and Hagen (1962) emphasized that, psychological qualities like innovation and need for achievement are very essential to make a man modern. McClelland (1961) holds that need for achievement is a kind of basic element that leads to constructive activities, technological innovations and thence to rapid economic growth. Thus modernization calls instilling new ambitions and achievistic goals in man. To Lerner (1958) developing a capacity for psychic mobility and the ability to mentally place oneself in others' roles is the essence of modernity.

From a normative viewpoint, modernity is conceived of as composed of a set of norms or values that are considered to be relatively independent of individual motivations or consciousness. Scholars like Parsons (1964); Geertz (1963); Bendix
(1964); Feldman and Moore (1960) and Eisenstadt (1968) thus believe that imbibing certain values like universalism, humanism, individualism, liberalism and secularism as an integral part of modernity. Many other researchers speak of modernity as a multidimensional concept. Modernity for Dube (1967) involves the emergence of a new behavioural system with certain distinctive characteristics like empathy, mobility, high participation, achievement orientation, competition and rational thinking. Several scholars have used them as constructs and put them into empirical tests (Kahl, 1968; Schnaiberg, 1970; Armer and Schnaiberg, 1972; Inkeles and Smith, 1974).

Thus modernization is a multivariate phenomenon and a whole complex of factors contribute to the transformation of men to modernity. Factors like urbanization, industrialization, education, mass media and income have significant influence on the individual's modernity. Societies and individuals, which are under the influence of these factors, have a higher degree of modernity and there is a positive correlation between modernity and these factors. Education and industrial experience are found to be very effective agents of modernization (Inkeles and Smith; 1974).

Modernity is futuristic and very desirable as it leads to spontaneous development of personality qualities making for quick adaptation to the changing environment. Thus modernity has emerged not only as a valid but also as an important psychological explanation of development specially because it links individual growth with social development. It is multidimensional in nature and consists of a set of psychological qualities, which are empirically conducive to individual growth, development, adjustment, progress and well-being. It is thus a pre-requisite for all social and individual development (Singh, 1984).
Health Modernity

Health lies at the core of modernity and development. The World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of Health proposes that, ‘Health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being’. It is not merely the absence of disease but a state of physical, mental, emotional balance that is determined by both internal factors and external environment.

It refers to the full and harmonious functioning of the total personality, which implies the presence of the positive health, that is, physical, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being and the absence of negative health, that is, the absence of illness. It includes physical and mental development also the psychological and social development (Singh A.K., 1986). Health of an individual cannot be determined by any single factor, it is dependent on several combinations of personal, social, and cultural factors. It lies at the core of modernity and development. It shapes the nature of the modern nation state and its social institutions, it powers social movements and defines rights of citizenship and it contributes to the construction of the modern self and its aspirations. Health is the first input in the development of the individual. Cognitive development is decisively influenced by the nutritional status of the mother and the child. Gopalan (1983) has corrupted that less than one-fifth of the Indian children achieve full genetic potential and physical and mental growth. The low health status of India has been identified as one of the important obstacles to human resource development (Singh A.K., 1986). Banerjee (1982) asserts that health status of population is very essential for economic, political and social issues.

The great concern of social scientist for economic and political development greatly undermines the importance of health dimension in concept of modernity. They failed to realize that in the ultimate analysis all development, social, economic,
political and technological, is oriented to the welfare of individual. When man is
accepted as a centre-piece of development his health assumes a key status. Health is
the first input in the human developmental process. Since the concept of modernity is
concerned with development, which in turn is concerned with the well-being of
common man, which decisively depends on health, A. K. Singh, and his associates,
icorporated a new dimension of health into the concept of modernity.

The concept of health modernity has been defined as, “Scientifically correct
information, attitudes and behaviour in relation to physical and mental health, diet and
nutrition, family planning and child care including breast feeding, personal hygiene
and environmental sanitation and such other issues which are essential pre-requisites
for healthy living and, therefore, for human and social development” (Singh, A.K., et.
al., 1987; Singh and others, 1988; Halyal, 1991; Singh and associates, 1991;

Health attitudes are of prime importance to the efficacy and well-being of
individuals. Man’s health matters much for him as well as for society. The child while
still in the womb is greatly influenced by the health attitudes and knowledge of its
parents. More so, a mother’s knowledge and attitude towards her own health during
pregnancy, about child care, breast feeding, nutrition and diet, immunization,
supplementary food, common diseases among infants, oral dehydration, knowledge
and information of prevention of deadly diseases like AIDS and cancer have a crucial
impact on human development. Hence the concern for health modernity occupies top
priority over other aspects of human development. Health modernity is directly
associated with an individual’s life and hence is a pre-requisite for a human
development as well as an integral part of personality. Health modernity is thus a
pillar on which personalities are built and shaped. However, health modernity cannot
be developed in isolation. The different dimensions of modernity are positively intercorrelated. A person with high ratings on rationality and openness to change will be more willing to accept family planning measures and new method of treatment of diseases.

Health modernity can be thought as an extension of the concept of modernity. It does not ensure or guarantee social, economic and political modernity but it is the fundamental precondition of all other developments. It includes scientifically correct information, attitude and behaviour in relation to physical and mental health, family planning, child care, personal hygiene and sanitation. The importance of health modernity is also understood by its practical usefulness. It is easier to intervene and improve health modernity than the other dimensions of modernity. The results of intervention in area of health are more concrete, visible and more easily measurable. Health modernity has been explained in terms of attitudes, knowledge, behavioural measures and social indicators. Measurement of health modernity is possible in the following areas: Physical Health, Mental Health, Nutrition and Diet, Breast Feeding, Child Care, Family Planning, Mental Retardation, Attitude towards Females, Cancer, and AIDS.

Themes covered in each dimension are given in Chart no. 1 and the profile of health modernity of modern man is presented in Chart no. 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Health (PH)</td>
<td>Scientific understanding of etiology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health (MH)</td>
<td>Treatment and prevention, superstitious beliefs and misconceptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition and Diet (ND)</td>
<td>Ignorance and misconceptions, nutrition value of food, over-eating, cleanliness of food/water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast Feeding (BF)</td>
<td>Breast vs bottle feeding, misconception of breast feeding, advantage of breast feeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Planning (FP)</td>
<td>Scientific understanding of childbirth, birth control, son preference, determination of sex of the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care (CC)</td>
<td>Immunization, hydration and ORT, growth monitoring, milestones of development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Retardation (MR)</td>
<td>Knowledge of epilepsy, development of language and IQ of children born to old age parents, child delivery and mental retardation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward Females (AF)</td>
<td>Roles of women, status in the family and society, divorce and widow marriage, equality of sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer (CN)</td>
<td>Alcoholism, tobacco and drug abuse: causes and prevention of cancer, detection and cure of cancer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS (ADS)</td>
<td>Modes of transmission of AIDS, symptoms of AIDS, preventive measures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chart No. 2: Attitudinal profile of person having Health Modernity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Believes/approves of</th>
<th>Does not believe/Disapproves of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Some types of leprosy do not spread by contagion.</td>
<td>Life and death depends upon God: medical treatment cannot do anything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Mental illness is curable and mentally ill persons can be treated and entrusted with responsibilities.</td>
<td>Once insane, one can never become a normal person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Women need Physical exercise as much as men do.</td>
<td>Saints can cure incurable diseases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Mental illness is curable and mentally ill persons can be treated and entrusted with responsibilities.</td>
<td>Insanity is caused by evil spirits or sins of past lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>The infant does not need any additional food except mother’s milk till four months.</td>
<td>Mothers with Caesarean operation should not breast-feed the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Many bottle-fed babies fall ill because the powder milk is not dissolved in clean water.</td>
<td>The first breast-milk after childbirth is harmful to the newborn infant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>If necessary, it is right to abort, either by operation or by taking medicines, the foetus in the womb.</td>
<td>One needs a son to do the last rites/rituals so that the soul may rest in peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Diarrhea in children can be prevented by clean and good water and food.</td>
<td>Children who stammer continue to do so as adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>If a child does not walk by 18 months (1 1/2 years) he may be mentally retarded.</td>
<td>Every child is born with equal amount of intelligence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Women should have the same right to work outside home as men have.</td>
<td>It is not proper for the wife to marry second time after the death of her husband.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cancer is curable if detected at an early stage.</td>
<td>Cancer is a contagious disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>AIDS is transmitted by transfusions of contaminated blood of an AIDS patient.</td>
<td>AIDS is transmitted by using clothes used by an AIDS patient.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>