

**MODERNIZATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT-**

**THE SEARCH FOR  
ALTERNATIVE PARADIGMS**

**S.C. Dube**

THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY  

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STUDIES ON SOCIO-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT  
ALTERNATIVES IN A CHANGING WORLD

# **Modernization and Development**

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General Editor: Anouar Abdel-Malek

The United Nations University's Project on Socio-cultural Development Alternatives in a Changing World (SCA), 1978-1982, arose from the deeply felt need to re-posit the problematique of human and social development in view of the dominant, Western-centred, reductionist models of development. The study concentrated on two major dimensions, constituting two sub-projects – Endogenous Intellectual Creativity and Transformation of the World – while select major thematic, innovative Convergence Areas (e.g., specificity and universality, geo-cultural visions of the world) were explored. Under the former theme development and its related issues were examined in terms of different geo-cultural areas of the world: Asia, Africa, the Arab World, Latin America, Europe, and North America. Under the latter sub-project consideration was given to the analysis of world transformation in the domains of science and technology, economy and society, culture and thought, religion and philosophy, and the making of a new international order.

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# Preface and Acknowledgements

This book is the outcome of a project on “rethinking development” on which I am working as a National Fellow of the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research. Limited in its scope and practical in its orientation, it attempts a review of development thinking and practice, seeks to examine the paradigm shift and the emergence of an alternative model, and focuses on the ambiguities, ambivalences and contradictions in the praxis of planning, economic growth and directed social change. It deliberately avoids abstract philosophical speculation and sophisticated model building. The book is not addressed primarily to the world of scholarship: I have in view a readership of policy makers, planners and thinking and concerned individuals. Many ideas incorporated in this volume have been developed in several of my previous papers and some will find elucidation and elaboration in forthcoming contributions.

This book was to have been written in collaboration with my wife, Professor Leela Dube. The format was planned jointly by us; but both being constantly on the move and together only for limited periods, only one of us could write the book. With her many other commitments Leela Dube withdrew from the assignment, leaving the responsibility for completing the task to me.

I am indebted to many institutions and individuals, but can acknowledge only a few by name. The first in the list is the Indian Council of Social Science Research, which invited me to accept its National Fellowship so that I could be relieved of the arduous responsibilities of the vice-chancellorship of a university and devote myself full-time to reflection and writing. The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration provided me with a cosy base and many amenities so that I could work in reasonable comfort. At the United Nations Asian and Pacific Development Centre (APDC) I was extended every help in completing this work alongside the other responsibilities that I had to take on as a consultant. I am indebted for the institutional support given by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, and the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, both in New Delhi, and the United Nations Asian and Pacific Development Centre, Kuala Lumpur.

The list of persons to whom I am indebted for criticism, comment and emotional support is indeed long. Mr Aftab Ahmad Khan, a brilliant and widely experienced civil servant from Pakistan and Director of the United Nations Asian and Pacific Development Centre, evinced keen interest in the completion of this volume. He has read every chapter of the book and his perceptive comments inform several of the ideas developed here. His experience in Pakistan, the Gulf countries and with the World Bank provided many invaluable insights. Above everything else, I cherish his gift of friendship. Also at the United Nations Asian and Pacific Development Centre I had many discussions with Dr Ahmad Fattahipour on the theme of the book and on other related matters. Two other professionals who have read early drafts of the work and commented on them are Professor Leela Dube of the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur, and Professor Yogesh Atal, Regional Adviser for Social Sciences, UNESCO, Bangkok. My relationship with them precludes me from thanking them formally.

The comprehensive bibliography to the volume was prepared by Ms Agnes How with the collaboration of Ms Siti Rafeah Shamsuddin. It is based largely on the bibliography prepared by the APDC library for the Conference on Development Perspectives for the 1980s organized by the United Nations Asian and Pacific Development Centre in December 1981; parts not relevant have been deleted, additional entries have been made and several sections have been specially prepared for this study. Agnes How has been a warm friend and a gracious hostess. Ng Get Meng, also of the APDC library, has constantly provided me with additional references and photocopies of urgently needed articles. At the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, Ms Nizmad Malhatza placed her considerable library resources at my disposal. My thanks to all.

Early drafts of three of the chapters were prepared in India where Mr Harish Bhatia provided efficient stenographic assistance. They were re-written and the rest of the chapters were newly written at the United Nations Asian and Pacific Development Centre. Without the ungrudging, willing and concerned cooperation of Ms Shaleha Haron it would have been impossible for me to complete the work speedily. Ms Haron was a secretary, a research and reference assistant, and more. Formal words of thanks cannot adequately express what I owe to her.

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**S.C. Dube**

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# 1 Dilemmas of Modernization and Development

## Two Keywords

Modernization and development have come to be keywords in the contemporary dialogue on the human condition. Though the two have a different intellectual ancestry, through a process of redefinition of objectives as well as conceptual and methodological convergence, they have come close to each other in substantive meaning. They share three reference points. First, they refer to the states of society. Theorists of modernization distinguish between *traditional*, *transitional* and *modernized* societies. Development theorists, on the other hand, speak of *underdeveloped*, *developing*, and *developed* societies. Second, both of them articulate a set of goals in the sense that the ideal of modernization or development provides an agenda for action. Third, both the concepts refer to a process – movement from tradition to modernity or from underdevelopment to development. The criteria that determine the state of societies are value loaded in the sense that they mainly take into account the volume of GNP and degree of industrialization. These criteria apply also to the set of goals; sights were set rather high when developing societies uncritically accepted the development theorists' assumption that life begins at \$1,000 per capita and when an economic historian of Rostow's repute suggested that the test of development is one car for four persons in the society. With the wisdom gained from the experience of the last three decades a greater degree of realism has been introduced into the setting of goals which, in proximate terms, are now confined to meeting basic needs and to the gradual upgrading of the quality of life. The complexity and inherent difficulties of the process of modernization are now better understood and appreciated. Simplistic unilinear theories indicating essential stages and steps towards the realization

of modernity or development no longer carry much conviction. The models of the processes leading to modernization and economic growth/development have undergone significant modifications. The modernization paradigm, built upon interdisciplinary perspectives from the behavioural sciences, now has a better appreciation of economic imperatives. Development economics, in turn, shows greater sensitivity to the behavioural and institutional aspects of development.

The fusion of the two concepts, however, has not so far taken place. Semantic differences still persist, as do differences in emphasis. Yet there is unmistakable evidence of greater convergence and a cross-fertilization of the ideas implicit in the two concepts.

Mental attitudes and institutional structures constitute the key elements in the process of modernization. James O'Connell (1976, p. 17) has a very apt expression to describe the essence of the modernization process.<sup>1</sup> He calls it *creative rationality*. Combining the concepts of innovation and order, this mental attitude begins to develop once the modernization process has taken off. He identifies three connected and interactive aspects that are basic to the process. In his words, they are: (1) a tested conviction of the existence of correlations and causes that maintains a continuing, systematic and inventive search for knowledge – in other words, an analytico-causal and inventive outlook; (2) the multiplication of tools and techniques that both results from the first aspect and nourishes it; and (3) a willingness to accept continuous change on the plane of both individual and social structures, together with a capacity meanwhile to preserve individual and social identity.

A series of societal changes are implicit in the process of modernization. Traditional agrarian societies are characterized by the predominance of ascriptive, particularistic and diffused patterns; they have stable local groups and limited spatial mobility; occupational differentiation is relatively simple and stable; and the stratification system is deferential and has a diffused impact. The modern industrial society, on the other hand, is characterized by the predominance of universalistic, specific and achievement norms; a high degree of mobility; a developed occupational system relatively insulated from other social structures; a class system based generally on achievement; and the presence of functionally specific, non-ascriptive structures (associations). Historically evolved institutions continuously adapt themselves to the changes dictated by the phenomenal increases in human knowledge that have resulted from the greater control of humanity over its environment. Modernization theory does not clearly spell out its distributive objectives; but the emergence of an implicit egalitarian and participative ethos does indicate the narrowing of social gaps and promotion of greater equality as desirable ends.

The notion of development in early economics was simple and uninvolved. Development meant the capacity of static national economies to generate and sustain an annual increase in their Gross National Product at the rates of 5% to 7% or more. The decade of the 1960s was designated by the UN as

the "Development Decade"; the target laid down for the period was the attainment of 6% annual growth rate of GNP. Another indicator used by economists was the relationship between the growth of per capita GNP and the ability of a nation to expand its output at a rate faster than the growth rate of its population. Rates and levels of growth of *real* per capita GNP were also calculated to determine the degree of economic development. In such calculations the rate of price inflation was deducted from the monetary growth of GNP per capita. Such a notion of economic development aimed at a planned alteration of the structure of production and employment. The size and share of the rural agricultural sector was to decline; those of the urban industrial sector, involving the growth of manufacturing and service industries, were assumed to expand progressively. Non-economic social indicators of development were touched upon only in passing. The trickle down effect of overall per capita GNP growth was expected to provide more jobs and economic opportunities, ensuring wider diffusion of the benefits of growth.

But in the developing countries things did not work out the way the economists had predicted. The "invisible hand" (a term originating in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, written in 1776) did not wave a magic wand. The social benefits of growth remained confined to small sections of the population, without reaching down to the person in the street. It was increasingly felt that getting the growth job done was not enough. Hence economic development was redefined and related to the objectives of the elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment within the framework of a growing economy. In the process redistribution was inevitably linked to growth. Three core values were gradually incorporated in the notion of development: life sustenance, self-esteem and freedom of choice.

Many vital questions related to both modernization and development continue to exercise development thinkers and planners. Definitive answers to them are yet to be found.

## **Nature of Modernization and Development**

In his perceptive essay, "The Change to Change: Modernization, Development, and Politics," Samuel P. Huntington (1976, pp. 30–31) has identified nine characteristics of the modernization process which, according to him, are generally agreed upon by scholars.<sup>2</sup> These characteristics are applicable equally to the process of development.

1. Modernization, and by implication development, is a revolutionary process. Its technological and cultural consequences are as significant as those of the Neolithic Revolution which turned food gathering and hunting nomads into settled agriculturalists. Efforts are now being made to transform rural agrarian cultures into urban industrial cultures. This is what Alvin Toffler (1980) would describe as the move from the first wave to the second wave.<sup>3</sup>

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2. The process of both modernization and development are complex and multidimensional. They involve a series of cognitive, behavioural and institutional modifications and restructuring.

3. Both are systemic processes. Variation in one dimension produces important covariations in other dimensions.

4. They are global processes. Ideas and techniques are diffused from the centre of origination to other parts of the world.

5. They are lengthy processes. Time is important in both modernization and development. There are no known methods of producing them instantly.

6. They are phased processes. Historical experience indicates that the movement towards the goals of modernization and development takes place through identifiable phases and sub-phases.

7. They are homogenizing processes. As modernization and development move to advanced stages differences between national societies are narrowed and ultimately a stage is reached when the "universal imperative of modern ideas and institutions prevail, leading to a point at which the various societies are so homogenized as to be capable of forming a world state" (Black, 1966, pp. 155, 174).<sup>4</sup>

8. Both are irreversible processes. There is no going back from modernization and development, although there may be occasional upsets and temporary breakdowns.

9. They are progressive processes. Modernization and development are inevitable as well as desirable. In the long run they contribute to human well-being both culturally and materially.

There can be little dispute about the processes of modernization and development being revolutionary, complex, systemic, lengthy and phased. It is open to serious question, however, whether they are global. Some benefits of modernization and development have been widely diffused, but a large section of humankind remains untouched by them. The contradictions implicit in the process leave it to be doubted whether the ideal of equal modernization and development on a global scale can ever materialize. Given the present trends it looks most unlikely. When one small section of mankind, in Toffler's metaphor (1980), is moving from the second to the third wave, two-thirds of humankind is constrained by the conspiracy of circumstances to remain a part of the first wave.<sup>5</sup> The growing disparities make nonsense of the global dimension of modernization and development, except in the very limited sense that all societies are trying to modernize and develop.

The homogenization aspect raises some further fundamental questions. It is common these days to describe the world as a global village, but we must take account of the rise and gathering strength of ethnicities and pluralities of culture consciousness that are tearing it apart. The manner in which the superpowers behave does not augur well for any meaningful global homogenization. The developing countries have also been drawn into the whirlpool of tension and conflict and their differences are posing a threat to world peace. Whether the process is irreversible, time alone will show. At

this stage we can only take note of the rise of fundamentalism in many societies and the strength that counter-modernization and counter-development ideologies have gained in many others. It is a matter of opinion and cultural valuation whether modernization and development are progressive. Doubtless the benefits conferred by them are substantial; but the social cost and cultural erosion implicit in them is also considerable. Several trends visible in the more developed countries cannot by any means be described as progressive. There is growing evidence of individual alienation and social anomie. Individual and collective violence is increasing. The normative structure of society is becoming weak and many social institutions are becoming dysfunctional. These countries find it difficult to hold such trends in check. This is what necessitates rethinking the objectives and strategies of modernization and development. Some of their injuries are avoidable; less injurious and more equitable paths to development and modernization can be found. This is what the debate on alternatives is about. The future of modernization and development depends, in the final analysis, on how humanity handles the present state of international disorder and global maldistribution of resources. If the superpowers take the collision course and reject the logic of the projected New International Economic Order the future – if there is one – remains bleak.

In retrospect three more characteristics of modernization and development can be identified. First, it should be recognized that they are painful processes. Modernization and development have previously been built on considerable exploitation of certain segments of the society and have involved a degree of ruthlessness. Imperialism aided them substantially. Their astonishing accomplishments have caused and are still causing considerable social injuries. They have resulted in international as well as intranational duality. The nations of the world can be divided between the privileged and the underprivileged, the number of the former being much smaller. Intranationally a similar duality prevails. In most countries there is a small privileged group surrounded by a large mass of underprivileged. Attempted justifications of the inevitability of this injury-causing dimension of the process were made in the initial phases, though not necessarily by those whom it hurt. Now it is being openly challenged.

Second, modernization and development are multilinear/multipath processes. Recent historical experience suggests that all societies do not necessarily have to take the same road to modernization and development; alternative paths can be followed.

Third, neither can be visualized as continuous and unending. They are conditioned by “outer” and “inner” limits. Human perceptions can change, and are changing, the finalities and the course of modernization and development.

## **Debate in Disarray**

The gap between the promise and performance of development and

modernization during the last three decades has caused acute disappointment which, in its turn, has led to heart searching. Many different diagnoses have been offered; linked to them is an equally bewildering number and variety of suggested remedies. Not only development, but the *debate* on development is in disarray. In the cacophony of ideas and strategies the Third World seems lost. A viable and sustainable approach is not yet within sight. None the less, the debate must continue.

Let us consider some of the dilemmas of development – the major issues and options under discussion.

The first dilemma concerns development vs non-development. The disenchantment with the outcome of the development effort of the last thirty years is so great that many serious thinkers in the Third World have begun to regard development as Enemy Number One of humankind and have become the devotees of non-development. The zero-rate-of-growth ideology is not a gimmick; to some it is an article of faith. It is true that the promised pay-off of development has not come about and that both its performance and non-performance have generated a series of intractable problems. Governments are finding it increasingly hard to cope with these problems; but the non-development ideology as a remedy may be worse than the disease. The phenomenal population explosion; acute shortage of food, energy, and other natural resources and their maldistribution; and the serious threats to the environment are problems that cannot be left to resolve themselves. They pose a challenge and call for a conscious and determined intervention in the processes of history.

The second dilemma is that of endogenous vs exogenous development. One of the paradoxes of the modern world is that while its constituent societies are getting potentially closer to one another, this centripetal tendency is obstructed by the simultaneous operation of centrifugal forces rooted in ethnicity, religion, culture and language. According to one estimate, the world is currently witnessing over 370 movements of varying strengths rooted in diverse interpretations of the concept of ethnicity. The cultural reality of developing societies cannot be brushed aside; all efforts at development have to be sensitive and responsive to it. The objectives of development will be considerably influenced by endogenous factors. At the same time, the reality of the diffusion of ideas and innovations as a force in humanity's cultural development cannot be denied. Both transcend national boundaries; but ideas, institutions and technology have to be adapted to the endogenous ethos. No society can remain totally uninfluenced by exogenous factors. The compulsions of the situation require a mix of the two.

Self-reliance vs interdependence in development pose the third dilemma which, in recent discussions, has been formulated as inward-looking vs outward-looking development. Countries differ in the size of their territory and population as well as in their physical resources endowment. Large countries such as China and India can and have been aiming at a high degree of self-reliance; but even they cannot hope to be totally self-reliant. Smaller countries, especially island societies and landlocked nations, cannot achieve

the same degree of self-reliance. They have to look for both capital and technology, as well as some natural resources, elsewhere. While a self-reliant and inward-looking approach to development has some advantages, no society can afford to become insular. Patterns of interdependence – sub-regional, regional and global – have to be developed. What has to be guarded against is this interdependence turning into a patron-client relationship which results in the subordination and dependency of the Third World country.

The attitude of the affluent countries to development aid has often been cynical, if not downright perverse. Recall, for example, the dilemma of triage vs aid to the neediest. It was seriously suggested that some societies were incapable of utilizing the aid extended to them and that any assistance to them only went into a bottomless pit, without producing any positive results. Help should be rendered only to those capable of using it; others should be left to fend for themselves – however dire the consequences. Aid has its cost and cannot be relied on.

The fourth major dilemma, which has been resolved at the conceptual level but not at the operational level, relates to growth vs distribution. In contemporary development thinking GNP has been dethroned because it has proved inadequate to produce equity and social justice. The current emphasis is on redistribution aimed at meeting basic needs, providing employment and improving social services. The central question, however, still remains unanswered: without growth, what will the societies have to distribute? The growth factor cannot be ignored, although its distributional dimension must constantly be emphasized.

The next set of dilemmas relate to different dimensions of centralized planning. The first of them can be formulated as centralized planning vs the operation of the market. Should the targets be decided by a central planning agency? Or should market mechanisms and price signals be left free to shape and reshape them? It is clear that the magic of the market place has not proved very effective in the context of the developing societies and that price signals have often been manipulated and therefore found misleading. It has to be noted, however, that even the centrally planned economies are showing increasing sensitivity to the price signals. The latter cannot be ignored so long as the world remains divided between free market and centrally planned economies. The second dilemma in this context is one of the intranational centralization vs the decentralization of planning; closely related to it is the dilemma of mass participation vs professionalism. The conditions prevailing in most Third World countries require a strong centre; but this argument does not even remotely imply segregation of the planners from those for whom planning is carried out. It is necessary to allow the people access to planning decentralization. This, along with mass participation, would reflect local and regional needs better and would ensure greater and more effective mobilization of human resources. A high degree of professionalism is necessary, but it is well to remember that bureaucracy and professional planners have both trained incompetence as well as trained competence. People must remain the masters.



Several dilemmas of an operational nature, involving choosing the right options, can be considered together. The first of these can be posed as one of industrialization vs the environment. The environmental threat posed by developed societies is greater than that posed by less developed societies. Pollution, as well as pollution-causing technology is exported by developed societies to the less developed. The more industrialized societies will, therefore, need to give serious consideration to earmarking part of their GNP for the research and development that will ensure a technology that produces minimal pollution, no wasteful consumption of scarce and non-renewable resources and conservation and improvement of the environment. At the same time they should ensure that they do not export to the Third World a technology that leads to high pollution and requires wasteful expenditure of energy and natural resources. On its part, the Third World should resist the import of such technology.

It would be absurd to advise the Third World not to industrialize for the sake of the environment. The environmental problems of the less developed countries are of a different order altogether. As Indira Gandhi has rightly said, for these societies poverty is the greatest pollutant. Removal of poverty will significantly contribute to improvements in the quality of environment. Environmental consciousness, however, has to be promoted in these societies so that they do not encounter problems of unmanageable proportions later. It should be noted that greed and lack of foresight have been responsible for considerable environmental degradation in the Third World; this must be reversed.

The dilemmas of industry vs agriculture, import substitution vs export promotion, aid vs trade, free international trade vs regional integration and protection have been much debated and need not detain us long. These do not necessarily pose either/or choices; a judicious combination of both is to be attempted. Agricultural production has to be emphasized; but experience suggests that in many Third World countries production is maintained at satisfactory levels – it is the system of distribution that goes wrong. The delivery system is defective. But more important than that is the fact that while there is enough food to go round, the majority have such low purchasing power that they cannot obtain sufficient food to meet their nutritional needs. In any case no one can seriously recommend perpetuation of two separate worlds, one mainly agrarian, the other mainly industrial. To the extent that it is possible Third World countries will have to adopt a policy of import substitution; but this policy may not work in respect of all the items needed for development. The global distribution of natural resources is uneven and unequal, necessitating imports of at least some essential items. In any event, efforts at import substitution and export promotion can go together, although the latter has to face several visible and invisible barriers.

The question of aid vs trade is tricky. Aid rarely comes without stringent conditions attached to it. Much of it is in support of projects and the package deal is often as, if not more, advantageous to the aid giver than it is