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UNIT 3 SOCIAL CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

*Social Change in
Contemporary India*

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Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
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3.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about social change and its trends in the contemporary Indian context. Following this, you will also learn about the patterns of change in modern Indian society with special reference to the process of Sanskritization, westernization, modernization and secularization.

3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of social change
- Analyze the trends of social change in India
- Discuss the patterns of social change in modern India
- Evaluate the process of Sanskritization
- Explain the concept of Westernization
- Know the meaning of the process of modernization
- Discuss the process of secularization

3.2 TRENDS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

In the first unit, you have learned about the dynamics of change and the meaning and nature of social change. As you have understood, social change is the alteration

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or modification of the structure and function of any societal system. It can be the change in interpersonal relationships, social organizations, social patterns and values, inter-caste and inter-community marriage, and change in family type from joint-living to nuclear households, etc.

Sociologists have given different models through which they trace the trends of social change. With the development of sociology as a discipline, sociologists including the founding fathers have borrowed heavily from other disciplines to interpret social change and make an outline of the direction with which societies change. In the 19th century, evolution became the predominant model for interpreting change in biology and sociologists interpreted social phenomena in the same direction, emphasizing that change in society is gradual and continuous and it occurs in a sequence. The evolutionary theorists have traced the trends of social change in two different ways: unilinear and universal. The unilinear evolutionists claim that changes occur in society in a single direction. For them evolution is an irreversible and unidirectional process. Societies pass through different stages and every stage is a higher and improved one than the previous stage. Auguste Comte and Karl Marx are the proponents of this view. Comte, the father of the discipline, viewed evolution in three successive stages: theological, metaphysical and positive stages, most commonly known as the 'law of three stages'. Human thought and knowledge are the bases through which societies change from one stage to the other. In the theological stage, people believed in the supernatural forces. In the metaphysical stage, human intelligence was the product of abstract forces. The last stage was the positive stage. In this stage of evolution, reasoning and scientific observation dominated all social phenomena. People started thinking about reason rather than superstition. According to Comte, all the societies pass through these three successive stages and each stage is more progressive than the earlier stage.

Karl Marx also talked about evolution of societies in unilinear manner. He believed that the Western societies have developed through four main phases, i.e., Asiatic, Ancient, Feudal and Capitalist. Through the path of change and development, societies progress in unilinear way and the basis of change is conflict between the classes of those who own the mode of production and those who do not. There is a conflict between the thesis and anti-thesis and as a result, the synthesis comes into existence. As to Marx, the Asiatic mode of production was the characteristic of primitive societies where ownership of land was communal and therefore there didn't exist any class. The next stage was the Ancient mode of production when slavery prevailed extensively. The master had the right of ownership over the slaves. Two types of classes existed during this phase as Marx propounded: the slave-masters and slaves. Following this, there was the Feudal mode of production which consisted of again two different classes namely, feudal lords and serfs. Serfs were deprived of property and were obliged to surrender their labour to the lords who on the other hand were the owners of private property. This stage laid the foundation for the next phase, i.e., the capitalist mode of production. In this stage, capital is the dominant means of production. Capital can be money

or credit. The capitalists own all means of production like land, machines and the bourgeoisie only own their labour power which they provide to the capitalists for their means of subsistence. As in other stages, the superior class exploits the inferior class in this phase of mode of production too. The bourgeoisie get exploited by the capitalists who pocket all profit and surplus value which leads to estrangement and alienation by the labourers or bourgeoisie class. This leads to a situation where the bourgeoisie world over will unite and raise voice against their exploitation by the capitalists. Marx predicts, a conflict will erupt between the capitalists and the bourgeoisie following this. It will lead to a classless socialist mode of production. Marx says that class struggle or conflict is the basis on which society changes from one mode of production to another. In his own words, 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle.' So, his theory is based on the assumption that each society passes through four stages of development and each stage is progressive than the preceding one.

The second category of evolutionists is known as universal evolutionists who focused on the evolution of societies from one typical social structure to another. Emile Durkheim, Herbert Spencer and Ferdinand Tonnies are the proponents of this theory. Emile Durkheim has explained his theory of evolution in his book '*The Division of Labour*' (1893). He has discussed evolution of society from 'mechanical solidarity' to 'organic solidarity'. The ancient society has been identified by him as representing the 'mechanical solidarity' and the modern industrial society with 'organic solidarity'. In the ancient period, societies were united with the solidarity of sameness, likeness and resemblance. Such solidarity was possible because collective consciousness among the people was strong. Individual behaviour was regulated by the collectivity. Law was 'repressive' in nature. On the other hand, 'organic solidarity', Durkheim explains, is the solidarity based on differences. This is the characteristic feature of industrial societies marked by high degree of division of labour and specialization. Collective consciousness in this type of society is relatively less effective and law therefore becomes 'restitutive'. In the transition from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity, division of labour plays an important role.

Herbert Spencer also traced the change in society in an evolutionary way. As he said, 'Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion during which matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to definite, coherent heterogeneity.' Spencer for the first time introduced systematically the laws of 'natural selection' and the 'survival of the fittest' hypothesis into sociology. In his '*The Principles of Sociology*' he emphasized that human society had progressed from small groups to larger ones and from simple to compound and later doubly compound ones, i.e., from a homogenous to heterogeneous form.

Similarly, Ferdinand Tonnies believed that societies evolved from 'Gemeinschaft' to 'Gesellschaft'. To him 'Gemeinschaft' represents the type of society characterized by community feeling and intimate face to face relationships. All the members of community know each other personally and, therefore,

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cooperation among them binds the whole community. The individual members are controlled by informal means such as morals, values, gossips and gestures. Tomnies said that the rural societies represented the 'Gemeinschaft' kind of society. On the other hand, 'Gesellschaft' represents the modern urban life. Such type of society is characterized by impersonal relationships among the members and social control is maintained by formal means like laws and legally defined punishments.

Apart from the evolutionists, there are other theorists who trace the trends of social change in cyclical manner. Sorokin and Vilfredo Pareto are two of such sociologists. According to Sorokin, a particular society or culture progresses to a certain point reaching at its peak and then reverses back to its original position. He states that society moves from 'ideational culture' to 'sensate culture' and vice versa. While moving in a cyclical fashion these two types of cultures make space for a third type of culture, i.e. 'idealistic culture'. The 'ideational culture' is characterized by spiritualism and otherworldliness. The 'sensate culture' is fundamentally opposite to the 'ideational culture'. Here people give importance to their material sense and not to their spiritual senses. The 'idealistic culture' on the other hand is a mixture of the other two types where both materialism and spiritualism elements are present. Human knowledge is based on both super-natural and spiritual intuition and sensory experiences.

Vilfredo Pareto also analyzed change in a cyclical method. His theory is known as the 'circulation of elites'. According to Pareto, any society consists of elites and masses and it is the elites who bring change in the society. There can be two types of elites in a society according to Pareto: the governing and non-governing elites. The governing elites are those who play a role in government and hold power. The non-governing elites are those who don't enjoy power and are out of the government. To Pareto, elites can be of 'foxes' type and 'lions' type. The former type of elites rule the society by cunning, fraud and manipulation; whereas the latter type of elites control power through direct use of force. Pareto says that major changes occur in society when one type of elites replaces another, i.e. the process of circulation of elites. The elites fall and lose their control over government as they decay in quality and lose dynamism.

There are also couple of sociological models that created analogies between social change and the technological advancement of the Western societies. In the mid-20th century, sociologists and anthropologists borrowed a theoretical model from linguistics and analyzed social change. This approach is called 'structural functionalism'. This theory postulated that the existence of social institutions like kinship determine human behaviour. The theory propounds that social institutions are all interrelated and a change in one institution brings change in other institutions.

3.3 PATTERNS OF SOCIAL CHANGE— SANSKRITIZATION

In this section, you will learn about the patterns of change with special reference to the process of Sanskritization. While analyzing the process of social change, and in particular in the context of Indian society, the process of Sanskritization, Westernization, modernization and secularization serve as important conceptual tools.

Noted Indian sociologist M.N. Srinivas had made a sincere effort to analyze the process of social change in Indian society through his significant work, *Religion and society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952). This book was probably the first such attempt to study change in Indian context in a systematic manner. The term Sanskritization which was coined by Srinivas, during his study on the Coorgs, was primarily meant to analyze the process of cultural mobility. According to him, it is a process which has been occurring throughout the Indian history and still continues to occur. Srinivas (1966, 6) defines Sanskritization as 'the process by which a low Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently "twice-born" caste. As he says, such changes are initiated by a claim to higher positions in the caste hierarchy than that the particular caste traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community. The claim is made over a generation or two. Srinivas (1966) said that occasionally a caste claims a position in the caste hierarchy which its neighbours are not willing to concede. To illustrate this, he says the Harijan castes in Mysore will not accept cooked or 'pucca' food and water from the Smiths who are certainly one of the touchable castes and therefore superior to Harijans even if their claim to be Vishwakarma Brahmins is not accepted. Similarly, the peasants or the 'Okkaligas' and others such as Shepherds or the 'Kurubas' do not accept 'pucca' food and water from Marka Brahmins, who are certainly included among the Brahmins.

Srinivas further maintained that Sanskritization is usually accompanied by and often results in upward mobility for the concerned caste. However, as you have learned in the first unit the mobility associated with Sanskritization is only *positional* change in the system of caste hierarchy and doesn't lead to any *structural* change, i.e., a particular caste moves up in the local caste hierarchy and the neighbour caste comes down, but this takes place in the broader caste hierarchy as a whole. There is no change to the caste structure as such.

Sanskritization, moreover, as a process is not confined to the Hindu system but also happens to the tribal groups as well such as the *Bhils* of western India, the *Gonds* and *Oraons* of central India, and the *Pahadis* of the Himalayas. This usually results in the tribe undergoing Sanskritization claiming to be a caste and, therefore, Hindu. In the traditional system, the only way to become a Hindu was to belong to a caste, and the unit of mobility was usually a group and not an

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individual or a family (ibid, 7). So the main argument that Srinivas wants to place is that contrary to the theoretical and book view of the caste system, there is scope for mobility inside the caste structure. As he said (1952, 32):

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The caste system is far from a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed for all time. Movement has always been possible, and especially in the middle regions of the hierarchy. A caste was able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism, and by Sanskritizing its ritual and pantheon. In short, it took over, as far as possible, the customs, rites and beliefs of the Brahmins, and adoption of the Brahminic way of life by a low caste seems to have been frequent, though theoretically forbidden. This process has been called as Sanskritization.

Originally, Srinivas used the term 'Brahminization' to describe the process of mobility inside the Hindu caste system. However, later looking at the broader nature of the process, he used the term Sanskritization to denote the inter-caste mobility. The term 'Sanskritization' is a much broader concept than 'Brahminization' because not only it encompasses non-Brahmin models like Kshatriyas model, Jat model, Vaishya model and models of other 'twice-born' castes but also denotes a wide spectrum of values and lifestyles (Hasnain 2006, 601). Srinivas said that Sanskritization was no doubt an awkward term, but it was preferred to Brahminization for several reasons: Brahminization is subsumed in the wider process of Sanskritization though at some points Brahminization and Sanskritization are at variance with each other. For instance, the Brahmins of the Vedic period drank 'Soma', an alcoholic drink, ate beef and offered blood sacrifices. Both were given up in the post-Vedic times. It has been suggested that this was the result of Jain and Buddhist influence. Today Brahmins are by and large vegetarians; only the *Saraswat*, *Kashmiri* and *Bengali* eat non-vegetarian food. All these Brahmins are, however, traditionally teetotalers. In brief, the customs and habits of the Brahmins changed after they had settled in India. Had the term Brahminization been used, it would have been necessary to specify which particular Brahmin group was meant, and at which period of its recorded history. Again the agents of Sanskritization are not always Brahmins (Srinivas 1962[2002], 42–43). It is not only the Brahmins, but also local 'dominant castes' who have been the models of imitation. Srinivas (1966) defines 'dominant caste' as one that 'yields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in the hierarchy'. Traditionally, the castes having high ritual status were enjoying high political and economic power. However, later new factors affected dominance and Western education, jobs in the administration and urban source of income became significant in contributing to the power and position of a particular caste. The dominant castes were thus enjoying high status in local hierarchy. The people belonging to lower castes looked at them as their reference groups and imitated their life-styles and rituals and, therefore, the dominant castes gradually became a source of socio-cultural change in the local caste system and a different model of Sanskritization.

Different castes have been found changing their traditional cultural practices while aspiring for higher positions in local hierarchy. The process of Sanskritization

has many consequences. As Hasnain (2006, 601–2) remarked, it may result in the erosion of cultural autonomy of the women folk which includes erosion in the freedom to choose life-partner and prevalence of a rigid sexual morality. Changes in family structure include a movement towards the orthodox Hindu joint family and the concomitant stronger authority of father, monogamy and a stronger caste organization with increased tendency of ostracism. Also a rigid commensality prevails along with changed food habits prohibiting beef and pork and consumption of liquor while giving importance to higher education and adopting dowry practice instead of token 'bride-price'. Besides, in the sphere of religion, it frequently results in the donning of sacred thread, giving up animal sacrifice at the time of wedding and increased emphasis on pilgrimage, etc.

According to Srinivas, Sanskritization means not only the adoption of new customs and habits, but also exposure to new ideas and values which have found frequent expression in the vast body of Sanskritic literature, sacred as well as secular. *Karma, Dharma, Papa, Maya, Samsara* and *Moksha* are some of the most common Sanskritic theological ideas, and when a group becomes Sanskritized, these words occur frequently in their talk (1962, 48). As he stated, the spread of Sanskritic theological ideas increased during the British period. The advancement in science and technology and especially communication technology carried Sanskritization to areas which were inaccessible earlier and also the spread of literacy in the country carried it to lower caste groups who were mostly illiterate before. Besides, the introduction of Western political institutions like the parliamentary democracy has also played phenomenal role in increasing the instances of Sanskritization in the country.

It is pertinent to mention that there are several other processes which are technically different from Sanskritization but have often been confused with it. For example, S.L. Kalia discussed about the process of 'tribalization' that occurred in Jaunsar-Bawar of Uttar Pradesh and in Bastar region of Madhya Pradesh in which high-caste Hindus temporarily resident among tribal people take over the latter's mores, rituals and beliefs which are in many respects antithetical to their own (Srinivas 1966, 19). Besides, a study by D.N. Mazumdar gives evidences of an opposite process that shows the members of higher castes abandon their rituals, dressing pattern and traditional mode of life and even taking up the professions traditionally practiced by the lower castes. He called this process as 'De-Sanskritization'. According to Mazumdar, the shrinkage of distances between castes is not due to Sanskritization but its reverse. The lower castes are not moving towards the higher but the higher castes are abandoning their life-styles (Sharma 2004, 343).

Y. Singh (1977) observed that the process of Sanskritization though apparently cultural, reflects many complex motivational urges for social mobility. An important element in this process is the manifest rejection of the norms of institutionalized inequality fostered by the traditional caste-stratified system. It leads, however, to a paradox: Sanskritization reinforces the normative system which is

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represented by caste stratification, but it also, at least in principle, violates its basic tenet, i.e., the acceptance of the principle of hierarchy. For this reason, many sociologists have seen in the process of Sanskritization a latent form of class conflict which results because of the peculiar structural constraints of Indian society (Gould 1961; Leach 1960; Singh 1977[1999], 35). Srinivas made this point indirectly while analyzing his concept of 'dominant caste'.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. On what fronts social change can happen in society?
2. How the 19th century sociologists borrowed from biology to explain the process of social change?
3. What is unilinear evolutionists' opinion on social change?

3.4 WESTERNIZATION

Westernization is another concept and a process of social change which has been discussed by Srinivas at length. It is a process whereby societies increasingly adopt Western cultures, life-styles, technology, food pattern, language, alphabet, religion, ideas, philosophy and value systems. Srinivas used the term 'Westernization' particularly to indicate the change that took place in Indian society during the British rule in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Westernization as a process started having its impact substantially on the elites of the country since they had access to modern and British education especially English. The Brahmins and other higher castes who were enjoying power and position in the society with the tradition of learning, eagerly took to secular education system that the Britishers imparted with English as the medium.

Srinivas (1966, 46) wrote that British rule produced radical and lasting changes in Indian society and culture. It was unlike any previous period in Indian history as the British brought with them new technology, institutions, knowledge, beliefs and values. The new technology and the revolution in communication technology which this brought about enabled the Britishers to integrate the country as never before in its history. During the 19th century, the Britishers slowly laid the foundations of a modern state by surveying land, settling the revenue, creating a modern bureaucracy, army, police, instituting law courts, codifying the law, developing the communications like railways, post and telegraph, roads, canals, establishing schools, colleges and so on. They also brought with them the printing press that made a significant impact on Indian society since publication of books and journals transmitted modern and traditional knowledge to a large number of people. As Srinivas (1962) defined the term, 'Westernization refers to the changes brought about in Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule, and the term subsumes changes occurring at different levels—technology, institutions, ideology, values.'

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Srinivas (1966, 47–48) made distinctions between Westernization and two other related processes: industrialization and urbanization. As he mentioned, on the one hand, there were cities in the pre-industrial world, though they differed from post-industrial revolution cities. For one thing, they needed large rural population for their support, so that ancient and medieval countries remained dominantly agricultural in spite of a few big cities. Again, while the Industrial Revolution resulted in an increase in the rate of urbanization and highly urbanized areas are generally highly industrialized areas, urbanization is not a simple function of industrialization. As he stated, while most of the Westernized people are usually found in big cities, it will be wrong to equate Westernization with urbanization. Even in a country like India, there are people in rural areas who are as much and may be more Westernized than many of their urban counterparts.

Westernization resulted not only in the introduction of new institutions like press newspapers, journals, elections, etc., but also in fundamental changes in the old institutions. So, although India had schools long before the Britishers came to India they were fundamentally different from the schools introduced by the British in that they were restricted to only upper-caste elites and transmitted mostly traditional knowledge. Besides, there were certain value preferences implicit to the process of Westernization as well. One of the important values is 'humanitarianism'. This meant an active concern for the welfare of humanity irrespective of caste, class, religion, age and sex. It encompassed both equalitarianism and secularization. Humanitarianism resulted in many administrative measures taken by the British to fight epidemics, famines, and building schools, hospitals, etc. and also brought in several civil and procedural laws that put an end to certain inequalities that existed in Hindu and Islamic personal laws. Also, Christian missionary activities were remarkable in making humanitarian efforts especially in the form of providing education and health facilities. As mentioned by Srinivas (1966), the missionaries were the bitter critics of the Hindu social institutions like caste, untouchability, low status of women, child marriage, etc. This led to reinterpretation of Hinduism at both ideological and institutional levels and the conversion of the lower castes like 'Harijans' to Islam and Christianity. Such factors were instrumental in producing a changed attitude among the Hindu elites towards the traditional caste system and untouchability.

According to Srinivas, the increase in Westernization does not retard the process of Sanskritization; rather both go on hand in hand and to some extent, increase in Westernization accelerates the process of Sanskritization. For instance, the postal facilities, railways, busses, and media which are the fruits of Western impact on India rendered more organized religious pilgrimages, meetings, caste solidarities, etc. (Singh 1973[2001], 9). As mentioned before, Sanskritization and Westernization are concepts that analyze the process of cultural change and have no scope for systematic explanation of changes in the social structure (ibid). Srinivas pointed out that to describe the social changes occurring in modern India in terms of Sanskritization and Westernization, we need to describe it

primarily in cultural and not in structural terms. An analysis in terms of structure is much more difficult than an analysis in terms of culture (Srinivas 1966; also in Singh 1973[2001], 9–10).

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As observed by Singh (1973[2001], 25 and Jena and Mohapatra ([1993] 2001, 150–58), the process of Westernization has had its impact on both the 'little' and 'great traditions'. Its influence on 'little traditions' is termed by Singh as 'primary westernization' and on 'great tradition' as 'secondary westernization.'

(i) **Primary Westernization:** By primary westernization Prof. Singh meant changes induced by the Western impact on the Indian traditions. At the initial phases, Western culture made its impact on peripheral aspects of Indian culture. It created a sub-cultural pattern limited to a very specific group of people within a particular geographical area. That means, during the early periods of British rule, the Western impact was localized and peripheral. To illustrate the primary Westernization, Singh remarks that in the British trade centres, like Bombay, Madras and Calcutta there emerged a new commercial middle-class, the social composition of which differed from place to place. In Calcutta they were '*Baniyas*' (Merchants) in Madras, it was the Brahmins, whereas in Bombay they were mostly *Parsis*. These commercial middle-classes served as the middle-men between the native Indians and the British traders. This class was not Westernized to any significant extent though they adopted Western dress, language and way of living. In their basic psychological disposition, they were quite Indian. Singh called them 'quasi-westernized middle men'. Towards the early part of the 19th century, another group emerged: a group of English-educated professionals who played a major role in the process of Westernization. These English-educated people took up the values and ideologies of the western culture like humanism, equality, etc. Different socio-cultural reform movements grew up during this period which were spearheaded by these English-educated classes to campaign against 'sati-system', untouchability, child marriage, etc. The role of the movements like the *Brahmo Samaja*, the *Prarthana Samaja*, etc., was very important in this context. Such reformist movements though local in spread influenced the British administration and many progressive laws were passed as a result, e.g., prohibiting 'sati', child marriage, introducing widow-remarriage and so on. The expansion of modern education, transportation and communication served as a prelude to the greater Westernization in the basic structural pattern of Indian society. The Western cultural traits of humanism, rationality and equality started stimulating Indian minds which later on brought about changes in the 'great tradition' of Indian society.

(ii) **Secondary Westernization:** Towards the end of 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the process of Westernization started

taking firm roots in the Indian social structure. Western culture emerged as the basic ideology. Many social reformers justified the adoption of Western cultural spirit in order to make the Indians feel the necessity of liberty, freedom and equality. Besides, the cumulative effects on the changes in 'little tradition' and many other economic, political as well as administrative policies also affected the 'great traditions' of the country. Gradually, a new structural pattern with many new institutions started replacing many of its old institutions. Some such changes in the 'great tradition' of the country included introduction of the universalistic legal system, expansion of modern, scientific and universal education, urbanization and industrialization, development in transport and communication, growth of the sense of unity and nationalism, etc.

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3.5 MODERNIZATION

During the fifties and the sixties of the 19th century, modernization became one of the dominant themes of research. In fact, it is one of the important concepts of the sociology of development. Modernization studies deal with the effects of economic development on traditional social structure and values. The process of modernization is related to the industrialization, urbanization, high standard of living, development of civilization and broadness of view point. According to Eisenstadt, 'From a historical point of view modernization is a process of change towards those type of social, economic and political systems which were developed in Western Europe and North America from the 17th to 19th century, and after that spread over to South America, Asia and Africa during the 19th and 20th century' (Hasnain 2006, 609). In social science disciplines, modernization refers to the transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' type of society to a 'modern' society. Many sociologists associate modernization with the spread of education, urbanization and industrialization. As to Kendall (2007), urbanization is a process which has accompanied modernization and the rapid process of industrialization. In sociology, modernization is also linked to the process of rationalization. In a modernized society, the individual becomes much more important, gradually replacing the family or community as the primary unit of society. As societies experience the process of modernization, the importance of religion, traditional values, etc. becomes less important and people start thinking more about reason and rationality. As Hasnain (2006) mentions, the term modernization is less value-loaded than its predecessor—Westernization. Most countries in the Third World region were proud of their cultural heritage and deeply attached to it. While they were attracted to Western culture, still they had no plans to abandon their own life-styles and value systems. The concept of modernization recognized the strength of roots; it didn't pose any overt threat to the cultural diversity of the people aspiring for rapid change. To the elite of the Third World, the ideal of Westernization was difficult to swallow; they accepted modernization readily because it didn't appear to offend

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their own cultural dignity. According to Lerner (1958), there are three features of modernization which are core to a modernized personality—empathy, mobility and high participation. Empathy is the capacity to see things as others see them. All societies possess this capacity in some measure, but to sharpen and strengthen, it can make a qualitative change in human interaction. The second attribute, mobility, doesn't only imply geographical mobility; rather it is used in a more comprehensive sense. Unlike the traditional societies which had ascribed status, the modernized societies have open status system and largely give emphasis to achievement rather than birth. The third attribute—high participation—refers to the increased role of individuals in realizing social goals and objectives in more active ways (Hasnain, 2006, 609–10). The character of modern society is rational in cognitive aspects, universalistic in membership aspects, functionally specific in substantive definitional aspects, neutral in affective aspects, individualistic in goal orientation aspect and hierarchical in stratification aspects. Units of society tend to be more specialized and self-sufficient in a modern society and there is increasing evidence of role differentiation, solidarity and integration (Jena and Mohapatra [1993] 2001, 133).

Singh 1973[2001], 61) remarked that modernization symbolizes a rational attitude towards issues, and their evaluation from a universalistic and not a particularistic view point, (when it involves an emotional response to problems), orientation is empathic and not constrictive. Modernization is rooted in the scientific world-view. It has deeper and positive association with levels of diffusion of scientific knowledge, technological skill and technological resources in a particular society. However, what may be essential to modernization is the commitment to scientific world-view, the internalization of humanistic and philosophical view-point of science or contemporary problems and not merely the volume of technological advancement. It is possible that a society as also an individual might command a maximum of scientific skills and resources but a minimum of its necessary psychic and emotional requisites. It is otherwise possible that a successful scientist may be a failure as a 'modern' human, and a most affluent or technologically advanced society may also be the one which is most tyrannical. He further mentioned that the distinction between modern values and traditional values may be maintained on the ground that modern values, like science, being evolutionary universal, might not be typical to any one particular cultural tradition, whereas traditional cultural values may be particularistic and typical. Modernization in its essential attributes or in ideal-typical forms is a universal-cultural phenomenon. Like science, modernity is not an exclusive possession of any one ethnic or cultural group, but it belongs to the humanity as a whole.

Singh (ibid) analyzed modernization in Indian context of change in a very systematic manner. According to him, the sources of change can be endogenous or exogenous. Endogenous sources of change are the sources within the social system and exogenous sources are those coming from outside. Besides, change takes place in 'tradition' and 'social structure'. Tradition according to Singh is characterized by hierarchy, holism, continuity and transcendence and is divided

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into 'Great tradition' and 'Little tradition'. The former is the cultural belief and value systems that are practiced throughout the country, while the latter comprises the folk cultural beliefs and oral traditions and localized adoption of the 'Great tradition'. Both Hinduism and Islam in India featured holism, hierarchy, continuity and transcendence. Modernization of 'Great tradition' in both these cases referred to a pattern of change from hierarchy to equality, from holism to individualism, from continuity to historicity and from transcendence to rationalism and secularism. In India following the process of Westernization, there was educational modernization, emergence of universal legal system, advancement in communication systems and transportation, expansion of urban centres and modern political institutions. Similarly, in the sphere of little tradition, two forces of change, Sanskritization and Islamization (conversion to Islam) came through.

Further, he analyzed change in social structure which he divided into macro and micro-structure. The change in macro-structure referred to the change in the political, industrial and urban structures. For example, the elite structure in the country indicated that they came from homogenous backgrounds. However, the post-independence era saw the change in such macro-structure and elites came from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Change in the micro-structure referred to the change in caste, family, communities, etc. The modernization of caste for example was seen in its association with politics without losing its social functions. Voting behaviour is largely influenced by the caste of the candidate contesting the election. So, Singh claimed that India's modernization process is very unique and it is being instituted through the adaptive changes in the traditional structures rather than structural breakdown.

For a clear understanding, Jena and Mohapatra ([1993] 2001, 133–4) gives the following indicators of modernity.

- (1) A degree of self-sustaining growth in the economy or at least growth sufficient to increase both production and consumption regularly;
- (2) Increasing use of inanimate sources of power to meet human requirement and to solve human problems;
- (3) A noticeable degree of both individual and collective effort to achieve the technological advancement;
- (4) A measure to mass participation in the political affairs or at least a sort of democratic representation in defining and choosing policy alternatives;
- (5) A diffusion of secular-rational norms in the culture;
- (6) An increment of mobility in the society—understood as personal freedom of physical, social and psychic movement;
- (7) The emergence and growth of specific functional organizations and attendant changes in social structures and values;
- (8) A corresponding transformation in the model personality that equips the individuals to function effectively in a social order.

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Ram Ahuja (1999, 485–6) sites the following problems of modernization.

- (1) The first paradox of modernization is that a modern society must change in all ways at once but such a regular, coordinated pattern of growth cannot be conceivably planned. A certain amount of social unrest is, therefore, inevitably created. For example, mass educational system demands that trained individuals must be absorbed in occupational roles commensurate with their training and knowledge. However, it is not always possible to provide jobs to all educated people. This leads to unrest among the educated unemployed people.
- (2) The social problem is that structural change is uneven during periods of modernization. For example, industries may be modernized but family system, religious system, etc. remain conservative. These discontinuities and patterns of change affect the established social and other structures and produce lags and bottlenecks.
- (3) Modernization of social and economic institutions creates conflicts with the traditional ways of life. For example, trained doctors pose a threat to traditional medicine men. Similarly, machine-made finished products pose a threat to traditional hand-made crafts and the livelihood of the artisan communities.
- (4) Most often roles adopted by people are modern but values continue to be traditional.
- (5) There is a lack of co-operation among agencies which modernize and among institutions and systems which are modernized. This often leads to cultural lag as well as institutional conflicts.
- (6) Modernization raises the aspiration of people but many times social systems fail to provide opportunities to them to achieve those aspirations. This creates frustrations, deprivations and social unrest.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

4. Who made the first attempt to study the changes in Indian society in a systematic manner?
5. What is the difference between 'Sanskritization' and 'Brahminization'?
6. What were the forces that gave rise to Westernization?

3.6 SECULARIZATION

Secularization is another important process of social change in modern Indian context. It refers to the transformation of a society identified with religious values, ideas and institutions towards non-religious ideas, values and institutions. As societies progress and modernize, the people follow values of reason and rationality;

while religion, religious scriptures and institutions lose their influence on people and their social life. So secularization is a process where societies lose their religious significance. Max Weber opined that the scientific and technological advancement would weaken peoples' belief on religion and supernatural powers. Rationality will also overpower superstitious beliefs and dogmas. Weber called this process as the 'disenchantment of the world'. The term 'secularization' was first used in Europe in 1648. It was then understood as the process of transferring of Church properties to the control of the rulers. Bryan Wilson (1966) defined secularization as 'a process where religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance'. Similarly, Peter Berger (1973) defined secularization as 'the process by which sections of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols'. Further, M. N. Srinivas (1966) wrote that 'the term secularization implies that what was previously regarded as religious is now ceasing to be such and it also implies the process of differentiation which results in the various aspects of socio-economic, political, legal and moral becoming increasingly discrete to each other.' Singh (1973[2001]) remarked that secularism is a sub-process of modernization.

M.N. Srinivas (1966,118–119) wrote elaborately on the process of secularization in his analysis of social change in Indian society. According to him, British rule brought with it a process of secularization of Indian social life and culture, a tendency that gradually became stronger with the development of communications, growth of towns and cities, increased spatial mobility and the spread of education. The two World Wars and Gandhiji's Civil Disobedience campaigns, both of which socially and politically mobilized the masses, also contributed to increased secularization. Following independence, the Constitution also recognised India as a secular state and maintained that all citizens are equal before law. Comparing both Sanskritization and secularization, Srinivas opined that of the two, secularization is the more general process, affecting all Indians; while Sanskritization affects only Hindus and tribals. As he mentioned, broadly, it would be true to say that secularization is more marked among the urban and educated sections of society and Sanskritization among the lower Hindu castes and tribes. Quoting the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, he elaborated that one of the essential elements of secularization is rationalism, a comprehensive expression applied to various theoretical and practical tendencies which aim to interpret the universe purely in terms of thought, or which aim to regulate individual and social life in accordance with the principles of reason and to eliminate as far as possible or to relegate to the background everything irrational.

Following the analysis made above, as outlined by Jena and Mohapatra ([1993] 2001,159–60), the main ingredients of secularization can be discussed below.

- (1) **Decline in religiosity:** Religion is based on a distinction between sacred and profane in which the term sacred is associated with a faith in a mythical or supernatural power. However, the process of

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secularization in contrast implies a gradual decline of religious feelings. In a perfectly secularized society, religious considerations are replaced by rationalistic considerations. Thus, as the process of secularization proceeds, the social institutions and individual actions become increasingly free from the influence of religion.

- (2) **Rationality:** With the gradual decline of religious controls, there takes place a corresponding increase in rationalism in the process of secularization. People start thinking about the problems of their day-to-day life. Reason takes the place of faith. Instead of taking everything for granted, people try to find out the cause of happenings in their individual as well social life. A tendency towards establishment of cause and effect relationship becomes increasingly popular.
- (3) **Empiricism and commitment to scientific world views:** The process of secularization results in growth in empiricism and scientific world view. Human knowledge is based on observation, experimentation and verification. Experience and experimentation governs the human consciousness. Beliefs, faiths and mythical orientation are increasingly replaced by the scientific knowledge derived from empirical observation.
- (4) **Process of differentiation:** The growth of empiricism and rationalism necessarily results in a corresponding differentiation in the social structure. Different aspects of social life come to be differentiated from each other. Each such aspect for example, economic, legal, political and moral sub-systems becomes increasingly distinct. Each sub-system gets further differentiated which results in the increasing specialization and professionalization.

So, to sum up it can be said that secularization is a process which brings change in the approach of people towards things where rationality and reason increasingly influence their attitude and orientations and where religious and superstitious beliefs have less control on human behaviour.

As has been discussed in brief in the above paragraphs, the process of secularization in India started with British contact. However, there is a difference between the Western model of secularization and the Indian model of secularization. The Indian experience of secularization is a unique one. In the West, especially in Europe, secularization meant isolating the Church/religion from public life/control. So, the Western model is without religion. However, the Indian model of secularization is with religion. The Indian Constitution mentions in its 'Preamble' that it is a 'secular' country where each and every religion will be treated by state equally and that there wouldn't be any state religion. The Constitution also defines that every individual has freedom to practice, profess and propagate any religion. It has been instituted as one of the fundamental rights of Indian citizens. The right to freedom of religion is guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution of India. As it reads, Article 25(1) says, 'Subject to public order, morality and health and to

the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion.' Again, Article 25 (2) says, 'Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law: (a) Regulating or restricting any economic financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice; (b) Providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.' So this Article in the Constitution of India guarantees that every person in India shall have the freedom of conscience and shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate religion, subject to the restrictions that may be imposed by the state on the following grounds, namely: (1) Public order, morality and health; (2) Other provisions of the Constitution; (3) Regulation of non-religious activity associated with religious practice; (4) Social welfare and reform; (5) throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes of Hindus.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

7. What is meant by 'primary westernization'?
8. What do you mean by 'secondary westernization'?
9. How the importance of religion comes down in a secular society?

3.7 SUMMARY

- Sanskritization is a process of cultural mobility, where the low Hindu caste or tribe or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently 'twice-born' caste.
- Westernization is a process whereby societies increasingly adopt Western cultures, life-styles, technology, food pattern, language, alphabet, religion, ideas, philosophy, value systems, etc.
- Modernization refers to the transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' type of society to a 'modern' society; especially, it is associated with the spread of education, urbanization and industrialization.
- Secularization on the other hand refers to the transformation of a society identified with religious values, ideas and institutions towards non-religious ideas, values and institutions.

3.8 KEY TERMS

- **Industrialization:** The continually expanding application of sophisticated technology designed to efficiently draw energy and raw materials out of the environment and fashion them for human use.

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- **Modernization:** The process of general social change brought about by the transition from an agrarian to an industrial mode of production.
- **Secularization:** A process of decline in the social influence of religion.
- **Westernization:** It is a process whereby societies come under or adopt Western culture in such matters as industry, technology, law, politics, economics, lifestyle, diet, language, alphabet, religion, philosophy and/or values.
- **Evolution:** Under this broad definition, evolution can refer to a variety of changes that occur over time—the uplifting of mountains, the wandering of riverbeds, or the creation of new species.
- **Feudal system:** The social system that developed in Europe in the 8th century; vassals were protected by lords who they had to serve in war.
- **Serf:** A member of the lowest feudal class, attached to the land owned by a lord and required to perform labour in return for certain legal or customary rights.

3.9 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Social Change is the alteration or modification of the structure and function of any societal system. It can be the change in interpersonal relationships, social organizations, social patterns and values, inter-caste and inter-community marriage, and change in family type from joint-living to nuclear households, etc.
2. In the 19th century, evolution became the predominant model for interpreting change in biology and sociologists interpreted social phenomena in the same direction, emphasizing that change in society is gradual and continuous and it occurs in sequence.
3. The unilinear evolutionists claim that changes occur in society in a single direction. For them evolution is an irreversible and unidirectional process. Societies pass through different stages and every stage is a higher and improved one than the previous stage.
4. Noted Indian sociologist M.N. Srinivas had made a sincere effort to analyze the process of social change in Indian society and it was made in his significant work, *Religion and society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952). This book was probably the first such attempt to study change in Indian context in a systematic manner. The term Sanskritization which was coined by Srinivas, during his study on the Coorgs was primarily meant to analyze the process of cultural mobility.
5. The term 'Sanskritization' is a much broader concept than 'Brahminization' because not only it encompasses non-Brahmin models like Kshatriyas model, Jat model, Vaishya model and models of other 'twice-born' castes but also

denotes a wide spectrum of values and life-styles. Brahminization is subsumed in the wider process of Sanskritization though at some points Brahminization and Sanskritization are at variance with each other. For instance, the Brahmins of the Vedic period drank 'Soma', an alcoholic drink, ate beef, and offered blood sacrifices. Both were given up in post-Vedic times.

6. Westernization resulted not only in the introduction of new institutions like press newspapers, journals, elections, etc., but also in fundamental changes in the old institutions. So, although India had schools long before the Britishers came to India, they were fundamentally different from the schools introduced by the British in that they were restricted to only upper-caste elites and transmitted mostly traditional knowledge.
7. By 'primary westernization' we mean the changes induced by the Western impact on the Indian traditions. At the initial phases, Western culture made its impact on peripheral aspects of Indian culture. It created a sub-cultural pattern limited to a very specific group of people within a particular geographical area.
8. 'Secondary westernization' started towards the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century. The process of Westernization started taking firm roots in Indian social structure. Western culture emerged as basic ideology. Many social reformers justified the adoption of Western cultural spirit in order to make the Indians feel the necessity of liberty, freedom and equality.
9. Religion is based on a distinction between sacred and profane in which the term sacred is associated with a faith in a mythical or supernatural power. However, the process of secularization in contrast implies a gradual decline of religious feelings. In a perfectly secularized society, religious considerations are replaced by rationalistic considerations.

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3.10 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What do you mean by social change?
2. Give a brief note on Sanskritization as a means of social change.
3. What is the difference between modernization and Westernization?
4. What are the challenges faced by the process of secularization in India?
5. How have the evolutionary theorists explained the trends in social change?
6. What have been the positive aspects of Westernization in the Indian context?

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Long-Answer Questions

1. Critically analyze the trends of social change from the sociological viewpoint.
2. What are the patterns of social change in modern Indian society?
3. Analyze in detail the process of Sanskritization propounded by Srinivas.
4. What is Westernization? Analyze it in the Indian context.
5. Discuss the process of modernization and its features.
6. What is secularization? Comparatively analyze the Western and Indian model of secularization.

3.11 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 THEORIES AND AGENCIES OF DEVELOPMENT

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Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 Theories of Development and Underdevelopment
- 4.3 Modernization Theories
- 4.4 Centre–Periphery Theories
- 4.5 World System and Unequal Exchange
- 4.6 Capitalist Model of Development
- 4.7 Socialist Model of Development
- 4.8 Mixed Economy
- 4.9 Gandhian Model of Development
- 4.10 Summary
- 4.11 Key Terms
- 4.12 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’
- 4.13 Questions and Exercises
- 4.14 Further Reading

4.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about different theories of development and underdevelopment. More particularly, you will read about the modernization theories, Centre–Periphery theories and the World-System theories. You will also learn about different models of development including the Capitalist, Socialist, Mixed economy and Gandhian models.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the theories of development and underdevelopment
- Understand the modernization theories
- Explain the Centre–Periphery model of development
- Analyze the World-System theories
- Know the concept of unequal exchange
- Evaluate the Capitalist, Socialist, Mixed economy and Gandhian models of development

4.2 THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT

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In the first unit, you have learned about the concept of development and its indicators. As you know, development refers to improvement in the quality of life and advancement in one's state or condition. It may refer to improvements in one's well-being, living-standards and socio-economic opportunities. Subsequently, in the second unit you read about the changing conceptions of development and the concepts like economic development, human development, social development, etc.

Since the mid-20th century, most particularly after the Second World War, there has been a consistent effort to improve the economic situation in the developing/poor countries and develop the living conditions of the people in the Third World region. The development planners tried to promote the development models of the Western or industrialized countries in the developing countries through measures like the introduction of scientific and technological know-how, the expansion of education, the development of infrastructure including communication, etc. However, this proved to be detrimental to the interest of the so-called developing countries. There was no end to poverty, there was no end to conflict, there was no end to malnutrition, hunger and underdevelopment. Comparing the two regions with different needs and different economic realities and replicating the Western model of development in poorer regions widened the gap between the two regions representing the developed and less-developed countries of world. It can be mentioned that during the beginning of such developmental efforts, there was little or no dialogue on the primary causes and the real nature of underdevelopment of the poorer countries and that the real path of development was considered from the Western and socialist view-points. It is only in very recent times that the opinions and voices of the poorer regions gained substantial mention and attention in development theory. This is very significant since different countries have different socio-economic problems and the policies, strategies, planning, etc., to eradicate poverty and undertake development should consider these factors. Mere replication of a foreign model in an indigenous environment would be a futile affair. Hence, different positions and view-points in developmental policy are based on the differences in underlying development theories. There are several theoretical arguments on development which propound different models of development initiatives. They are discussed in the following sections.

4.3 MODERNIZATION THEORIES

Modernization theory is one of the first attempts to explain development and underdevelopment. As Preston (1996, 166) writes, the background to the construction of Modernization theory is suffused with the political concern of the USA in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The general ethos of the period find

intellectual expression in the social and scientific concern with the structural-functional analysis of the industrial society. The social-scientific material can be taken to comprise a package deal which specifies the nature of industrial society, indicates how non-industrial societies might be expected to modernize, argues that capitalism and socialism will converge as the logic of industrialism drives the global system forward, and suggests that the system will produce widespread prosperity with a consequent diminution of the conflict-occasioned ideological debates.

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The countries that had got independence following the decolonization process during the second half of the 20th century and were branded as underdeveloped or developing had started different projects for national development. Fast improvement in industrial production, for both export and import substitution, was the main objective of such countries, whether communist or capitalist. Industrialization was the focus of development. It was thought that through industrialization such countries could catch up with the West. Such an activity was termed as the project of modernization. The newly independent countries started infrastructural development by constructing roads, highways, dams, etc., developing social sectors like education with scientific orientation, getting rid of tradition that hindered progress, bringing out political modernization with efficient bureaucracy and so on. Such an approach later came to be understood as Modernization theory. In the process of the construction of this Modernization theory, there were two major areas of intellectual resources available to the theorists. First was the work of the economists who confront the problems attendant upon the scale and complexity of the macro-economics of growth. Second was the work of social scientists who concerned themselves in one way or another with the problem of analyzing the industrial society (Preston 1996, 169).

According to S.N. Eisenstadt (1973, 12–15), Modernization theory depicts the differences between societies in terms of their positions on various indices of modernity or development that measured their similarity to the model of modern industrial society. Modernization theory argues and raises the questions. What is impeding advance towards the industrial model and what are the conditions and mechanisms of social transition from traditional to modern? To Eisenstadt (*ibid*, 23) the main features of modernization are the development of a high extent of differentiation; the development of free resources which are not committed to any fixed, ascriptive groups; the development of wide non-traditional, national or even super-national group identifications; and the concomitant development in all the major institutional spheres of specialized roles and of special wider regulative or allocative mechanisms and organization, such as market mechanisms in economic life, voting and party activities in politics, and diverse bureaucratic organizations and mechanisms in most institutional spheres. In this context, Peet and Hartwick (1999, 76–77) remark that precisely in the economic sphere, modernization meant specialization of economic activities and occupational roles and the growth of markets; in terms of socio-spatial organization, modernization meant urbanization, mobility, flexibility, and the spread of education; in terms of the political sphere,