CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study, it may be recalled was premised on the existence of a long standing a-political culture in India. The hallmark of India has been its culture rather than its polity or political developments through the ages. Even during the British rule with the expansion of universal education and mobilisation of mainly middle classes in the independence movement, Indian masses remained relatively unmoved and unaffected. The elite comprising mainly the educated sections of middle classes imbibed modern political culture while the large chunks of uneducated rural masses lagged behind. Taking this clue from Myron Weiner, this study, by developing and measuring the central concept of modern political culture, had addressed to the issues of (a) homogeneity of elite political culture (b) fragmentation of mass political culture and (c) the role of some selected factors of the life conditions of Meerut region in modernising the political culture of its people of both elite and mass character.

Such issues were examined through the conceptual instrument of modern political culture. Field work for the
study was done in the second half of the year 1990 in Meerut city and its surrounding country-side. Different groups belonging to elite-mass categories were interviewed to collect data by an structured interview schedule.

We are now in a position to sum up our findings and focus our attention on their theoretical and practical significance. The main findings are summarised as below:

1. MEASURING MODERN POLITICAL CULTURE:

In the recent years several authors from different countries have attempted to measure modern political culture. For instance, Almond and Verba, 1963; P.B. Mayer, 1973; Barnes and Sani, 1974; Charles A. Johnson, 1976; Robert Presthus, 1977 have all built their own measurement instruments to suit their research objectives. Drawing from these empirical works and other theoretical writings this research developed, as its starting point, its own concept of modern political culture as a configuration of some attitudes and value orientations towards a set of political objects as shared among and transmitted by the people of this region of Meerut and its surrounding areas.

As the study was dealing with culture, there were good reasons which did not allow this researcher to apply the scale constructed by any other author.
These reasons are:

(i) Attitude scales are not generalisable beyond the group for which they were constructed. It means, the reliability, once determined, does not remain constant across groups or cultural contexts.

(ii) Items in the constructed scale are scalable only in the context chosen for the purpose of research. But when context changes, they become unscalable.

Therefore, it was appropriate and imperative to construct a valid and reliable scale which was suitable not only to the socio-cultural and psychological requirements of the sample groups but also to the over-all situation in which the instrument was applied to collect data.

At the time of construction of the scale we lay down three criteria for the guidance.

(i) The measure had to be based on the sound definition of modernity of political culture.

(ii) It should have reflected the socio-cultural attributes of the elite-mass groups in rural-urban context.

(iii) It should have yielded results comparable to the findings of existing researches in the field.

1.1 Constructing Modern Political Culture Scale:

In all, five basic componential themes were selected to measure the modernity of political culture.
These themes were selected carefully so that they must suit to the cultural context of the area of study. The five theme components are:

(i) Trust or Identification: It deals with political trust with (i) fellow citizens and (ii) superordinate political units.

(ii) Equality or Absence of Arbitrary Distinctions of Status: It means that every body is equal irrespective of parochial or primordial issues, such as, birth, caste, religion, language, etc.

(iii) Liberty: It implies universal love, dignity, positive attitude of tolerance, open discussion and variations in thinking, etc.

(iv) Loyalty and Commitment: It refers to unambiguous sense of identification with a unit of which an individual consider himself a member.

(v) Activist and Achievement Orientation: It stresses the expectations among the people that their own activities and those of government must produce change in their lives.

1.2 Framing the Items:

After finalising the themes we selected 27 items on the basis of these themes. These items tapped a respondent's attitudes, values, and behaviour patterns representing the range of five themes described above and, in this way, constituted five 'sub scales' and one overall
scale of modern political culture. Some characteristics of the modernity of political culture scale and those of the concept of modern political culture to which the scale has been applied are stated below:

(i) **Distinguishability of the Scale:** The overall scale of modern political culture as well as the componential 5 sub-scales distinguish and discriminate among the individual respondents in terms of the characteristics designated as modern political culture. Their scores on the overall scale as well as the five sub-scales range between 0 and 100.

(ii) **Validity of the Scale:** Validity of the scale was established on the basis of selection of appropriate content items use of operational terms, check of conception of modernity of political culture by theory and practical experiences of people, familiarity of the respondents with the nature and purpose of the study, discrimination of the respondents between modern and non-modern by each theme.

(iii) **Reliability of the Scale:** Reliability of the scale was measured on the basis of Internal Consistency Reliability. It can be known by making the scale free from random variations among the items. It is called coefficient of equivalence or split-half reliability. The test was applied on our cultural modernity scale of 27 items and we got 74.00 as an index of split half reliability coefficient.
Spearman Brown formula was used to determine the reliability of entire test, which confirmed the reliability of our instrument.

2. NATURE OF MODERN POLITICAL CULTURE:

One of the major objective of this study was to examine empirically the inter-relations within the socio-psychological components posited to define political culture for this study. The data reveal that:

(i) There existed a units or coherence in the formulation of modern political culture as was adopted in this study. It means that modern political culture comes about as an integrated whole.

(ii) Almost all the themes constituting the concept of modern political culture are positively and significantly inter-correlated with one another suggesting that the concept formulated for this study is one integrated system.

(iii) All the componential themes that have been postulated to constitute modern political culture are more or less equal partners in this venture with Trust or Identification falling a little behind of the partners like Equality, Liberty and Political Activism which emerge as front line contributors.

One implication of this finding is that modern political culture is a multidimensional concept.
This conclusion is derived from the analysis of covariation among various dimensions of the concept. It is true that no two dimensions of the concept assume perfect or near perfect correlation, nor that any one dimensions would substitute all the rest. It clearly shows that there is no unidimensionality in the concept, rather, it is a multidimensional concept.

3. ELITE AND MASS POLITICAL CULTURE:

It was the basic assumption of this research that modern political culture develops or evolves in a social context, which is determined by the life experiences or conditions of men. From this basis premise flows another assumption that various social structures are likely to develop various types of political cultures, according to their conditions of life space. Selection of four groups representing various positions on elite-mass continuum helped to discern this relation. Apart from elite - mass reference, there were two sets of factors, (i) Socio-economic status of the respondent's family and (ii) the socio-personal characteristics of the respondents, which were supposed to act as the source of socialization leading to help or hinder the development of modern political culture.

Three main hypotheses were generated involving these issues relating to the elite and mass political cultures.
(i) Elites have a homogeneous political culture significantly different from the masses.

(ii) Elites have a more modern culture than the masses and differences of their socialization experiences of education, family and occupation account for their culture.

(iii) Masses have a political culture fragmented along caste, community and rural urban lines.

Findings Related to the First Hypothesis are:

(i) Homogeneity of elite political culture was examined against the argument of Myron Weiner (1965) who differentiated between the elite and mass political cultures. He asserted that the elite political culture is homogeneous. To test this proposition the mean score of four elite groups on modern political culture were arranged. Data suggested that there was a considerable degree of homogeneity between the urban elites i.e. Urban Professionals and Urban Bureaucrats (mean score 67 & 67) and between rural elites i.e. Rural Power Elite and Rural Bureaucrats (mean score 58 & 54). But there was no such homogeneity between the urban and rural elites. This difference was further tested by the use of Z ratios which were low within the rural - urban elite groups (i.e. 0.23 & 1.98) but significantly high between the groups (i.e. 2.81 to 3.59).

(ii) The mass political culture is found to be fragmented. Mean scores and Z ratios provide support for it. Two groups, Urban White Collar Workers and Rural Landed Farmers have secured high mean scores (i.e. 58 & 62) producing a Z value as low as 1.19 which is not significant statistically.
Findings Related to the Second Hypothesis are:

(i) That elites have more modern culture than the masses is examined through the identification of respondents who attained high modern political culture scores. Data reveal that the respondents who acquired high modern political culture are in high percentage in the elite group (46.25) which in the mass group showing as low as 17 percent.

(ii) As for testing the influence of factors which were subjected to nominal scales, the significance of association is examined by the use of Chi-square technique. The results are as under:

(a) Urban background of the respondents show significant association with the modernization of the political culture. The $X^2$ of the value of 31.23 for 2 degree of freedom at .001 level of significance was found significant.

(b) Family type has not shown any significant relation with modern political culture. The $X^2$ of the value of 5.15 for 2 degree of freedom at the significance level of .07 did not indicate any significant relation between between these two variables.

(c) Sex of the respondents has not indicated any positive relationship with the modernization of political culture as the $X^2$ value of the order of .97 for 2 degree of freedom is too low to support the relationship of any significance.
(d) Age of the respondents is found to be negatively associated with modernity of political culture, the $X^2$ of the value of 23.7 for 6 degree of freedom indicate this inverse association. The age group of 20 - 40 years contains highest modernity thereafter it declines as the age increases.

(e) Religion is found significantly and positively associated with the modern political culture, the $X^2$ value of 27.79 with 4 degree of freedom indicate that Hindus were more modern in their political culture than the Non-Hindus.

**Correlational Analysis:**

(i) Correlational analysis of the relation between family SES variables and modernity of political culture revealed that family education contribute maximum ($r = .60$) to the modernity of political culture and least contribution is made by the land possessed by the respondent ($r = .19$). To make this relationship more manifest, the total high modern frequencies were distributed on the scale by the use of Deciles, against the varying degrees of Family SES Scores. This enabled us to ascertain the proportion of those, who scored high in each decile on the cultural modernity scale. Findings suggested that increase in SES fosters modern political culture.

(ii) Correlational analysis of the relation between personal characteristics of the respondents and modernity of political culture revealed that
respondents education was the highest contributing factor \( r = .70 \) while political participation was the least \( r = .35 \) contributing factor to the modernity of political culture. To make this relationship sharper we distributed the frequencies by using the Deciles, scoring high on the scale of modern political culture, against the scores on the summary Personal Characteristics. By doing this it was found that richer the people in some of their personal attributes, the more modern they are in their political culture.

Interactional Association:

(i) Interactional association of SES variables explained that level of family education and family income contribute more substantially to the modernisation of political culture than other variables. Similarly respondents caste and his education were found strongly correlated with the modernity of political culture.

(ii) Interactional association of personal characteristic variables showed that respondents education was the strongest variable which contributed most substantially to the modernity of political culture. Near to the education \( (.70) \) there was political awareness \( (.66) \) and media exposure \( (.59) \) which produced modern political culture.

Another important finding of this research is that despite the conducive role played by socialization factors like education, mass - media exposure etc. the growth of modern political culture remains uneven at the rural-urban
and elite - mass bases and fragmented if considered at mass level alone. There still exists as yawning gap between political cultures of elite and mass groups. Factors like religion and caste are still playing their decisive role among the masses.

Findings Related to the Third Hypothesis are:

(i) Fragmentation of mass political culture on caste lines was evident. Data classified for this purpose divided that higher caste people possess high modern political culture in higher proportion (70%) than the people of lower castes (30%).

(ii) Religion is found to be another source of fragmentation in the mass political culture. Data exhibited that Hindus could secure high percentage (78) in the category of high modern political culture while Non-Hindus could secure a low (43) percentage.

(iii) Residential background was examined as a source of fragmentation in the mass political culture. Data has supported the finding that rural respondents scoring 'low' on modern political culture scale secured high percentage (69), where as urban respondents 'high' on modern political culture scale also secure 44%. All in all, indications are that the political culture of the masses gets fragmented on rural-urban, caste and religious lines.
BROAD CONCLUSION:

From the main findings of this study as sketched above, the following broad conclusion may be drawn:

There exists a persistent gap, as measured by a modern political culture scale, between the political culture of elite and mass groups residing in Meerut and its surrounding areas. The elite of this region share a relatively more homogeneous political culture than the masses. Their own personal education, exposure to the media of mass communication along with higher standards of family education and other elements of modern family milieu are promoting modern attitudes, values and behaviour in the population of this area. Consequently, the diffusion of education and media of mass communication have a great potential to bridge the elite-mass gap of political culture. This is corroborated by other research findings of other scholars in India as well as abroad.