SOCIOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT: An Alternate Approach

During the last four decades, development theory has taken several sharp turns. A wide range of theoretical framework has been offered by scholars from different academic streams during this period. As a sociologist, S.C. Dube has classified development theories in four broad phases. 1

In the first phase, development essentially meant economic development and economists focussed their attention exclusively on economic growth. The basic idea was to achieve maximum output and to ensure capital formation. It was assumed, if output increases, distribution would automatically take place. In the second phase, the relationship between economic development and social change was realized. It was felt that economic development and technological changes are hindered by institutional factors. Thus, modifications in institutional framework of society and alterations in attitudes and values were to be contemplated to facilitate and accelerate the process of economic development. In the third phase, issue of unequal development was the centre of concern. New concept of human-centered development emerged and called for greater access for the common man to planning process. The fourth and contemporary approach to development has a wide perspective. It questions the relevance of existing world order and national order in facilitating such development, which could benefit all sections of the society. It was proposed that the culture of development has to be changed. A new style and new idiom was needed. Greater emphasis was given to basic needs of mankind—education, public health, and other services to offer greater distribution benefits to the general mass of people.

Therefore, during the last four decades there has been a trend among the theoreticians and development practitioners to place increasing importance to human factors upon development process. Brookfield rightly suggested, “the term development implies a progress towards a complex of welfare goals such as reduction of poverty and

unemployment, and diminution of inequality\textsuperscript{2} Even after several decades of consistent efforts in post colonial era, most of the Third World Countries are far away from the goal of economic development which was set for them immediately after independence (in case of colonial countries). As we discussed earlier, the main reason for this failure can broadly be attributed to the lack of human factor in initial development planning. Besides, blind imitation of developed Western countries while formulating the development policies and failure in building a government machinery which is more sensitive to the needs of poor masses, can also be held equally responsible.

After learning lessons from the earlier failures, in the more recent development planning greater emphasis has been placed on:

- Human centered approach,
- Greater people participation,
- Local level planning, giving due importance to local needs and resources.
- Improving quality of development administration

Therefore, various components of revived approach of development policy need to be studied in detail. A study of this nature will facilitate better insights, which would be useful not only for development planners but also for academic concerns on these issues.

1.1) THE CONTEXT: An Understanding of rural setting in India

Rural phenomena cannot be understood without taking into account the wider socio-economic structure. It has very distinctive features, which involve typical analytical problems. In case of the Third World countries, it generally accounts for at least 70 per cent of the national population. An overwhelming majority of this population which contains about two third of the poorest population of the country as a whole is involved in agriculture and allied occupations.\textsuperscript{3} Despite all these negative features, it is the source of primary products for export, of foodstuffs, and labour for national urban and industrial

\textsuperscript{2} H. Brookfield (1975), \textit{Independent Development}, p. XI
\textsuperscript{3} P. Dorner (1972), \textit{Land Reform and Economic Development}, pp. 16-17.
centers. It has a mixture of traditional non-capitalist and newly emergent capitalist forms of organization and is inhabited by huge population of peasantry.

There has been a widespread thinking that this peasantry is frequently resistant to many changes introduced by the state, even if the policies are extensively aimed at improving agriculture and at redistributing productive resources on a more equitable basis. Commenting on the relationship between agriculture and national development, Boke holds the view that traditionalism and various other typical features of peasantry are major impediments to national economic development and the source of many conservative attitudes towards modernity and economic growth (J.H. Boke: 1953). While other group of theoreticians emphasized the dynamic role that peasantry can play in promoting industrialization through the capital it earns on export crops, which is often used to finance urban-industrial development; and through the provision of basic food stuffs for expanding urban populations and of labour for factory production.

Both of the above mentioned views present two polar opposite perspectives. Most of the studies undertaken on peasant society fall in either of these theoretical frameworks. Peasant society of India has always attracted the attention of sociologists and a wide range of studies has been undertaken on them in post-independent India.

After the initial focus on the role of peasant on rural development in 1950s and early 60s, the importance was given to study the political life of peasants. Here, the researchers have shown how the power and status hungry peasants grabbed the new political opportunities, which were brought under the programs to decentralize administrative power. They also showed how the lack of training to use political authority and democracy and traditional rivalry between different classes, lineage, castes and religions etc. have marred the spirit of democratic decentralization programs. Studies by Lewis (1958) and Dhillan (1955) have shown how factionalism came in the way of realization of the benefits of community development program.

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Role of peasants in wider political activities also attracted attention of the academicians. Benefits of the first two Five Year Plans brought prosperity to some of the peasants. New gained education and awareness of political process lead them to take interest in wider political processes at the state and national level. Caste and kin networks also played a crucial role in this process. The peasants who are highly parochial and emotional went out of political party lines and voted in mass to the candidates who belonged to their own caste and region. This whole process was thoroughly studied using new concepts and approaches as dominant caste by Srinivas (1959) and functional and interest group by Lewis (1958).

Studies on peasant economy have also drawn a lot of attention. It is said that a peasant is born in debt, lives in debt and dies in debt. Reasons for their failure in economic front have been studied thoroughly by Gurumurthy (1979) and Ishwaran (1966), and they found that it was due to peasant’s peculiar psychology along with their outlook and attitudes towards life. It was found that when they have plenty, the peasants do not keep a watch on their spending. It was also observed that they have lot of societal obligations towards temples, priests, beggars etc. They also have to contribute to the celebration of festivals and rituals at the village level, which involves lots of expenditure and in the process they themselves became poor.

Inspired by Firth (1964), mode and means of saving money amongst peasant groups were studied by several anthropologists. Till then, mere superficial visits to villages created misunderstanding about peasants’ economic ethos. These visitors found peasants sitting idle during the day and thus called them lazy. Anthropologists, who studied peasants’ way of work and leisure, have disapproved it by saying that peasants are hard working, as they work day and night during the peak agricultural activities. With their limited means and skill, the peasants can work only for 4-5 months in a year and after which they idle away their time, since there is no work for them. For this the peasants can not be called lazy.

Peasants may not save in the form of services, obligation and live stock etc. When they have no work, they help their co-villagers who need help. Thus, they go on accumulating
with the needy families and when they in turn need additional hands to work in their family, they may demand it back. This saves them from hiring additional labourers at the time of need.

Peasants are known as colourful people who give more importance to ritual activities. They also celebrate a number of feasts, festivals and rituals, which have resulted in cyclic and non-cyclic activities. Festival days are feast days. The fairs, Melas, Jatras, which are held in shrines, also serve as places of pilgrimage, business and recreation to the peasants (Gurumurthy: 1973).

Peasants look up to their religious institutions not only for religious benefits but also for their welfare needs, including education (Sadasivaiah: 1967). In the past, many temples and Maths served as educational and welfare centers for needy poor. Recently they have started formal educational institutions to give modern and secular education (Halbar and Madam: 1972).

The above discussion clearly indicates that peasants in India exhibit very peculiar characteristics in all spheres of life. Any program aiming at developing this society has to consider all these characteristics. These peculiar characteristics can no way be said to have uniformity across the country because locally determined practices and beliefs are very frequently observed. Therefore, there is a need to develop and design micro level planning.

The search for a macro level framework capable of explaining the wide range of economic development and social change has been a major pre-occupation of social scientists over the past several decades. Some of these perspectives will be discussed here.

1.2) THE MODERNIZATION APPROACH

According to More, the concept of modernization denotes a total transformation of a traditional or pre modern society into the types of technology and associated social organizations that characterizes the advanced, economically prosperous, and relatively
politically stable nation of the Western World. Such a view was entirely based on the assumption that there are two "ideal typical", if we use Weber's language, forms of society, which would exhibit all the characteristics of traditional and advanced society respectively.

Neil Smelser, was perhaps the first scholar, who used More's ideas in his theory of structural differentiation. For Smelser (1963), a developed economy and society can be characterized as a highly differentiated structure and an underdeveloped one as relatively lacking in differentiation. Hence, change takes place through the process of differentiation. "Differentiation" implies a process by which more specialized and autonomous social units are established. In Smelser's model, economic development and social progress are not isolated processes rather they go along with each other.

For Smelser, economic development takes place through four processes: (a) Modernization of technology; (b) Commercialization of agriculture; (c) industrialization process and (d) Urbanization. Nevertheless, these four processes of economic development affect the social structure of traditional society in similar way. These four processes led to two simultaneous processes affecting the social fabric of the society.

I. **Structural differentiation**: establishment of more autonomous and isolated social units. Smelser took example of family. According to him family does no longer remain the basic economic unit of production, the family’s activities have become more concentrated on emotional gratification and socialization.6

II. **Integration**: A process of integration also takes place whereby these differentiated structures are united on a new pattern. For instance in pre modern political structure, political integration was based on kinship status, tribal membership and control over basic economic resources. This has moved to 'modern' type characterized by specialized political parties, pressure groups and bureaucracy.

Smelser recognizes that the differences in pre-modern conditions and traditional structure may shape the social change. However, the pattern of change would remain the same.

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Therefore, Smelser’s model depicts the general, ideal typical features and processes of social development.

The above discussed model was used by Hoselitz also. He applied Parson’s pattern variables, which essentially underlie Smelser’s differentiation. Hoselitz’s model can be understood through diagram – 1.1

Diagram 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Society</th>
<th>Modern society</th>
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<tr>
<td>Particularistic</td>
<td>Universalistic</td>
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<td>Ascription</td>
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<td>Value Affectivity</td>
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Eisenstadt, refined this approach and took account of the diversity of societal types subsumed under the single concept of traditional or pre-modern. He distinguished between different processes by which modernization could be initiated.

"The process of modernization may take off from tribal groups, from caste societies, from peasant societies. These groups may vary greatly in the extent to which they have resources and abilities necessary for modernization. They may differ in their capacity to regulate the more complex relationships between different parts of the society which are attended on social differentiation and in the extent to which they are willing or able to become integrated into new wider social framework." 

In addition to ‘differentiation’ and ‘integration’, a third concept ‘adaptation’ has also been pointed out. Modernization can only be sustained if the society develops a certain degree of structural flexibility whereby it becomes capable of dealing with new changing problems and of absorbing within its central institutional sphere, new social groups and strata with their problems and demands.

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8 S.N. Eisenstadt (1966), Modernization: Protest and change, p. 49.
Hence, Modernization signals the establishment of new broader political and social entities, whose symbols of identity are couched in non-traditional terms and whose institutional frameworks cut across narrower parochial units and emphasize more general universalistic criteria. 9

Several scholars have questioned Smelser's assumption that the long term effect of economic development will be the replacement of traditional institutions by relationships and values of a more 'modern type', as Eisenstadt comments,

"Within any group, community or organization that developed in modern society many particularistic, ascriptive and diffuse orientations inevitably tend to persist and develop. Thus on the local community level the ties of friendship, often kinship and common residence, have many particularistic and ascriptive orientations that are perpetuated and often even structured in modern setting." 10

Smelser's model seems to rest on the idea of unilinear development along the times of what appears to have happened in Western European capitalist countries. This impression is supported by the fact that he first developed it while analyzing the kinds of social change that accompanied the British Industrial Revolution. However, the model is not a distillation of actual Western experiences, nor even an average of the several experiences of the Western nation states but rather an idealization of the main direction of certain social and cultural trends that proved so successful in the West. 11

Hence, although it may not accurately reflect the process of modernization as they occurred in Western Europe. It, nonetheless, explicates from an understanding of this particular historical sequence and posits the existence of similar structural processes arising under conditions of economic growth in the third world. To this extent this is an ethnocentric approach. 12

9 Ibid, p. 16
10 Ibid, p. 153
12 Norman Long (1977), An Introduction to the Sociology of Rural Development, pp. 2627
1.3 THE RURAL URBAN CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The traditional-modern dichotomy had already appeared in the form of a rural urban or folk-urban conceptualization, even much before Smelser. This conceptualization of social change had roots in the early work of Redfield (1947). The main features of Redfield’s concept of ‘folk’ society correspond closely to Smelser’s view of ‘traditional society’. According to Redfield, the ideal typical features of a folk society are as follows:

“\textit{It is small, isolated, non-literate and homogenous, with a strong sense of group solidarity. The ways of living are conventionalized into the coherent system, which we call a ‘culture’. Behaviour is traditional, spontaneous, uncritical and personal; there is no legislation or habit of experiment and reflection for intellectual ends... The sacred prevails over the secular; the economy is one of status rather than of market.”}^{13}

Redfield treats the folk and urban types as representing opposite extremes on a continuum. This continuum can not simply be regarded as a morphological device facilitating the comparison of different types of social structure. It also implies and depicts the general process whereby folk societies become transformed through their incorporation into wider structures, into urban type societies. However, Redfield’s conceptualization differs from Smelser’s model as Redfield treats city as the main source of change and he gives only minimal importance to technological changes.

Redfield’s model has been criticized for two most serious weaknesses.\textsuperscript{14}

1. The whole of Redfields analysis rests on the assumption that uniform and simultaneous change occurs in all the institutions of society as it moves from the folk towards urban end of the continuum. Thus, family institutions change concomitantly with political, economic and religious ones. Unlike Smelser, he does not give any account of the different rates of change between institutional spheres. In addition, he also does not discuss problems of integration except in so far as he regards societies of urban type as necessarily less integrated than those of folk type.

2. The second methodological weakness is his claim that it is possible to infer the general path of change from a study of four contemporaneous communities of different structural complexity.

\textsuperscript{13} R. Redfield (1947), “The folk society”, \textit{The American Journal of Sociology}, Vol. 52, p. 293
\textsuperscript{14} Norman Long (1977) \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 37-38
1.4) CULTURAL OBSTACLE APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

A major exponent of the cultural obstacle approach to problems of development is G.M. Foster. He suggests that the peasants' worldview is strikingly different from that of other categories of persons. According to Foster, peasants hold the view that almost all good things in life exist in limited and un-expandable quantities. Since all things exist in limited quantity, consumption of any one of them in any form can be done at the cost of others. This view that individual improvement can be done at the expense of others, is the key to understanding why Tzintzuntzenos (peasant community studied by Foster) often seem to be conservative in their views. Besides, they are so timid in accepting the opportunities a changing world offers them.  

In Foster's view, it is the existence of these cultural elements and the way they work together which explains the traditionalism and conservatism, frequently commented upon for peasant societies. Although such factors as the lack of access to knowledge and information about the contemporary world etc. are important. Foster’s study in Mexico suggests that it is the cognitive orientation in the form of the ‘limited good’ which constitutes a central factor inhibiting rapid social and economic change.

Foster’s conceptual model reality postulated for peasants seems to be too simplistic and mechanical. A more complete understanding of peasant responses to socio-economic change requires an analysis of the interaction of both internal and external social, cultural, ideological and economic factors.

1.5) PRE-REQUISITES OF DEVELOPMENT

Pre-requisites of development include factors, which encourage or make it possible for development to take place. These factors can broadly be put in two categories- technological factor and social factors. Different theorists have analyzed these two factors giving varied degree of importance to each one of them.

Moore attempts to outline the basic structural conditions for industrial development. For him values are important as they provide the rationale for particular norms or rules of organization and conduct. Thus, the value of economic growth requires, for instance, a fairly high degree of individual mobility and a placement system grounded on merit in performance. Such a value orientation is likely to come into conflict with strongly held values of a more traditional kind, based on kinship status and obligation. In this sense extensive value changes are the most fundamental conditions for economic transformation. Another value of importance is that of nationalism, which has frequently provided the ideological framework for the integration of various traditional structures.

Another important condition is what Moore calls the institutionalization of rationality. The most important point is that some leading sectors of the population must be committed not only to the idea of economic growth but also to its practical implementation in terms of programs and plans. A problem solving orientation and dedication to deliberate change among the government and administrators is a condition even for getting started.

In addition, Moore also talked about 'structured bureaucracy and achievement orientation. These according to Moore are the major social requirements for industrializing an economy.

A similar discussion on agricultural development led Mosher (1960) to identify five 'essentials' (1) transportation, (2) market for products, (3) new farm technology, (4) availability of purchasable inputs, and (5) incentives. He listed out five accelerators also: (1) education, (2) production credit, (3) farmer associations, (4) expanding land base, and (5) planning. Although Mosher is less interested in detailing the types of social institutional conditions, his list of essentials and accelerates clearly have sociological implications.

16 B.Moore (1963), op.cit., p. 93
17 Ibid, p. 95
The debate on the social conditions of economic development in concerned with certain normative and institutional changes that precede economic growth. This is what constitutes 'social and cultural' pre-requisites. One school of thought believes that attitudinal and value changes or re-interpretation of ideology are essential pre-requisites to create a modern society and economy. Intellectual origin of this argument has its roots in the work of Max Weber, who in his writings on the Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism (1958) emphasized the role of ideology in social development.

1.6) RELIGIOUS ASCETISM AND RATIONALITY

In his studies on European capitalism, Weber attempted to trace the origin of economic rationality in religious ethic practiced by certain ascetic Protestant sects.

Weber was interested in the combination of circumstances responsible for cultural uniqueness of the western civilization. He thought that this uniqueness was related to the process of rationalization in the West. He theorized that the religious ethic of the Puritan middle class man was a major factor in the rise of modern industrial capitalism. To test his theories, Weber undertook comparative studies on India and China where, in spite of many favourable factors industrial capitalism failed.18

Capitalism rests on the inclination of men to adopt certain types of rational conduct. Since the marginal and religious notions have influenced the conduct of all men in the past, Weber reasoned that religious ideas might also have influenced the development of present Western economic system. Because rationalization played a central role in Western capitalism, Weber proposed to investigate the influence of religion on its development.19

Following Weber's theoretical framework, several studies have been conducted in the Third World countries to examine whether or not there exists a similar sort of relationship.

19 Ibid, pp. 5-6
between incentives for economic development and religious beliefs. For instance, Pieris studied Sikhism in detail.

According to Pieris, like Purinatism, religious doctrine of Sikhism had a direct effect on Sikh daily life. It broke free from inter caste restrictions and enabled Sikhs to engage in every kind of occupation. And it stressed the value of hard work combined with an austere style of living. The lives of Sikhs illustrated the influence of worldliness, which expressed itself most strikingly in their positive attitude towards entrepreneurship and their willingness to move into new types of occupation.²⁰ Several other studies of similar nature (Kennedy: 1962 and Nevaskar: 1971) were conducted which attempted to follow Weber's framework.

Debate on Weberian approach continued and it was clearly understood that a wide range of socio-cultural factors, including religious disposition, might facilitate development in specific context. But one should not prompt analysis by assuming that certain factors constitute necessary pre-conditions. Many different value systems exist in modernizing societies and there is no reason to expect that one type is more effective than any other. As Weiner (1966) notes, Catholicism, which is frequently characterized as being a conservative social force, did not apparently impede the high rate of growth in certain Latin American countries.

Similarly, Bellah (1957) argues that whereas industrialization in the West was the product of a slow process of accumulation, industrialization in the East was government controlled and sponsored. His analysis of Tokugawa religion shows that it contained various elements that were conducive to an ideology, which, during the Meiji period, reinforced the government’s efforts to initiate planned economic change. However, it was the Samurai (Warrior) class of aristocratic official, not the merchants, who were the spearhead of this new economic ethos.

It will be useful to note here that none of the earlier discussed socio cultural factors (religious value, spirituality, social prestige, kinship affiliation) are supernatural enemies

or friend of modernization process. They are variables, which hold different values and roles in traditional cultures and modern ones also. Many traditions are to be modernized through qualification, redirection etc. to make them functional in a modern setting. The gradual integration of patterns congruent with modern life comes less through rejection of tradition than through its accommodative qualification and syncretic blending with Western values, structural concepts and ideologies.

1.7) MODERNIZATION AND INDIAN TRADITIONS

Social changes in traditional India were initiated both through orthogenetic and heterogenetic sources. But these changes were essentially pre-modern in nature and quality.21

Buddhism and Jainism emerged as protest movements against the Hindu caste system. Their growth led to the formation of new caste like segmentary groups, which later degenerated into caste and contributed further to pluralistic tradition. These movements had their impact on political and economic structure of Indian society also. Buddhism and Jainism together led to the emergence of new mercantile castes in urban centres. Orthogenetic movements also formed the bases of Sikhism in north India and of Bhakti movements in south and north India. With the partial exception of Bhakti movement in north India which project egalitarian values, all other movements, which include Arya Samaj and Brahma Samaj also were either break away processes to establish parallel great traditions or reiterated established great traditions of Hinduism.22

Thus, most of orthogenetic changes, which took place, were confined with the traditional Hindu social structure and value system. Whatever nominal changes took place were not strong enough to bring about any significant structural change, none of them had any meaningful impact on political system, the stratification system or the caste order against which they were initiated.

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22 Ibid, p. 193
The Islamic tradition came in India through a heterogenetic source. However, contact with Islam only reinforced Indian traditions as Islam was itself organized around traditional values. Y. Singh argued, “despite dissimilarities in ideal value themes of the Hindu and Islamic traditions, there took place a synthesis between them which reinforced the traditional character of Indian society.”

Islamization and Sanskritization are the two important processes of change, which have been active in traditional India. Sanskritization is a change, which takes place within Indian tradition while Islamization is due to outside contacts. Both of these processes are the outcome of a tendency among the strongly deprived groups to adopt or change their local traditions in conformity with the normative elements of a Great tradition. Though these processes are different in their value orientation, however, at some point they are homologous also. “This homology arises from similarity of structural context in which the motivation for these changes comes into being.”

Process of Modernization
Modernization in India started with colonization especially with the establishment of the British rule. This contact with an entirely different and alien culture brought significant changes in the culture and social structure of India society. However, not all of these changes could be called modernizing in a strict sense of the term. The basic direction of this contact was towards modernization, but in the process variety of traditional institutions also got reinforced. This statement clearly contradicts those modernization theorists who hold the view, “Modernization is a process leading to a complete transition from traditional society to a modern society” (Hoselitz: 1960 and Moore: 1963).

The uniqueness of contact with Britishers lies in the fact that before their arrival in India their traditions themselves had undergone drastic changes due to industrial revolution and social reforms. British traditional system of hierarchy was replaced by rational

23 Ibid, p. 192
individualism in economy and society. These are the factors, which determined the attitudes of British rulers and administrators about modernization in India.

Y. Singh holds the view that from the seventeenth century onwards the process of modernization gradually started taking its roots in India. Emergence of organizations like Brahmo Samaj, Prarthna Samaj etc., which emphasized assimilation of Western cultural norms and mode of learning and consolidation of British powers to the middle of nineteenth century, together led to several changes:

1. “Modernizing great tradition: Universalistic legal system, western form of education, urbanization, industrialization, new means of communication and social reforms.

2. Structural Modernization: Rational bureaucratic system of administration, judiciary and army; and new class of business elite and entrepreneurs emerged.

3. Emergence of political elite and rational leadership.

4. Growth of working class and trade unions.”

Altogether, the above mentioned developments led to articulation of rationalist aspirations in the country which was in itself a major step in the growth of modernization.26

There was however a distinct feature of modernization of India in the British period. The growth of this process was selective and segmental. It was not integrated with micro structures of Indian society, such as family, caste and village community. Later in the twentieth century, as nationalist movement gathered momentum, a communal electorate system was introduced. All these historical events which took place during the British period, have deeply influenced the process of modernization which followed during the post-colonial period. It increased the contingency of traditional institutions and symbolism to the Indian process of modernization.27

26 Y. Singh (1994), op.cit., p. 203
27 Ibid.
Following independence, the process of modernization in India has undergone significant changes. As part of development strategy, modernization at all cultural and structural levels has been envisaged by the state. Gaps in modernization process between micro and macro level and between ‘little’ and ‘great’ traditions, which were experienced during British period, have been consciously abolished. Some of the significant characteristics of post independent modernization efforts are given below.

1. Universal adult suffrage and parliamentary democracy has integrated all sections of society in the larger political process.

2. Conscious reforms of Hindu Marriage Act and inherent law have deeply affected the family system.

3. Community development program has taken the cultural norms and role structures of modernity to each and every village.

4. Land reforms and democratic decentralization has deeply affected the power dynamics at the village level.

5. Caste has also in the process undergone a radical transformation of roles, occupational structure, inter-caste relationship, power structure etc., *(Y. Singh: 1994)*

We understand from earlier discussion that modernization, in its advanced form, becomes an all-encompassing process, none of the cultural and social values are left without getting affected by it. In the case of India, as the process of modernization became all encompassing, it also generated inter-structural tensions and conflicts between past and present traditions. Further course of modernization in India would depend much on the manner in which these tensions are resolved as the modernization gathers momentum.

To conclude the discussion, a uniform set of role structures along with commitment to modern values will be created with the advancement of the modernization process. Inconsistency between values, norms, roles and traditions may still persist in different forms and expression in different societies. However, large sectors of societal and cultural life of societies would share uniformity of standards with other modern societies.

Diversity may persist within this strong sense of unity in the traditions of mankind. The major factor would here be the nature of value premises that societies adopt for
modernization. So far, however, no uniformity of such value premises is in sight. The divergence of political ideologies and contradictions in cultural and racial identities coupled with inequality of resources among nations create basic schism in the value structure of modernization. Hence, particularistic growth pattern of modernization seems to be more credible than universalistic form of its development.

1.8) **GANDHIAN MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT**

Gandhian approach to development does not stand in isolation from his larger scheme of thinking. Therefore, it is often found that several of his ideas are intricately connected with each other. *Truth and Ahimsa* (non-violence) was the basic theme behind his entire political and economic philosophy. Since the state represents violence in a concentrated and organized form and is an organization based on force, Gandhi argued in favour of a stateless society. His ideal state was an ‘enlightened anarchy’ in which people are naturally good and hence need no government.28

In such a state, as mentioned above, said Gandhi, every one is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In an ideal state, therefore, there is no political power.29 This was Gandhi’s ultimate ideal, which he called as *Ramraj*. But Gandhi being a very practical idealist30 admitted that his anarchist idea of *Ramraj* was not possible. Hence, he modified his stand by asserting that while the totally non-violent or stateless society was the ultimate ideal, the realizable and immediate ideal was predominantly a non-violent state.31

The Ramraj or enlightened anarchy of Gandhi’s dream was to be realized in three stages. In the initial stage, the goal was *Swaraj*. In the second stage, the objective was to bring a pre-dominantly non-violent state through the evolution of village republics (Gram Swaraj). In the final stage, the purpose was to achieve Ram Raj. Since, the ultimate ideal

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29 *Young India* (1931), 2nd July, p. 162.
31 *Harizan* (1940), 9th March, p. 31.
of Ram Raj is difficult to realize, Gandhi suggested that in its absence, the only realizable alternate and immediate ideal would be the Gram Swaraj.  

The village is the basic unit of Gandhi’s ideal social order. He visualized an inherent contradiction between the village and the city. He said village civilization and city civilization are totally different things. One depends on machinery and industrialization and the other on handicraft. Gandhi believed that British exploited India through its cities and the cities exploited the villages. The town dwellers lived on the poor villager’s subsistence and exploited them to the extent that they produced the food but slept hungry.

Gandhi’s strategy of rural reconstruction was based on his programs of village Swaraj and Swadeshi movement. Under these two programs, he introduced very simple activities like ‘charkha' (Spinning Wheel) and ‘Khadi’ (hand made cloth), promotion of household cottage industries and village handicrafts, village sanitation and hygiene, basic education for harmonious development of the whole personality etc. From time to time, he withdrew from active politics to devote his time for constructive programs which include several things like communal unity, abolition of untouchability, promotion of handicraft and cottage industries, prohibition of alcohol and women development etc.

To him, efforts to achieve India’s political independence and to work on the constructive program were inseparably linked. Under his program of reconstruction of village, Gandhi advocated a self sufficient village economy and self-reliant village community and full utilization of local resources for the development.

Gandhi’s ideal village belongs to the pre-British period, when Indian villages were small republics undisturbed by the periodical visits of outsiders. The republican character of Indian villages was destroyed by the British rule. Therefore, in Gandhi’s plan of rural reconstruction, the ancient republican village without any kind of exploitation served as model unit.

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32 V.P. Verma (1965), *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya*, p. 178.
33 *Hindustan Standard* (1944), 6th December.
Gandhi said, “My idea of ‘village Swaraj’ is that it is a complete republic, independent of neighbours for its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus, every villager’s first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloths. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow useful money crops. The village will maintain village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own water work ensuring clean water supply. As far as possible, every activity will be conducted on a co-operative basis. There will be no caste such as we have today with their graded untouchability. The government of the village will be conducted by a Panchayat, annually elected by the adult villagers. The Panchayat will be legislature, Judiciary and executive combined. Here is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom”.

In order to build village republic, Gandhi’s scheme envisaged maximum decentralization of political and economic power to the villagers. In such a scheme most of the decision-making powers will rest in village Panchayat rather than in the regional and national government. The periodically elected village Panchayat will exercise all legislative, executive and judicial powers. Panchayat will inculcate spiritual and moral values among the villagers. Villagers will defend the village against any external aggression by building a “non-violent peace brigade of volunteers, who would be prepared to be killed for the defense of the village.” In Gandhi’s words:

“Any village can become such a republic today without much interference, even from the present government.... Here, there is a perfect democracy based on individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government, The law of non violence rules him and his government.... He and his village are able to defy the might of world.”

Gandhi’s scheme suggested, along with political decentralization, a decentralized planning economy based on self-sufficiency as far as its basic needs are concerned. In certain matters interdependence would also be necessary. No village can be entirely self

sufficient but it would strive to attain the goal. The village would have to import certain things which it cannot produce.\textsuperscript{39}

Gandhi’s self-sufficient village was to provide full employment to all the adult villagers. According to him “the economic constitution of India should be such that every body should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. This ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of the elementary necessities of life remain in the control of the masses. The neglect of this sample principle is the cause of the destitution that we witness today not only in this unhappy land but other parts of the world too.”\textsuperscript{40} For him, “any plan which exploits the new materials of a country and neglects the potentially more powerful manpower is lop-sided and can never tend to establish equality. Real planning consists in the best utilization of the whole manpower of India.”\textsuperscript{41} This idea of full employment will enable villagers to fulfil their basic needs in the village itself so that they will not migrate to the town and cities.

Thus, Gandhian approach to rural development and reconstruction based on the ideal of self-sufficient, self-reliant, self-governing, non-violent village republics, was a total plan of establishing unique social order in place of the existing one in India. In fact, Gandhian model was based on a multi-dimensional approach to rural reconstruction, covering economic, political, social and educational aspects.

Therefore, at all levels Gandhian approach to development seems to be an antithesis of modernization approach. The contradiction of basic framework of these two approaches will be explained through the following points.

\textsuperscript{39}\textit{Ibid.}, p.63.
\textsuperscript{40}M.K. Gandhi (1962), \textit{op.cit.}, p. 34
\textsuperscript{41}\textit{Ibid}, p.35.
Gandhian Approach | Modernization Approach  
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Development takes place within indigenous traditional framework. | There is ideal typical value system which needs to be adopted for the modernization.  
Traditions are the driving force behind development. | Technology development is the starting point.  
Micro approach to development conceived at the village level | Macro approach: modernization takes place at regional and national levels.  
Urbanization is bad for the society and for the development. | Urbanization goes along with the modernization.  
Each society has its own path of development, particularistic in approach | All the societies go through a more or less same process, universal in approach.  
Emphasizes the need of going back to tradition. | Transition from traditions to another modern set of values.  
Negative role of state | Positive role of state.  
Local forms of administration | Centralized administration with high degree of bureaucratization.  
Human happiness at the center. | Economic development at the center.  
Indigenous model of development | Western model of development.  

As far as the place of Gandhian model in Indian context is concerned, his concepts of decentralization of powers to the panchayat, to enable them to become self-sufficient village republics was rejected by the Constituent Assembly which adopted the western parliamentary system of democratic government. This apparently represents a wide departure from Gandhi’s idea.

The economic development policies and programs also clearly represent a very wide divergence from the Gandhian ideal. All our efforts of planned development have aimed at building up a rapidly expanding and technologically progressive economy. In order to develop a strong industrial base, the emphasis has been on development of basic industries, power generation, mining and development of infrastructure required for industrial growth. Along with industrial development, without affecting it, development of agriculture and allied sector was carefully attempted primarily to gain self-sufficiency in food grains. Development of rural areas was felt necessary. But it was possible only at the cost of industrial development and, therefore, a ‘low cost program’ strategy of rural
development was adopted as a compromise to gain time in the absence of any viable alternative. 42

Development strategies of the last fifty years have succeeded in achieving a considerable progress in terms of agriculture development, industrial base, development of human resources and development of physical and institutional infrastructure. However, despite these solid achievements, Indian economy has failed in its main task of solving the basic problems of poverty, unemployment and inflation. The era of rising expectations created by hard-earned independence and national planning is said to have given way to a period of rising frustration among the Indian people. Modernization – industrialization growth – trickle down model of development has been found to be woefully inadequate to tackle the problems of rural poverty. 43

The conditions of vast majority of rural masses have persistently been worsening because of the failure to take fruits of science, technology and industrial development to the rural poor. Our policy objective of economic growth with social justice seems to be almost impossible to achieve. In the words of Dr. Kurien, “If the persistence of mass poverty is any indication at all, the situation today is the same as it was in colonial India.” 44

1.9) ALTERNATE APPROACH OF DEVELOPMENT

Even after fifty years of planned development strategies, relevance of Gandhi's ideas can be very well realized. We might even have a feeling that immediately after the independence, we should have gone with Gandhian model, may be with slight modification. By now, however, we have gone so far and ahead on our road to build a sufficiently strong agro-industrial base that there arises no question of going back, nor is it possible. The politico-economic and for that matter, even social realities of late nineties, are totally different to those prevailing in the late forties or early fifties. None,

42 V.R.Gaikwad (1986), op.cit.,p. 10
not even staunch Gandhian, would recommend for the adoption of Gandhian approach in its entirety.

However, some of Gandhi’s ideas, which are relevant even in today’s context are listed below:

1. Maximum involvement of people in the planning and implementation of rural development.
2. Least interference from the government.
3. Maximum utilization of local resources, using only limited resources, which are necessary, from outside.
4. Employment opportunities for villager within the village to control out migration to urban centres.
5. Strengthening local bodies, such as panchayats, cooperating for most of the administrative and economic purposes, within the village.
6. To facilitate gradual empowerment of the village community by handing over all the responsibility of development to them.

After fifty years of independence, government in India has failed to realize even a fraction of the goals of poverty alleviation, development and prosperous villages, set at the time of independence. Therefore, this is a right time to think of an alternate of the government type of development approach.

We do not have much to choose, there are two extreme approaches: modernizations perspective on the one hand and Gandhian model on other. As we have already discussed, modernization approach, which was adopted in a modified version for the post-colonial development planning in India, has failed in bringing out the desired changes. On the other hand, the existing realities do not permit to go all out for Gandhian model. Therefore, we have to think of an approach, which can utilize the entire existing infrastructure and at the same time provide enough room for decentralized planning and people’s empowerment, as suggested by Gandhi. Thus the alternate approach will be centralized, as far as resource mobilization, national politics, and national economy is
concerned but it will also allow people (Villagers) to plan and execute their development program at the micro (village) level.

Now the problem arises, who will take the responsibility of organizing people at the grassroots level. We can not expect much from the government agencies, as we have experienced in the past, and the only alternative, one can think of, is voluntary organization. Voluntary organizations seem to be the most appropriate agency to organize villagers, train them, articulate their interest and provide necessary technical support. However, several questions arise in our mind when we think of voluntary organization and their role as stated above (we have already outlined these questions in the introductory chapter).

Therefore our approach to study rural development in India in ensuing chapter will be close to Gandhian model for micro level management and will also consider some significant and useful features of modernization model as discussed above. The role of VOs in facilitating desired results with above stated approach form the core of our approach.