# POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT THEORY : A CRITICAL REVIEW OF ITS APPLICATION TO INDIAN POLITICS

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## CERTIFICATE

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**"POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT THEORY: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF ITS
APPLICATION TO INDIAN POLITICS"** submitted by **Mr. BENNY
JOSEPH** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** has not been
previously submitted for any other degree of this or any
other University. To the best of our knowledge this is a
bonafide work.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed
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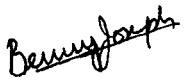
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# CONTENTS

# INTRODUCTION

This study provides a critical review of Political Development approach and its application to Indian Politics. In India, the debates on Development over the years have witnessed an ascendance of western influence dominated by the discussion of institutional structures and mechanisms in the academic and political domains. Controversies generated by the debate focused on the central role of politics in modernizing the traditional Indian society.

The assumption was that politics performs the function of integration and narrows the gap between traditional and modern elements of society, by penetrating traditional structures and relationships and thereby involving them into the political competitive process, giving rise to new values and attitudes. The nature and quality of the transition to modern society was identified in relation to the various agents of modernization. The functional parts of society were seen as factors promoting the consolidation of various institutions. There emerged a specialised language of political discourse on Indian politics directly affected by the theories of political development.

The results are not convincing, if not impracticable, from the observation of political reality as

they do not reveal adequately the cleavage between politics, society and economy.

The Indian debate on political development and modernization envisaged politicisation of the social forces as the principle medium for the modernization of Indian society. Emphasis was on the fusion and interpenetration between the traditional social system and the modern political institutions as well as between the values of tradition and modernity.

It was assumed that politics performs its integration function, where top elite makes links with elements at lower levels, from national to the state, to the district and finally the village level. In this process of political modernisation and change important role is attributed to political elites.

The theorists using the approach outlined variables like stability, political integration, participation etc. for the analysis of India's political development. It focused itself on the role of caste, relationship of voting and the maintenance of the system, role of attitudes and values of elites in bringing about change. Ahistorical categories were emphasized for identifying structural differentiation in the social institutions of Indian society and its relation to politics.

It explained the conditions and ways under which caste as a traditional factor is modified, as a result of social and political interaction patterns and allegiance. It is said that under the impact of pressures of modernisation, primordial institutions and networks would breakdown and are integrated and formally replaced by new institutions and relationship associated with modernity. Institutions of caste, is hoped to be changing both in the form and function under the impact of politics.

The debate also concentrated on the role of electoral politics in the process of transition from tradition to modernity. They analysed the relationship between voting behaviour and the development of the political system in relation to voters choice, leadership behaviour and policy process.

Next to this, attention has been paid by political development and modernization theorists to leadership, relationship between political elite and masses. A number of empirical studies on political elites in various states and village level were conducted. They have signified the consequence of new elite and social groups into politics. The primary focus was on the attitudes and behaviour of elites in bringing about change.

In this study the focus is on discovering as to how far these theories are relevant to the reality of Indian politics, and the extent of which new institutions have met with success in democratizing the base of power in rural areas towards a secular democratic order.

This raises a number of intricate questions. Various studies on the peasantry, Green Revolution, landless labour and elites have shown some of the important process concerning the Indian society. Various structural inadequacies in the development process have been highlighted by the studies on monopoly capital and its links between economy, polity and society.

The mid 1970s shows a significant turning point in Indian politics. The developmental models with its primary focus on politicization and institution-building began to crackdown with the emerging political reality. But this does not mean that the model was abandoned for the study of Indian politics. The eventual crisis of political institutions in India led to the imposition of emergency. This shows the inherent contradictions in the analysis of political development and modernization framework. The emergence of the middle peasantry, the belated development of capitalism and the phenomenon of caste conflict shows the phenomenon inherent to the structural analysis of a

transitional society. It raises serious doubts about the validity of the claims of mainstream developmental framework with in the politcal reality of Indian Politics.

Within a 'tradition-modernity continum' the scholarly reflections on the political development, the fusion and accomodation of social forces, the institutionalization of the political system etc. in India has emphasised in the following three major areas of interest.

1. Modernization or changing role of castes.

2. Relationship between political variable and voting behaviour.

3. The necessity of political elites in facilitation of the modernization process.

The vast amount of literature within the ambit of political development in all do not form a part of this study. Hence the focal concern of the present study for a critical review of political development approach is concentrated on the studies of caste, Electoral politics and political elites.

## Outline of the Study

The first chapter deals with an analysis of major theoretical orientation to arrive at a critical understanding of the paradigm of political development. With

this in view the chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with ;

Part 1 - Critical Review of political development and modernization theories.

Part 2 - Analysis of dependency and world system theories.

Part 3 - Analysis of Alternative approach.

The second section provides a review of some of the major works on Indian politics to see how the developmental framework have changed over the years and is an effort to show a critical trend in these changes. The primary purpose of this chapter is to provide a background for a critical understanding of the paradigm in general and especially on Indian Politics.

The chapter 2 deals with various theoretical orientations to the relationship between caste and modernity in Indian politics. Caste system has been the object of enquiry for modernisation theorists, as an agent of social transformation. They point out the extent of social mobility in terms of weakening of caste or as performing secular functions in the political process associated with modernisation. This chapter attempts a critical review of the studies on caste that follow a "tradition - modernity" scheme of analysis.

Chapter 3 outlines a review of electoral studies that analyses electoral behaviour as a barometer of political development and focuses on the inherent contradictions of such an analysis. We describe it in chronological order in the context of various elections in India, by identifying the major themes and their implications. This is to show how far they arrive at explanations relevant to the Indian political reality.

In chapter 4, first we deal briefly with the sociological theories of elites. The major part of the chapter tries a review of political elite and leadership studies in Indian politics. The study of elites originated as a part of the paradigm of political development, with growing interest on developmental analysis. In India, these studies concentrated on the role, attitudes and behaviour of elites as contributing to political development. The primary focus was on elites as agents of social change at village level.

In conclusion we attempt to summarize the various trends in the analysis of political development in India. The main emphasis is on a critical understanding of the paradigm of political development and modernization to the study of Indian politics in the context of structural changes. This is seen in relation to the emerging political reality in the Indian context.

# CHAPTER I

## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT LITERATURE - A THEORETICAL REVIEW

The literature on Political development emerged as an important concern beginning with the era of decolonization. This was given impetus by the Post-World War U.S. foreign policy, coupled with the academic interest in the problem of social and political change in the III World. When faced with the rise of communist influence in Asia, Africa and Latin America, political sociologists focused their attention on those social forces that could act as motive forces of political change in a direction suitable with the political interest of the united states. In the period of the 1950s and early 1960s, this was expressed in debates provoked by national and international developments like the emergence of fascism, Nazism, the impact of stalinism, Mc carthyism etc.

Also, trends in the social sciences were affected by a concern for Revisionist View of Democracy. This view as applied earlier to the analysis of contemporary U.S. and Anglo-Saxon Political System was extended to the analysis of the Third world states, with it elitist bias and pessimism against mass-based social and political movements.

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"Ideas were taken to be the creator or determinant of the form history was to take in the III World"[1] Western Society was taken as the ideal on the hope that problems of the III World could be solved by applying various theoretical models. It took for granted the stability of capitalism and its capacity to maintain order as this theory was powerfully influenced by the history of industrialization and democratization in England, the 11th century evolutionary theory and 20th century structural functionalism. It envisaged a linear process of transformation from small scale traditional agricultural societies to complex, organizationally integrated modern industrial states. Various theoretical constructs, loosely identified as growth , modernization, progress, development etc. was used to explain the political realities of the Third world.

The theories of development and development policies have been challenged from a variety of sources. Firstly, various scholars in argument with the underlying premises have pointed out its shortcomings. Secondly, left wing scholars have brought to focus the theoretical and empirical flaws. They have showed how these theories are defined to suit the capitalist interest, which in turn promoted underdevelopment. Finally, events in the III world

itself have challenged the validity of its explanations, and the policies associated with them.

The defenders of the paradigm on the otherhand conceded that development theories were capable of being reformed, and assumed the prevailing thinking on political change and political order.

Combining theoretical considerations and colonial realities it becomes easier to arrive at a critical understanding of the paradigm of political development. With this in view the following section is divided into three parts. part - I, Critical Review of political development and modernization theories. Part-II Analysis of Dependency and world system thesis. Part-III Analysis of Alternative approach.

In a similar way, the conventional literature of political development can be divided into 2 sub sections. I - that produced between the mid 1950s to mid 1960s and II - from the mid 1960s and after.

Despite much controversy, the concept of political development has also been in a state of confusion. The use of terms such as development, Change and modernization serve largely to confuse. Many political development works give less attention to conceptualization. The term came to

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political science from a sense that, a political analogue to economic development was necessary. According to Huntington (1971) the concept did not integrate a body of related concepts or distinguished, one aspect of political reality from another. Riggs (1981) concluded that the term is only a ´power word' that offers political power to those who can control it. Eckstein (1982) clearly admits that the present literature on development does not represent developmental inquiry properly.

" Given this feeling even in the part of some of the political developments best known analysts, the concept appears to have fallen into disrepute or at least neglect.[2] "

A look back at the literature on development, we find that the theory is based on the assumptions of structural functionalism, which look upon society as an organism deriving its major conceptions from earlier theories. The main objective of the earlier developmentalist school was to derive general categories, (hueristic tools) to differenciate diverse types of social organizations and their stages of growth. This were specified in general categories, comprehensive and basic enough to study societies in comparative terms. The intellectual roots of functionalism can be traced to the writings of social anthropologists like Radcliff - Brown and B. Malinoswski

who studied the pre-literate or tribal societies. They 'functionally' justified the role of rituals, magic, religion in providing an integrative role for the maintenance of order in these societies.

It was Talcott Parsons who inspired the political scientists in the U.S. to adopt functional approach to the study of politics.[3] Drawing inspiration from such a comparative study Gabriel Almond elaborated a theoretical framework for the study of pattern based on developmental model. Similar to the thinking of parsons and other functionalists Almond sees the political system as the legitimate order maintaining or transforming system in the society.[4]

The main political categories used by Almond for the study of political system are political (input) functions and governmental (output) functions. The political input functions are (a) Political Socialization and Recruitment (b) Interest articulation (c) Interest aggregation and (d) Political Communication. The governmental output functions are (a) Rule-making (b) Rule application and (c) Rule adjudication. In a latter writing Almond classified that his concept of Political System is one of interdependence, to the criticism that functional systems theories often mean an equilibrium and hence have static or conservative bias.

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During the 1960s, another American Political Scientist Myron Weiner, dealing with the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America regarded Political fragmentation as the factor behind underdevelopment.[5] The factors such as political fragmentation, instability, thus were seen by him as mainly because of traditional social structures and values in these traditional societies. Hence modernization or replacement of traditional structures with liberal democratic structures was seen as a remedy to ensure political integration and stability.

Edward Shils interpreted political development in terms of it being conditional on the growth of values of liberal democracy. The main emphasis in his analysis relied on the importance of a central value system, where class conflicts in the society, in course of time get themselves neutralized, by an attachment of this value system, which in turm helps to maintain the social order. Mobility and consensus to him became the important values of liberal democracy, essential to deal with dissent and order.[6] Similar emphasis is also seen in the later writing Gabriel Almond.

Therefore it becomes evident that,

"For the proponents of the idea of political development, the quest for modernising the traditional backward countries became synonymous with the

> quest for fostering the structures of
> capitalism and liberal democracy. In
> other words, the level of political
> development would be dependent as the
> extent of Socio-economic structures as
> envisaged in the west. For the exponents
> of the model of political development,
> politics thus became a dependent
> variable".[7]

Transplantation of liberal democratic institutions and values in the developing countries failed to ensure political mobility and consensus. These theories faced serious challenges in the 1960s, as attempts to classify society in terms of certain pattern variables proved unacceptable as a form of analysis. This was reflected evidently in the dispute on the assumption, whether the path from tradition to modernity, would be a unilinear progression or not. Various criticisms in this effect to the ascribed unilinear and teleological nature of modernization theory evolved in different writtings.

Also in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, introduction of Liberal democratic social structures and values failed to contain sporadic and revolutionary outbursts against political regimes. This coupled with the challenges of workers and peasant agitations to the new strategies of modernization. According to Samuel P Huntngton the forces of social mobilization and modernization create a decline of the

stable traditional order, as the disparity between the needs and aspirations unleashed by social mobilization and the opportunities for satisfying them unleashes social frustration. Unless the political system is sufficiently institutionalized to cope with these tensions, it will be racked by erruptions of anomie, unrest, disorder and violence. To him in such a situation, "the rates of social mobilization and the expansion of political participation are high; the rates of political organization and institutionalization are low. The Result is political instability and disorder. The Primary problem of politics is the lag in the development of political institutions behind social and economic change."[8]

An emphasis on the primary of politics is also reflected in the writtings of David Apter. To him in the earlier stages of modernization, the traditional societies require an exceptionally well organized political system able to maintain a high degree of control.[9]

Lucian pye in her writtings identified 3 major value components of the development syndrome - equality at the level of the political culture (to be realised through popular participation), capacity at the level of authoritative structures (reflected in the rational and legitimate exercise of authority) and differentiation at the

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level of non-authoritative structures. (to be realised through functional specificity of roles).[10]

By the 1950s and early 1960s, when studies of political development began to appear, the study of economic growth was already at a higher form. W.W. Rostow was the economic historian whose work had the most obvious appeal in the studies of political development. He conceived development as a number of stages though which all societies had to pass in order to reach a self-sustaining economic growth, what Rostow called 'maturity'.[11] It is implicit in his writtings that underdevelopment is an original stage, that there were no stages before the present stage of underdevelopment. Such an interpretation ignores the historical background of underdeveloped countries, assumed it as a stationary stage to start with.

Following pye, Binder stressed on the notion of crises, within the framework of a structural syndrome under the auspicious of comparative politics sub-committee of the social science research council (SSRC - CCP) from an original emphasis on decolonization and nationalism, state formation and democracy was followed by institutional assessment, education, bureaucracy, interest groups, the functional contributions of these plus a more diverse pluralism, ethnic, class, elites and finally the problem of

crises, identity, legitimacy, participation, distribution and penetration.[12]

A survey of the theories discussed above reveals that normative character of their content, accept the past of the west as a model for the third world societies. Many critics both from the liberal and radical sources called for revision in the field and brought to evidence the 'unilinear' or 'ethno centric' bias in their concepts of change, which distorted the process of social change in these countries.

This emerged accute when it was brought to light by many that developmental theories were impracticable in the face of many of the terrible trials through which the third world was passing, as we shall see in the latter writtings.

## Neo-Marxist Critiques of the Developmental Model

The criticism from the radical sources was more comprehensive. It posed greater challenge focussing on its ahistorical and conservative bias, and its failure to make sense of what happened in the third world before and after colonialism. Conventional interpretations of development, such critics argued, neglected to explain the kinds of changes that had taken place and hence they distanced

themselves from both modernization theory and the Orthodox Marxist understanding of the third world.

Out of the older theories of imperialism of Lenin, Bhukarin etc., two traditions had emerged in Latin America in the study of underdevelopment - the nationalist and the revolutionary.[13] The Nationalist tradition was dominated by members of the U.N. Commission on Latin America (ECLA) where the work of Paul prebisch figured in this connection. It was the 'revolutionary school' of the 1960's on the other hand were successful in defining alternative explanations of underdevelopment. They addressed themselves to the comparatively neglected aspect of the theory of imperialism in the peripheral societies. Following "a theoretical orientation that draws heavily on the later work of Marx and his successors",[14] these scholars argued that the underdevelopment of the third world is the result of the development of the first world.

The Dependency theorists share the view that the Power of international capitalism setting up a global division of labour has been the chief force responsible for shaping the history of the III world. The theory is essentially concerned with the asymmetrical relationship existing among nation states in the contemporary world. It considers the internal dynamics of underdeveloped societies

and thus underdevelopment to be primarily conditioned by their position in the international economy and the result out between internal and external structures. The phenomena of underdevelopment and backwardness in the III world are explained in terms of processes - political, economic, social and cultural which link the developing world (the peripheries) to the developed world (the centre).

Scholars like Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin and Immanuel Wallerstein have variously elaborated the above thesis by tracing the dialecties of development and underdevelopment from the period of merchant capitalism through colonialism to neocolonialism. The works of these writers has a tremendous influence and impact on the study of Development and underdevelopment.

These authors formulated a more comprehensive theoretical approach to the understanding of development and underdevelopment as the dialectically constituted results of metropolitan capital accumulation.

Frank[15] was more than anyone else, the catalyst in formenting a movement of criticism against the developmentalist model of stages of economic growth. Much of the Frank's theorization grew out of his rejection of the apriori assumptions of the theories of modernization which

he argues do not lead to quite an understanding of societal development and underdevelopment.

Frank and others contended that while the third world may have been undeveloped before Western penetration, it became underdeveloped after its incorporation into the vortex of international capitalist system. Underdevelopment was caused because the advanced industrial world was able to develop at the cost of the third world. Dependent is a consequence of expansion of dominant nations and is tied to the demands of the dominant as opposed to the needs of the dependent economy. The Historiography built up by Frank and Griffin[16] on Latin America and Walter Rodney[17] and Samir Amin on Africa analyzed how crucial capitalist penetration had been for underdevelopment in the third world.

Thus for Frank development and underdevelopment are dialectically constituted societal formations which emerge out of the dynamics of surplus expropriation in the process of capital accumulation. He identifies 3 sets of contradictory relations that generate unequal development. (1) The contradiction of expropriation/appropriation of economic surplus (2) the contradiction of metropolis - satellite polarization; and (3) the contradiction of continuity of change. These contradictory relations dialectically constituted, simultaneously stimulate

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metropolitan capitalist development and satellite structural underdevelopment. There social formations are again produced and reproduced as part of the same process of world capitalist accumulation.

Applying the theory to the Latin American continent Frank showed how states such as Brazil, Argentina and Chile were penetrated and rendered dependent by the advancing capitalist system.[18] Even in his later writtings of the 1970s, his arguements are limited to the Latin America experience and there is no marked shift from his earlier view.[19] Thus the dynamic nature of Frank's arguement enables him to demonstrate that even though development and underdevelopment are structurally different, they are infact relations due to internal contradictions of the world capitalist system.

Like Frank's theory, immanuel Wallersteins world system theory[20] is also originating from a similar intellectual stable. It also views capitalist development as a global process which produces and reproduces growing inequality within and between the world states. Wallerstein argues that there is only a single international division of labour dominated by the only mode of production - global capitalism - but does not comprise sub parts and are "alternative modes of labour control". By rejecting Marxist

theories of imperialism, surplus value and class, and focussing on the notion of 'unequal exchange', Wallerstein conceptualized a world capitalist economy in which pre-capitalist world empires are shown as having been eliminated by a geographical expansion of the trade-based on modern world system which also incorporated the remaining mini systems. The mechanism of surplus appropriation by the core is the power of 'strong states' via the operation of unequal exchange, a process happens due to 'one global capitalist system' with subordinates parts leading to a hierarchy of states within this system.

Thus he insists that the early 'units of analysis' to be adopted to analyse the conditions in any country in the modern world must be the global world economy, and world inter-states system which it has generated. Social reality as Immanuel Walterstein articulates is centered in the world economy[21]. Another contribution by Walterstein is the idea of the semiperiphery' as a 'buffer' between core and periphery. To put it in another way for Walterstein global capitalism is characterized as commodity production for profit in the world market, and thus forms of production articulates a variety of forms of exploitation within the context of relations between powerful states and peripheral areas. However Walterstein's theory like Frank is based on

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market or exchange relations as opposed to the Marxist notion of production relations.

Dependency thesis of A.G. Frank, and world system theory of Immaunel Walterstein, despite some overlap, can be seen written a common allegiance characterising underdevelopment as the result of the spread of international capitalism. The theorists showed that the misery of much of the III world desires not from a locally generated traditional resistance to modernity, but from the operating forces of modernity itself, as it has historically implanted itself on the periphery. Walterstein argued that the slave trade has made Africa the 'backyard' of Europe and the only alternative is socialist resolution[22].

Samir Amin argues that national liberation movements in the peripheral areas brought about the transformation in imperialism from colonialism and also the exploitation of primary production labour to a different international division of labour where industrialisation could begin in the III world. This change and the resulting industrialization in the peripheral countries, according to Amin changed the peripheral bourgeosie from national Bourgeosie to 'junior partners' in the world capitalist system. This has according to him constitutes a return to the old colonial system as the peripheral bourgeosie merely

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replaced the old feudal and comprador Bourgeosie as the subordinate ally of imperialism. For Amin, anti-imperialist struggles in the periphery can lead to change.[23]

Change is possible if popular movements arise and capture the state. In his study of meo-colonialism in Africa, Amin demonstrates how countries like Ghana and the Ivory Coast can choose different paths resulting in differening neo-colonial patterns.[24]

In short the main arguements of these theories can be summarized as follows:-

Development and underdevelopment are essentially aspects of the same economic process and the former has been able to occur only by increasing the latter. The very existence of world capitalist system means that the development potential of underdevelopment countries is blocked. The world is divided into two or three main groups of nations, and in this nexus, the trans-national companies act as main agents of neo-colonialism, as they are the virtual mechanism in the transfer of surplus from periphery to the centre.

Thus looking from and dependency perspective, it becomes obvious that, it is modernity not tradition is at the origin of the struggle. The Development approach with

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its consensual bias fails to empirically grapple, what is happening in the regions of Asia, and Latin America. Theorists in political science presented institution building as one of the organizational techniques; and often sanctioned the establishment of military governments for periods of transition. The separation of economics from politics is thus a logical expression of the needs of advanced capitalism, through which "imperialism" in its various forms fully operates.

Originally as mercantilism, then as free trade, later as finance capital and most recently under the auspicious of multi-national corporations, capitalism over the last five centuries created a world economic system. Thus the developmental theorists fail to analyse imperialism with the force it needed, as has been clearly brought to light by the dependency perspective, and marxian interpretations.

## Towards an alternative framework

As we have seen earlier, the traditional thinking on the policy of development looked tradition and modernity as polar opposites and mutually exclusive parts. Thus they consider a dichotomy between tradition and modern, and traditional societies are considered as simple, homogenous, static, particularistic, closed and dominated by primordial

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customs and traditions. Modern societies on the other hand represents national order with a complex social structure and institutional framework. Modernization was scan as the process through which a traditional society make the transition.

In the Western thought the polity has been viewed as a superstructure which reflects social rules, represents social interest and restore social strains. Thus the polity in democratic theory is an improvement of society. The dichotomous relationship between 'tradition and modernity' model was criticized in the context of the problems of the III world societies. There have been numerous critiques of the ascribed unilinear and teleological nature of modernization theory. In India, early criticism to this effect was advanced mainly by Gusfield, Rajni Kothari, Rudolph and Rudolph etc.

These writers were of the opinion that in much of the Afro-Asian countries a rather different relationship exists. The polity is largely autonomous, consisting in the immediate post-independence period of a fairly small number of westernized elites presiding over a traditional and fragmented society. Also they note the earlier 'unilinear notion' failed with the changing political conditions of many of the Asian and Latin American countries.

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Taking a stand against tradition and modernity as 'polar opposites' Gusfield in the light of experience of the developing countries presents certain fallacies and point out that "It is incorrect to view traditional societies as Static, nomatively consistent or structurally homogenous".[25]

According to them it is the polity which shapes society more than the reverse. The major role of the modernizing elite is to remake society in their own image. Kothari has referred to this as"traditionalizing of modernity"[26]. Thus the result is a blend of tradition and modernity. Concerning India, it is referred by these theorists that the political system is modifying while itself being traditionalized. To them India emerges as model for building a political process allowing both for leadership from above and influence from below, each looked to other in a complex network of interactions that becomes increasingly institutionalized. "....India presents a sense of great tension between the structure of politics and the style of politics. The structure is modern, competitive and instutionalized; the style is traditional, consensual and personalized[27].

Criticising the unilinear nature of development Rudoplh and Rudolph argues,

"The assumption that modernity and tradition are radically contradictory rests on a undiagnosis of tradition as it is found in traditional societies, a misunderstanding of modernity as it is found in modern societies and a misapprehension of the relationship between them"[28].

Thus the prosperity to generate changes is inherent in the traditional structures and values. Modernity does not mean conflict with religion or traditional values, and evidence of modernity can be found with social and political changes. Thus there is a fusion of both, through a process of their respective self-transformation.

In subsequent years this notion of development changed its form with the crisis in institutional stability, as the proposed consensus among various pressure groups advocated by the political developments and modernization theorists did not result into a cohesive framework. More so, the deepening political crisis in the 70's both in India and the world at large, the dissatisfaction with the mainstream theory of political development and modernization forced them to rethink their premises. Rajni Kothari and others began to develop alternative model within the pluralist framework.

In the following section we shall attempt an assessment of this alternative theory with a view to delineating some of its broad tendencies and trends.

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The alternative framework offered by Rajni Kothari, D.L. Seth etc. in Indian context is based on the phenomenon of grass root movements in the unorganized sections of the Indian polity. THey are of the opinion that, to support the resurgence of the people at the local levels, non-party formations (NPF[S]) voluntary organisations and other groups can play a vital role. Drawing a large part of empirical reference from Indian experience, they have put forward a theoretical analysis of an alternative view of social transformation, to show how disillsionment with modern politics and growth of popular movements as a protest against, found in all societies.

This paper however doesn't analyse the role of action groups, or their relevance in social transformation. It deals mainly with how this thinking has been viewed in theoretical terms as an alternative framework for social transformation, its inadequacies and is purely a critique of these theoretical formulations.

These theorists apprehend that in an emerging context of world dependence, and the growing weakness of the state towards demands of the masses, its consequent authoritarian measures etc., the participatory context of political process in the countries has considerably weakened. The role of the state as an actor of the numerous

underprivileged masses has considerable declined. It is felt that present world order has become a composite corporate structure made of trans-national corporation on the one hand, a political structure of capitalist superstructure on the other. In the present world there is a "massive centralization of power and resources, centralization that does not stop at the national centre either and makes the nation states itself an abject onlooker and a client of a global world order"[29].

They talk of the growing solidarity of the middle class and the managerial cadres at the international level, and of a conspiracy for depoliticizing the mass of people by denying them any participatory role in democracies, like India. According to this school political parties only manipulate masses for electoral advantage. And they are not able to build issue - based mass movements at various levels, especially at the grassroots, for getting the grievances of the people reddressed.

They have tried to identify a vertical linkage between global economic power structures and the ruling elites of the respective countries. According to them, because of the awareness growing at grass root level, the politics of action groups and movements is getting disassociated from national politics and are increasingly

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aware of the problem of unilinear warfare, ecological destruction etc.

They are of the view that the III world emerged as a coherent human experience for which the existing models have been found unsatisfactory and a third alternative was called for. "There is no dearth of normative and ideological critiques of the prevalent model of development... But little or no attention has been paid to the numerous experiments, movements and organizational interests that struggle on the ground.[30]

According to them in countries like India, the social structure far from being transformed is getting distorted by modern politics, and this has led to severe repercussions in the way of further growth and a vast number of people are rapidly sinking below the poverty line. To the exponents of this view, an alternative framework emerges from such a social and institutional crisis of the experience with the modernization process of countries like India. They are concerned with grass root movements and non-party formations which they hope would generates a new initiative of values and institutions.

These initiatives are seen as based on, "Deep stirrings of conciousness of an awareness of crises that

could be turned into a catalyst of a new opportunity. It is to be seen as a response to the incapacity of the state to hold its various constituents in a framework of positive action... as attempts to open alternative political spaces outside the usual arenas of party and government though not outside the state"[31].

These grass-root organizations and movements attempt to redefine politics as something different and beyond electoral and legislative politics, by widening the arenas of politics to include such subjects as health, rights over forest and community reserves, ecological, cultural and educational issues. These initiators can be best desired as 'Societies' rather than 'politics'[32].

There are 3 factors emphasized by the exponents of alternative approach, which must be closely looked at.

(1) According to these theorists there is a decline in the role of state as an agent of social transformation.

The action groups are viewed as a response to the incapacity of the state to hold its various constituents in a framework of positive action, its refusal to meet the distribution demands and its repressive character. It is emphasized that role of the state as an instrument of human liberation and transformation of an egalitarian type is seen to be in serious jeopardy.

(2)    The second factor emphasized by the theorists is  the
irrevelancy or the restricted scope of political parties  in
the  process  of  social transformation.   The  parties  are
viewed  having lost contact with those who are at  the  very
bottom  of the social hierarchy.  After the alleged  failure
of  mainstream parliamentary democracy, in particular  party
system,  the proponents of non-party formations,  see  grass
root  organizations as the basis of a theoretical schema  of
democratic polity.

Action  groups  are characterized .as  potentially
capable  of renewing contacts with the  masses  and  getting
constant  feedback from them. Seth writes, "But  unlike  the
established left parties, the activist groups work  directly
with the people... they have been able to organize opprersed
groups  in the rural and urban areas which  were  considered
unorganisable by the left parties"[33].

They are of the view that party system is  loosing
credibility  and  is confined to elections  and  legislative
politics. Action groups are considered as an alternative  to
the  party politics, and hence viewed as viable  agency  for
social transformation.[34]

(3)    Another arguement put forward by these theorists  is
the  irrevalancy of class politics in providing the  setting

for the viability of action groups. According to Kothari, "Indian version of alternative development of social democracy at the grass root level can avoid the extremes of capitalism and communism, ... of social democracy on the western model and democratic centralism of the Soviet or Chinese model[35]. According to him, the capitalist system brings about a dualist economy and centralizing state by pushing large sections to the peripheries of the economic and political system. It is the middle-class to him that has become a world class and sections of the India's new middle class are integrated into the trans-national managerial class of world capitalist system.

"Instead of the working classes of the world uniting, it is the world middle classes that are becoming conscious of their 'inter-dependence' while more and more segments of the masses are getting marginalized and becoming a disorganized and 'doomed' non-class"[36]. Since the action groups are not interested in the logic of capturing state power as a pre-condition for social transformation, it is argued that they are more inclined to work with long-term programmed emphasizing decentralization of economic and political power.

Proponents of this theory include in the category of non-party political formation, organization like the

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Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Lokayan, AVARD, SWRC and various other groups working among tribals and the feminist organizations. Capture of the state power is not the goal of these organizations, and they help in constructive work at the grass root level. But they refuse to include organizations based on Religion engaged in social work.

Howsh Sethi argues that, "The traditional macro organizations suffer not only from rigid, hierarchical and bureaucratic structure, making an innovative and flexible approach difficult, if not impossible, they seen blessed with the most egolistical attitude with respect to their own infallibility."[37]

The alternative view rests it hope that action groups are capable of restoring the proper role of the state viz - autonomy, legitimacy, authority, institutionalization and performance by making it once again an instrument of liberation from exploitative structure in which the mass of the poor are trapped.

The alternative theory of change in the state, by gradual, long-term action, its emphasis on issues which, according to them, transcend classes, and the view that the non-party political formations are actually 'redefining politics' where others have failed, in effect creates more confusion than clarification. The confusion is created

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because the theoretical formulation is weak, it fails to provide any concrete alternative framework of social analysis, though it is critical of the exiting frameworks.

Having realized that in conventional societies groups and forces like this act as mediatory forces between the polity and society, these theorists even though not declining from this view seeks to revive the same through grass root initiatives. For this they identify the irreconciliability of the forces of market, to growing social contradiction between middle and poor classes and between urban and rural India.

As the structural class determination involves economic, political and ideological class struggles and these are expressed in the form of class positions, the concept of class can analyse the social relations and struggles more adequately than any another theoretical framework.

It is difficult to conceive of a gradual transition of the social order from below, or redefining the state, and the Indian experience has shown that Indian state is relatively autonomous of the various social class nexus, cited by the alternative framework. They are not interested in radical transformation and their method can be viewed as

a move for a necessary insurance against pressures for reforms of radical and rapid nature.

Despite much difficulty, it can be conceded that the development path advocated by the alternative framework do not seem feasible to the Indian political reality. An activist of the CPI(M) has demonstrated with empirical evidence, the fact that most of "Indian theorists of this voluntary action working at the grass-roots are willy-willy aiding and abetting this imperialist strategy..... For how else one can explain the strange spectacle imperialist agencies and governments funding organizations to organize the rural and urban poor to fight for their rights and against exploitation."[38]

Also the Social and Political impact of the alternative movement raises serious doubts, been negligible and accepts the prescriptions within the broad pluralist model of political development.

## Indian Studies - A Review of Literature

The Debates on political development based on 'nation building', affected the interpretations on Indian politics in the decades of the 1960s and after. This had generated explanations based on institution building and mechanisms of their functioning at different levels. Results

were apparent, as conceptual categories have multiplied over the years in the discussion of Indian Politics. To them modernization is the guiding spirit and politics the basic motivation. Theorists of political development took to the view that it is possible to mobilize people on a nationalist political platforms and venture into the task of 'nation building' and hence they see politics, necessarily not an adjunct of economics.[39]

From the point of view of political development studies, it was the impact of behaviouralism that was to be dominant and controversial. The field was defended as a comprehensive approach to politics. The liberal democratic framework that the early observers like Myron Weiner, W.H. Morris Jones, Rajni Kothari, Norman D. Palmer, et al., adopted, retain their concern to assume the functionality of traditional indian institutions along capitalist lines.

This section confines to a review of some of the major works on indian politics to see how a framework of developmental analysis have changed over the years and is an effort to show a unified trend in these changes.

One of the most commonly held views of the lot of literature appeared on political development and modernization in India is that of modernization as a teleological concept which proceeds along a fixed route as a

result of certain demographic changes.[40] The theorists viewed modernization as a multi-dimensional process which affects all aspects of a given society. Eventhough modernization was no longer equated with westernization, the various indications are features associated with developed western societies.

W.H. Mooris Jones(1967)[41] Govt. and Politics in India was one of the early attempts to advance an argument about Indian politics. He carried out a concept of 'levels' in Indian Political culture, describing these different manifestations as 'languages' or 'idioms' spoken by different actors to different audiences. He suggested a western form-practised in parliament and press and in text books, and a traditional form-which might be called feudal and a third distinctively Indian mode, Saintly, associated with moral and spirituality. The traditional was the village politics of 'consensus' among castes and bargain with the larger world. Morris Jones concepts consensus as the key phenomenon of macro political process in India.

> "In his understanding of 'politics and
> society' landless peasant, organized
> working class, Big bourgeone and their
> role in politics has no relevance. A
> society where the absolute majority is
> below the poverty line and is involved
> in constant struggle with the entrenched
> classes, does not seem to provide any
> key to the understanding of Indian
> politics to Moris-Jones".[42]

Gunnar Myrdals (1963)[43] approach which he himself describes as 'broadly institutional' gives, plea for far reaching institutional changes includes economic varieties such as output, income, conditions of living, levels of living etc. He characterized India, like other South Asian countries, as 'soft state' for its failure to perform on the front of mass poverty. His singling out of 'initial conditions' as the most inhibitive factors in the developmental process, his basically western that is North-Atlantic Socio-cultural view of development keeps his approach within the tradition-modernity fold.

Suggesting a concrete plan for higher institutionalization Robert Howdgrave (1970)[44] identified the major problem in the domain of public power in India as 'the revolution of rising frustration'. According to him demands and aspirations have increased in the process of modernization but the capacity and the will of the government to respond effectively has not kept pace.

The co-existence of Modern and Traditional elements is emphasized by Myron Weiner, while dealing with Indian culture. To him, India has two political cultures, one modern but has elements of traditionalism. The other political culture is predominantly traditional but has elements of modernity. This neither political culture is

absolutely free. Throughout his works, he has identified Indian politics as a bargaining process[45].

He examines various activities as adjustment between various interest groups who try to fulfill the aspirations of their members. The interest group might be community - oriented by caste, religion or be formal organizations like trade unions. All these groups help the individual to fulfill his interest in the political system. According to Weiner there is a lack of group representation and if it is increased on consulatative bodies Indian democracy can be made to function better. To him congress party provides an umbrella which gives shelter to a variety of interests[46].

Some theorists hold the view that the existence of a number of groups and their operation in the socio-economic life of the nation generate an area of conflict and disharmony. Communalism, linguism, religion and so on, are considered to be manifestations of the division in the social structure. These divisions are desired as the product of strong primordial loyalties which are imperfect in any traditional society. The tension takes a chronic form as, "the people's sense of self remains bound up in the gross actualities of blood, race, language, locality, religion or tradition and because of the steadily accelerating

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importance in those century of the sovereign state as a positive instrument for the realization of collective aims"[47].

Another groups of social scientists hold the view that there is no dichotomy between tradition and modernity. The interaction between the two results in the modernization of tradition and traditionalization of modernity. The functioning of different institutions like religion and caste is cited to show that they have been playing an important role in making democracy and competitive polity meaningful and particapatory. Rudolphs (1967) have pointed out that tradition and modernity should be seen as continuous rather than as separated by an abyss. "The relationship between tradition and modernity being dialectical rather than antithetical, each infiltrates and transforms the other"[48]. Thus caste association, communal organizations and so on are seen as essential to developing nationhood in a pluralist society.

## Centre - Periphery Analysis

Though generally scant attention has received to the centre - periphery model among the earlier theorists of political development, many writers have accepted this model of political development to a comparative study of nation

building and state formation in the Indian context. The most lucid general statement of this concept is to be found in the writtings of Edward Shils. The work of Bendix[49], who has adopted the centre-periphery analysis of development, the formulations of S.N. Eisenstadt[50], can all be interpreted with in a common conceptual framework. This follows (1) centre formation (either through a leading territory or dynasty or a dominant social class) (2) the process of infringement of the periphery by the centre (through the play of power and the process of policy making) and (3) the encroachment of periphery on the centre (through demands on the machinery of the state.

One of the profoundist applications of the model to the study of Indian Politics was that of Kothari's ʹPolitics in India' (1970). Though Kothari has moved a long way in his zeal for establishing legitimacy of Indian state, there remains some sort of unity of thought in his writings[51].

Modernization and politicization are the two trends that constitute the main theme in the Indian Political system according to Kothari. It was a model in which politization starts through the establishment of a constitutional and political superstructure which, through the actions of elites penetrates into society at various

levels[52]. Thus he provides a justificatory explanation of the autonomous role of liberal - democratic institutions in penetrating into and transforming the rigid and growth inhibiting structures and ideologies of the traditional order. He advocates a two way process of the modernization of tradition and traditionalization of modernity in India, by providing theoretical justification of electoral democracy, left - of - centre ideology, one party dominance, Indian political culture and nation states. Bhambri says, "Kothari's framework inhibits him from raising such basic questions in Indian politics as the class character of the state, location and distribution of political power, subordination or autonomy of the political system from the dominant and entrenched classes, and the actual performance of the system in terms of the benefits and advantage it brings to the dominant classes"[53].

Looking at the literature on Indian Politics, we find that the political crises of the 70's eventually leading to the declaration of emergency has forced many theorists within the pluralist framework to rethink their premises. Eventhough we see a clear cut shift within the developmental theories, this did not mean that political development as an approach to the analysis of Indian politics was abandoned. Rajni Kothari et al, began to develop alternative framework, based on grass root

initiatives[54]. Emergency was a practical proof from the experience of Indian politics that crisis is inherent in the social order and that social changes as advocated by the modernization theorist has not occurred, in its turn the institutional structures has become more corrupt and weak. Modernization process had created social tension and conflict within the countryside and led to concentration of power among privileged classes.

The striking feature of India's development is the fact that "close to 70 percent of the population is still dependent on agriculture for work, earnings and living"[55]. This depicts the "vulgarly pre-capitalist form of political life in rural India"[56].

Now we find a shift within Developmental theories towards justifying the crisis as something not inherent of the social order, rather than of leadership crisis, institutional weakness, etc. mostly in accordance with the pattern of Huntingtonian political decay. They have described recent political changes in India as party decay (Manor 1981), deinstitutionalization of the congress (Rudolphs 1987) and transition to mass politics (Kothari 1988). Such works deal with overcentralization of the polity and failure to work the federal principle on the one hand, and increase in regionalization and strengthening of

centrifugal, even separatist forces on the other, about personalism and authoritarian control of the congress party; about the possible re-establishment of 'one party dominance system' etc. Morris Jones (1977) writes - "India has to her credit remarkable political achievements since the independence and the greatest of these is the creation of the foundations for a system of accountable government. It lost its way in the.years preceding 1977 but retraced its steps before it was to late.... it remains a system capable of response and challenge, capable therefore of its own improvement"[57].

In support of our criticism we will refer to the opinion of Myron Weiner (1983). He holds the notion that social transformation take place through the power of market and sees politics as a bargaining process. According to him rather than being turned into a politically passive country, India has become highly politicized and participant. According to Weiner, if the future does not indicate a stable democracy" there still remain the historic facts that... there were many political movements in India which took a violent turn, but there were no fascist, revolutionary communist, religious fundamentalist, or secessionist movement with a large popular basee pressing for aa transformation of a countries political

institutions"[58]. To him the growing centralization of power within the congress party from 1972 to 1975 and a decline in the organization and popularity of the party with the states led to Mrs. Gandhi's decision to declare emergency.

James Manor (1981) identifies the paradox of awakening and yet decay being simultaneously and generally at work[59]. The awakening be refers to is of hitherto disadvantaged, silent or subdued politically inactive groups who are becoming mobilized, and sometimes assertive in their demands. The decay is to institutions formal and informal, and is the product among other factors, of corruption, deliberate de-institutionalization in the interest of personal rule with the result that party and other organizations are in disarray, the electoral process is tarnished, and its authority threatened.

Rudolphs (1987) on the otherhand, tries to identify the phenomenon of states-building in India through economic development, as well as the growth and decline of institutions. According to them, India presents a 'centrist' policy in which a positive state occupies a central role and mediates in class and related conflicts with a view to diffuse them and somehow keeps the initiative in the hands of a managerial elite[60]. Their analysis is located with in the framework of political development, of systems research

and institutional analysis, seeks sources of stability and order rather than of transformation and turmoil. The authors argue that at the political level, there has been a gradual erosion of institutions, bureaucracy, military, police, parliament and judiciary and the deinstitutionalization of congress party. Instead of identifying the primacy of class politics in India; using the comparative institutional framework of analysis, Rudolphs assign primacy to 'centrist politics' and 'social pluralism'.

Differing from the earlier notion of modernization as a process whereby primordial loyalties exists as one of a plurality of commitments expressed in interest groups, Francine Frankel et al (1989)[61] identifies same as a process of social formation. For this purpose they put forward the changes introduced into society by the modern state and treats caste, cultural and religious identities as a process of social formation. Such an analytical strategy emphasizes the importance of the structural context, which would in turn help them to emerge in the competition for social, economic and political advantage.

The above review of different writings on Indian politics easily shows us how political development theories when affected by changing political climate has become insignificant in understanding the political tendencies and

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forces, and also become self contradictory over time. In this connection it is necessary to remember as it has been pointed out by many analysts that, because of its very nature, the framework of political development and comparative politics could not and cannot acquire the power of explaining and analysing the dynamics of the social and political process in its diverse aspects.

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# CHAPTER - II

## MODERNISATION FRAMEWORK AND STUDIES ON CASTE

The unique system of social stratification, caste system has been the object of enquiry for modernization theorists, as an agent of social transformation. Such an analysis being based on the interplay of the dichotomy between tradition and modernity, perceives social process as linear, pointed out the extent of social mobility in terms of weakening of castes or as performing secular functions in the political process associated with modernization.

Various theoretical orientations to the relationship between caste and modernity looks at the range of adaptive traits through which castes pursue social mobility. Social and Political scientists have studied this phenomenon as a problem in structural-functionalism, social interaction and political dynamism. According to them, the detachment of the power system and system of social identity from caste structure, as a consequence of the coming of economic and political modernity provided major modifications in their internal structure. The Basic essence lies in the observation that stratification in a society is the result of the needs of the societies, and not out of the needs or desires of individuals.

To political scientists, the relationship between caste and democratic institutions has been the main focus of attention, and they have presumed to know about the intrusion of caste into politics, and politics into caste. Today interaction between caste and politics is increasingly evident at different parts of the Political Process. Contemporary Political and economic factors have led to considerable change in the caste structure, to new political identities, in terms of caste groupings and associations. The establishment of a democratic polity has drawn caste beyond the sphere of social relation to the arena of politics. As a result, 'politics is more important to caste and castes are more important to politics than before.'[1] caste today is not only playing a useful role of democratizing and secularizing the polity, it is also providing meaningful content to the political process itself.[2]

This has led to considerable misunderstanding about nature of caste and its interaction with politics. Some have tended to argue with or to a view of political modernization and seen it as a progression away from tradition.[3] Scientific theories and concepts have been involved in dealing with various aspects of caste. The validity of such an analysis should be seen in relation to

the degree to which they satisfy in understanding the social reality.

The conceptual framework in most studies on caste focus on Social structures to the execution of Historical and Cultural prepositions of social reality.[4] The logical conclusion of the studies is the flexibility of traditional social structure to adapt itself to the forces of modernization. Modernity to them began to weaken the balance or equilibrium between the components of traditional social system, and politics has helped in dissolving caste, that have found important functional role to play in modern society. "Caste far from being an impediment of democratic politics was seen by political scientists as an element of democratization process because these network help in incorporation of large sections of the people in modern political activity".[5] The conceptual formulation of change such as Sanskritization and westernization, vertical and horizontal mobilization etc. have been used by social and political scientists in studying the modernization process and social change.

The following section attempts a critical examination of such an analysis of change; and also the logical inadequacies of such concepts have been highlighted.

The process of transition in societies like India involves tensions and breakdowns, this phenomenon being

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common to all transitional societies, the primordial social structures come into conflict with the new emerging social categories. Instead of developing into synthesis of traditional and modern forces, eventually this conflicting relationship acquires sharp polarization between various elements in the society.

A study of caste as a phenomenon of social change should generate classifications, relevant to the social reality, bearing upon the process of social change and modernization. This must be in congruence with the historical past of the society in study representing the process of change and conflict that take place in traditions from within.

A review of the studies on caste points out a strand of writing that follow a 'tradition-modernity' scheme of analysis leading to the changes in terms of the level of institutional activities.

This can be discussed under two main categories.

(1)    Anthropological and sociological studies related to the general treatment of caste as a traditional social structure or changes within the system because of socio-political changes.

(2)    Studies dealing with the politicization of caste.

## Anthropological and Sociological studies

These studies were based mainly upon empirical observation of social stratification in the setting of a village or town and portrayed the static nature of institutions, particularly caste and occupational structure of rural and urban societies. Many of such studies have emphasized the functionality of caste system. The caste-model of Indian society has been applied to the study of social relations, group dynamics, politics, elections, enterprenuership and social mobility. The caste model as used by British ethnographers, anthropologists like M.N. Srinivas and structuralists like Louis Dumont and others, highlight the social and ritual aspects as objects of study, independent of economic and power relations.

In the treatment of the structural features of the Indian social system and tradition Dumont point out that the caste system divides the whole society into a large number of hereditary groups and suggests, it is the single principle which encompasses all relations, even when they seem to oppose it. It is an 'ideological structure' whose elements are exhaustively constituted by the relations between them. It consists of 'the specialization and inter-dependence' of abstract elements within a hierarchical whole.

According to him destinction of pure and impure is the very principle of hierarchy to such a degree that it emerges with the opposition of superior and inferior. He has held that the feature stressed invariably in the caste system is function rather than birth. Equality is set over against hierarchy, Power against virtue, and pollution against purity. It is changing 'to a modern.... a totalitarian mentality.'[6]

Dumont's characterization of caste systems as essentially based on the hierarchical ranking of caste following pure and impure occupations is most clearly perceivable in the relations between the two extreme groups. The Brahmins and the untouchables. Such an interpretation of caste ranking as strictly transmitted hereditary leaves little scope for occupational mobility within the caste system, and each caste within the caste system tends to be occupationally immobile which is re-enforced through religious sanctions. Dumont's approach by implication suggest that the untouchables are destined to the process of perpetuation of inequality and rules out any structural changes in the caste system.

The modernization tendency of caste is best illustrated by M.N.Srinivas and his concepts of Sanskritization and westernization highlight this process.

This concept deals only with the cultural and social mobility and not to the structural aspect. According to him, the acquisition of political power, education, leadership, economic betterment and a desire to move up in the hierarchy are the factors highlighted in the process of Sanskritization. Sanskritization is the process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or tribal or other kind of group changes its customs, rituals, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high and frequency, 'twice-born' caste.[7]

The concept of westernization adds to the social mobility. Westernization to him refers the changes introduced in the Indian society during the British rule and accelerated after independence.[8]

Bailey studied the adaptive nature of the traditional society with democratic political system and records a subtle process of change taking place through the initiative of the intermediaries who belong to traditional society and understand the demands of the new polity. This would result in bridging the "immense gap in communication between the elite who rule and the masses who are governed.'[9] He thus speaks of change at different levels with the emergence of new political elite and at the levels of a new socio-political system.

According to Harold Gould, castes are not merely weakening. Instead they are restructuring and consolidating themselves in order to perform important adaptive functions for their members in the context of the more open forms of social stratification in society. "....caste can be said to be in the process of becoming more and more explicity an adaptive structure whose functions include the provision of security, solidarity and preferential treatment of groupings of people who seek to avoid the 'logical implications' of detailed universalitic discriminations, with respect to the competition for jobs and... other scarce resources...."[10]. According to him caste in other words are acting as co-optive instruments in the domain of access to jobs and social mobility.

Analysing the interaction of caste, class and power others have assumed that with the process of 'modernization' arising out of various influences, more evidently the political aspect would result into the replacement or disappearance of caste and new categories of empirical reality like status, power, play important role. Andre Beteille observes "... the process of economic change and political modernization have led to the productive system and the organization of power to acquire an increasing degree of autonomy. In the concrete, the overlap between hierarchies of caste, class and power has been

progressively reduced"[11]. According to him the traditional structure based on caste was relatively a closed society where there was not much mobility. The process of modernization which has been improving on the Indian society ever since the consolidation of British rule, has been precipitating profound changes in the traditional structure of Indian society.

It is beyond doubt that these studies on caste aims at legitimacy and justification of the caste system, pronouncing an all - inclusive and encompassing functional system. Eventhough the study of Srinivas and other functionalists point out important forms of social mobility, it has been made evident that the process of sanskritization operates significantly, only when it is preceded by economic, educational and political mobility. Such a view should take into account the broader social, economic and political processes that are operative in a particular society. Commenting on the concept of sanskritization Yogendra Singh (1977) considers that sanskritization reinforces the normative system which is represented by caste stratification, but it also, at least in principles, violates its basic text - the acceptance of the principle of hierarchy[12].

Also functional approach fails to identify the extent of occupational[13] and other process of mobility among the lower castes.

The empirical reality of caste system eventhough does not correspond the Varna system, it has been used in identifying the castes because of its integrative role of various sections into the caste system. A distinction between Varna and Jati, thus is lacking in most of the studies on caste. Dumont's characterization of distinction related to pollution of pure and impure do not really affect the caste system today, as new forms of exploration are increasingly obvious, due to economic benefits from green resolution and political gains from adult franchise. To state that the pure hierarchy is one that is universally believed-in or one which legitimises the position of those who participate in the caste system, is misleading[14]. "The Historicism of Indian society is not taken into account by these analysis, and reductionism has been the hallmark of 'caste-model' analysis. Everything is reduced to all-pervasive principle of caste-hierarchy, basis of which is the polarity of purity pollution"[15].

Also the functionalists fail to identify the tendencies of the perpetuation of social inequality. The dominant class, may not always share their power and

privilege with the masses and thus tends to perpetuate social inequality for a sufficiently long time.

The analysis of the social structure must be in congruence with the changes, and not of a 'static' and 'motionless' time of reference using categories and concepts incapable of analysing such a change. Social categories must change according to the change in the social structure. The social reality should be analysed from the point of change in accordance with the actual historical specifications[16].

To understand, the dimensions of change in the caste system, it is necessary to grasp the concrete process of restructuration going on in society. This has to be seen under the specific historical contexts of social process, the development policies of the government, and its effects on the social structure and the relations among the various groups in the village. Such a study has to diagnosie both the basis of caste in the structure of land relations and its superstructural dimensions in politics emphasizing various levels of interaction between economy, culture and politics.

Studies Dealing with the Politicization of Caste

These studies focus on the process of political development leading to overall politicization of the social

process, to determine the extent to which political power is distributed in the society. The aim is to show how individuals are loosing their loyalty based on caste and who as citizens participate in various processes of politics at different levels, thereby increasing competition among individuals and groups to control political power. This notion basically falls into the pluralist framework of groups playing predominant role in politics, whereby market model or the competitive model of polity operates at a higher level, encompassing all aspects of an individual.

Another conclusion of such studies is the flexibility of the traditional social structure to adapt itself to the new forces of modernization. Adaptive structures in the Indian context are supposed to take the form of caste associations, in the process of political modernization by smoothly forging operative relationship between the traditional society and the new political institutions.

The writing of Wiener, Rudolphs, Kothari, Hardgrave, Bailey and others brought about a host of structural functional perspectives and explanations into the field of Indian studies analysing how traditional institutions like caste and religion underwent politicization. Myron Weiner rejected the tradition-modern

dichotomy and regarded modernity as "the wave of the future". According to him given the conditions of economic development and growth of political consciousness, caste came to acquire economic interests and political ambitions of their own as castes and as voluntary associations. He says, "as economic growth has occurred in India and political awareness has increased the number of community associations has grown" Also "within political parties, aserptive identifications are playing a prominent role" and major institutions "have associations that articulate their interest....... increasingly, such groupings have had their political manifestations"[17].

They have studied how the extension of political system leads to greater participation by lower castes groups in the political process. These studies focused on the electoral behaviour, with the political side of modernization. Under the influence of bahavioural analysis, it concentrated on the stabilization of the existing political process, to the secular behaviour of caste groups and new functionality of caste phenomenon. The extension of adult franchise was taken as an opportunity as it has given castes greater political power and on the strength of their members, they are able to bargain for more social, economic and political benefits. Thus castes while weakened and transformed by the impact of modern democratic politics, at

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the same time it provides an institutional mechanism through which the modern political system penetrates into traditional society.

Rudolphs have shown how caste sabhas through its adaptation have been able to accrue to their members economic, social and political benefits thereby using the strength of numbers to increase their bargaining power. Caste associations use modern elements of society as interest groups, to broaden caste consciousness and participation, and thus facilitate the adjustment of traditional society to the demands of the modern political system. This has brought new groups into the political system remitting in a gradual transformation of the old order. Rudolphs have elaborated their thesis by using examples of the Nadars and Vanniyars of Tamilnadu.

> In other words, "Caste is loosing its functions norms and structure once associated with it and acquiring new roles. It is serving the ritual and occupational goals of traditional society less, the mobility and politicization goals of modern society more. In doing so, it helps to substitute in the lives of ordinary Indian, choice for birth, equality for hierarchy and opportunity for fate"[18].

They view the modernized form of caste in which the modern and traditional elements are combined in the form of caste association. It is a paracommunity which has the features of traditional natural association and the modern

voluntary association. Caste associations to them emerged when members of the different jatis, often, but not always, with the same caste name, were freed from the earlier constraints by modern economic and political activities. With new means of transportation and communication they could pursue mutual political and economic interest by regional co-operation and acquire new roles.

Thus Rudolphs argued that caste associations act as modernizers, that enable members of caste to pursue social mobility, political power and assemble in many ways, those of the voluntary associations, familiar to European and American politics. The political mobilization capacity of caste is identified through vertical, horizontal and differential mobilizations depending upon the stage of development and internal integration of particular castes.

According to Rajini Kothari, in the emerging world of securalism, caste is only one of the components entering into the political process. Caste remains an important variable. A certain degree of casteism is expected in a society of which caste is an integral past, "To seek caste-free politics in India is to look for a politics unrelated to its social control"[19]. The caste-politics interaction being dialectical, if castes affect politics, it is equally true that politics affect caste.

Kothari has expressed this as, "It is not politics that gets caste-ridden; it is caste that gets politicized. Dialectical as it may sound, it is precisely because the operation of competitive politics has drawn caste out of its a political context and given it a new status and identity that the "caste system" as hitherto known has begun to disintegrate"[20].

The modernization theorists show how caste and its groups assert their identity and strive for positions by making politics their sphere of activity. On the other hand, it also exemplifies politician's interest in mobilizing caste groups and identifies for political manipulation. The protagonists of modernization approach fail to observe the dichotomy or contradiction between caste and politics.

Harrison and Hardgrave also believe that caste association helps the means for mobilization of caste communities, and that in certain circumstances castes may act as political groups in arenas of varying inclusiveness.

Hardgrave (1969)[21] for example in his study of Nadars of Tamilnadu, generalizing for the whole of India, took the view that horizontal mobilization among castes has enhanced political mobilization and the Nadar Sabha has adapted itself to modern political changes.

Selig Harrison (1956, 1960)[22] gives a more clear case of conflict between two castes. Concentrating on the caste in Andhra politics Harrison gave the model of 'caste-party' identity, in which Khammas and Reddis unity brought down the Brahmnical supremacy, but soon separated into political rivals under different political parties. Khammas joined the Communists, and Reddis the Congress. Thus the social elevage in Andhra resulted into political elevages.

Kothari and Maru (1965) and Weiner's (1965)[23] studies of Kshatryia Sabha of Gujarat show that the caste Sabha is largely responsible for spreading the 'Kshatriya' label and the consciousness amongst several castes - elusters of the region, notably Rajputs, Baniyas and Bhils. Caste consciousness to them played an important part in the formation of the federation for transforming them though political power.

Differing form the above notion A.H. Somjie is of the view that what the political parties do is to build a patchwork of segmented political supports on multi-caste lines, rather than rely on a caste however numerous it may be[24]. In the study 'Democracy and Political changes', he observes the consequent political change in the rural community with the adoption of democratic institutions. According to him, new social groups emerged and dislodged

those who had earlier enjoyed power. This was possible through electoral machinery for selecting representatives of their social groups. Thus various theorists under modernization perspective attributed, functions of homogenisation, secularization and democratization to caste associations, caste federations and adaptive structures.

It is beyond doubt that with the process of democratization of the social structure in India politicization of caste has taken place. But the question that arises is how far politicization helped the castes to shed its traditional loyalties and acquire a new role.

The answer seems doubtful from the practical experiences of the historical analysis of the influence of caste in the political process of India. The complexity of the nature of relationship of society and polity in India, concomitant with the control of change have revealed how caste as a traditional element in the social structure have variedly been manipulated through the political mechanism, to suit the personal privileges of a particular class, which eventually comes to be justified through the process of electoral politics. This has made a situation whereby particular castes after having partially played any dominant role in the political sphere, soon falls back to its traditional loyalties. The Indian experience shows that

though caste politization has occurred, this has resulted in caste confrontation and conflict because of manipulation of traditional structure for political gains.

This should be seen in two ways.

(1) The traditional social structure in India has to grapple with the modern democratic political institutions.

(2) Secondly, the material foundations of rural India from a federal, semi-feudal, with gross regional and class variations, is changing to a development of rural capitalist economy linked with the overall capitalist development in India.

"In transitional phases of change, when stratification system might be passing from one system-state to another, imposition of system categories of stratification over the processes of change might not only be artificial but may also lead to serious distortions of reality"[25].

The point that needs to be stressed is that each caste group is experiencing some sort of an internal segmentation. The most important reason for this is economic under the impact of industrialization, urbanization, education and democratic politics, different segments of each caste groups are becoming conscious of their economic interest. In the country side capitalist and technocratic

penetration of Indian agriculture has alienated the poor and landless peasants from the rich capitalist farmers, though both of them may belong to the same caste. On the whole the weaker sections of India have not witnessed any significant transformation.

Various studies on the otherhand have showed that no direct co-relation law be established between individuals caste-status and political orientations, influence and activity and that caste-status is relevant in politics only in so far as it is mediated by socio-economic status. In effect, this means that in the political sphere, members of a caste-group are more likely to be unlike each other, as they are highly dispersed along the socio-economic scale.[26] A study of social stratification needs to focus on problems and units relevant to the specific societies in relation to the overall impact upon the social order and change and more particularly to the differences in 'access to resources'.

The spread of capitalism has not only strengthened the rich peasantry, mainly belonging to the middle social strata, but has also meant the further deprivation and economic dependence of the landless, many of whom belong to the scheduled castes. The upper castes continue to weild considerable influence in the economy and administration and therefore in the political sphere.

Caste association began to emerge as a separate social phenomenon from the colonial period accepted new behaviour along sanskritized ways for higher place within the hierarchy. These caste associations intensified their efforts in the post-colonial period. The liberal social and political analysists began to identify these caste associations as 'competiting groups', in the country side.

It has to be remembered that caste which largely, governed the total social ethos during the pre-capitalist historical period, has carried itself through the colonial phase to the present with adjustments and modifications. It has survived the modernizing impact of the British rule, the growth of industrialization, means of communication, western education, the emergence of nationalism and above all the advent of participatory democracy based on universal adult franchise. This is because, the state as an agent of modernization has all the time served the dominant social strata in society for social transformation, cultural oppression and economic exploitation.

The retarded capitalism in India, with persistent feudal elements in the rural areas has created constraints in the economy. An analysis of the development process in India makes it clear that,

> "weak capitalism requires traditional
> props like caste and community to
> establish and maintain its domination,

while it is not resilient enough to
dissolve and replace the old identities.
A significant aspect of this situation is
not just the incompatibility between the
old and the new but the fact that the
social and cultural force of pre-
capitalist forms is much greater in
political sphere than in the sphere of
production".[27]

Also, Green Revolution sharpened the

contradictions in Indian society, and this has led to

unprecedented upsurge of caste tensions, because of the

increased polarization. In the process of political

development, the possibility of structural changes became

restricted by the policy of a particular party in power.

"Some of the schemes started by the government, infact led

to a much sharper polarization and in places legitimized the

emerging system of stratification".[28]

The following questions are relevant in raising in

relation to caste and social inequalities in India. They

are (1) How have various agrarian reforms affected caste,

class and land relations ? (2) Who have been the gainers

and who the losers of land as a results of these reforms ?

(3) What is their caste and class positions today ? (4)

What is the impact of these reforms upon the emerging

pattern of power structure in district ?[29]

Thus it is the kisan castes comprising of the

patidars, marathas, jats, vokkalingas, linkayats, Kammas,

Reddis etc. and few of the traditional feudal classes (Brahmins, Rajputs, Vellals etc.) are dominant in the country side. These rich farmers, almost with a dual political character, with the structure of peasant unity and peasant movement are facing the Urban Industrial class and the rural semi-poletariat on the other. The rise of the peasantry has brought the middle social state of society, the land-based middle castes to leading positions both in the rural economy and the state level politics. The radical elements among the middle castes has vanished as they have come to occupy rich holdings and in turn, due to the dual character uses caste associations and peasant appeals to rally people behind them and relies on caste and kinship ties for influence in education, employment and other concessions. This indicates that,

> "the main lines of conflict are no longer between middle and low-caste peasant on one side and high caste landlords on the other, but are now between the rich farmers and the agricultural labourers - poor peasants. And they show that the caste structure of rural India has changed in this new emerging class struggle, caste is one of the strongest weapon which the rich are using to divide and attack the rural poor".[30]

R.K. Hazari, observed that participation in Green Revolution, has become one of the the instruments of acquiring and this led to tensions and conflicts in the rural areas against the oppressed castes. This phenomenon,

for instance is noticeable, "in the North-West between the jat and the Chamar, in the south between the Nadars, Mudaliars and the Palayas, in the east between the Bhumihar/Yadav and the Chamar. Within the hold of the Green Revolutionaries in Haryana, between the jat, the Ahir and the Bishuoi.[30]

Thus the capitalist path of Indian agriculture continues to be dominated by a socially narrowed group of 'landlord capitalism' with semi-feudal relations of caste identities.[32] But the large sections of the poor agricultural labourers, including dalits, adivasis, muslims etc. Comprising 60% of rural households still remains as poor and low in the social-economic hierarchy as before.

> "Modern institutions like the associations and federations did after all, use and thus strengthened, the caste idiom. Caste categories have changed the older nomenclature and have certainly become wider in their identities, but only in terms of including model caste groups into their fold, as it is become politically viable and useful. The net impact has been the further strengthening of caste identities, often resulting in greater tension in rural areas"[33]

Caste conflict in rural areas have resulted in atrocities against tribals and Harijans in rural areas of Bihar, Madya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and other agricultural regions. "Caste riots are frequent in those areas where the caste-wise economic deprivations are manifestly correlated

with class-wise economic deprivations; such as in Bihar, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu etc."[34] The case of caste conflict in Belchi, Bijapur, Pipra shows the growing rural tensions and the degree to which dalit labouers are challenging the new power holders of the village.[35] In states of Punjab, Haryana and western U.P. where concentration of Kulak farmers mainly of caste hindus of middle or kisan castes, increasing evidence of castes conflict between rich farmers and Dalits and adivars are occurring. Sinha observes that "in the villages of Bihar, the rise of a rich peasant classes has drawn agricultural labourers of all castes - chamars, Dusadhs, Kurumir, Yadavs, Bjumihars and so on to forsake their caste organizations and fight along trade union line.[36]

Also another important issue in this context of changing status of castes is in relation to the structures and mobilisation strategies of political parties. Scholars have highlighted, how leading political parties have relied on caste lines for augmenting support and hence played a decisive role in reinforcing social elevages. It has been noted in a study of Uttarpradesh that, "Both the congress and the Lok Dal turned caste and communal categories into voting blocs to create stable and identifiable bases of support. The emerging class formation and the attendant

social conflict were distored by the appeal to caste and community identities".[37]

The congress party used various electoral strategies to continue its dominance in the centre of power and authority. It thus diffused socio-political structure and provided for imitationist character of ideological strategy to popular image. In this process, various primordial loyalties like caste were used as tool and to preserve its hegemonic control. "Caste ladders have emerged as brokers in politics and they used caste to influence public polices and decisions". This has also led to "intra - caste and inter-caste competitiveness, so much so that at every election, a new caste arithmetic had to be evolved in every constituency by the congress leadership".[38]

Also inter-elite-tensions due to rural factionalism are taking more and more the political colouration of a combination of castes - upper, middle and lower, compared to inter - caste tensions. As a result castes and castes in conflict provide easy mobilization principle in politics of electoral competition as well as for the distortion of democratic, secular pattern of the country.

In recent years, broadening sense of social identity has made the dalits to resist the social and

economic oppression of the high caste society. They have succeeded in asserting the articultion of a Dalit counter culture, in ballot box challenges or mobilization around economic issues and labour unions. Significant number of Dalit have moved into socio-economic positions and this has created a sense of Dalit identity. The resistance and activities of Dalit panthers of Maharashtra, Karnataka Dalit Sangharsh Samiti (KDSS) and Delhi panthers, illustrate the nature of the common themes, and interregional ideological linkages that shape local activism in contemporary Dalit mobilizing.[39]

Caste system today functions as an effective method of economic exploitation. The dominant caste have acquired social prestige and political power and thus has perpetuated caste domination. Much of the theorising on the modernist tendencies of primordial loyalties can be regarded as reductionist,

> "in the sense that it cannot account for the continuous temporary transformations in the structured whole. It cannot also account for the sheer mobility, with which the same phenomena change their mode of expression. Instead, it engages itself with the importance or uniquences of India's primordial features without realising for a moment that factors such as caste cannot create a new future for man as they totally lack in social transformative capacity".[40]

## Conclusion

The modernization theorists with their emphasis on the political evolution of caste failed to grasp the restructuration going on in the society, and the inbuilt, hidden nature of the problem of caste as a phenomenon in politics. The Indian experience of political development have had opposite effect of consolidation of caste identities, resulting in tensions in rural areas. This has been given, a new turn with the emergence of middle peasantry, as the chief beneficiaries of Green Revolution. Also few needs to look at the changing status of caste in relation to the mobilization strategy of political parties. caste identities have been used by political parties to dissrupt oppositional mobilization.

A restructuration of the society on the principle of socio-economic equality has not been possible within the existing power structures. A large percentage of those who are below the poverty line belong to scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and backward classes.

A deeper analysis of the structure of traditional society in its relation to politics makes it clear that, the belated capitalism, with its different configurations has added to the existing economic and political dimensions of social inequality and has polarized social identities like

caste. In such a situation, the resultant phenomenon has given rise to increasing influence of traditional forces of social categories into the political process. The failure of modernization theorists is seen from the perspective of institution changes, in terms of the extent of social mobility within the caste system. This should be seen in relation to the hegemonic control of particular class in the society, the erosion of institutional bases, and in the context of the crisis of political system itself. This became more alarming in the period since 1975, as the Indian political situation has witnessed almost frequent political disorders, especially on caste lines.

Also various studies on peasantry, landless labour, Dalits have shown the inadequacies in the interpretation of tradition - modernity scheme of analysis of caste, with a pluralist system. Thus it is clear that, studies relating to the weakening of caste due to political and economic factors, have not been able to identify the social changes in terms of inequality, based in its relation to economic structure, or the increasing power structure in the village in the contest of new emerging agrarian relations, and the manipulation of electoral process, leading to caste conflicts.

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# CHAPTER - III

## ELECTORAL STUDIES AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The political development theorists have tried to examine the voting behaviour in India in relation to the functional inter-relationship between the voters choice, and the development of the political process. This has been given impetus and rapid stride through the methodology of Behavioural analysis. New developments in the political system are noted by attempts at the study of voting behaviour, opinion formation and shifts in attitude over a period of time.

These theorists view the various dimensions of a citizens political activity and his participation in the electoral process as the concept of politicization. They have taken the voting preference as a dependent phenomenon and have explained it in relation to variables like castes, kinship, faction, political issues, party loyalty and personality of the candidates. The functioning of formal institutions is reflected in changing values and attitudes which legitimize the institutions, by involving and mobilising people and make them efficient and functional to society.

Elections were considered as legitimisation process of the democratic system in relationship to

governmental stability, governmental capacity to perform to
the urges and needs of the citizens through political
linkages. They developed the relationship between voting
and modernization of the social forces and perceived voting
act to be relevant to elite actions, leadership behaviour
and policy process. /

Within this background, various scholars have
analysed the elections starting from the first general
elections in India. The basic idea behind these theories
was to study the Indian elections with the help of
methodology and tools that has been applied for the
election studies in the western democracies and predict the
future trends. This was done without attempting to seek the
meaning and value of the vote for various classes and strata
in our class-divided society. The peculiar political
situation in India and the hold of congress party over the
masses, made scholars to treat elections in India as
progress of democracy.

The importance of electoral politics for the
development of Indian political system is seen in the level
of political participation of the masses, their choice for a
particular party, and their capacity to change the
governments. This combined the efforts of modernization

theorists to analyse the traditional Indian society as moving towards a process of modernisation.

The following section attempts a review of electoral studies, which follow a 'tradition-modernity' approach and focus on the inherent contradictions of such an analysis to show how far they arrive at explanations relevant to the Indian political reality.

According to the pluralists vote is considered as a periodic affirmation or rejection of a particular section of the elite and major issues are dealt outside the mechanism of electoral politics through the process of politicization. It weakens the traditional structures and relationships, by involving them into the political - competitive process, there by giving rise to new values and attitudes. Equality of access to public resources is reduced to competition in the society, whereby various interest groups articulate their demands.[1]

This process has been analysed by a number of behavioural analysts using various empirical studies, to illustrate the viability of the political system. This approach is based on the psychological variables and hence led to the development of socio-psychological approach to the study of elections.

Elections were looked as "complex events involving individual and collective decisions, which directly affects and are affected by the total political and social process. They open up channels between the polity and society, between the elite and the masses and between the individual and government. They are major agencies of political socialization and political participation".[2]

Following the voting behaviour studies of the west, it is only after 1960's that Indian political scientist paid serious attention to voting behaviour and its relation to the larger political process; eventhough empirical researches were being carried out soon after the first general elections. It was limited to data collection, description psychic make up of voters and the various influences working on them.

"The rationale of psephological studies lies in their promise for theory building. The long term objective informing these studies is to work out a theory of election politics which as the middle range theory may ultimately contribute to the construction of meta or general theory of politics in a country".[3]

They examine the dimensions of elite-mass relationship in the context of developing polity, particularly the intermediate structures in this

relationship and the role of governmental structures and authority images in the crystallisation of party systems. This has been identified in various ways, dealing with different patterns of voting behaviour in differing political and socio-economic contexts, and the interrelationship between the levels of participation, as against building of strong and stable institutions. Crucial role is given to the dominant elites and their strategies of coalition-making and co-operation, of the socialisation of traditional elites and the electoral approval and reprisal in the process of political institutionalization.

Kothari in the 1960s visualized a single party system and described the Indian system as one party dominance, consisting of party of consensus and parties of pressure.[4] Within the overall framework of modernization of the Indian polity, the process of political development is seen in the bahaviour of Indian voters. Kothari treated the congress as a functional equivalent of a pluralist system of bargaining, compromising and conflict resolving. The congress party in the absence of a well-organized opposition claimed to have permitted open competition within and between the forces of left and right.

"The Indian system can be described as a system of one party dominance. It is a competitive party system but

one in which the competiting parts play rather dissimilar roles. It consists of a party of consensus and parties of pressure".[5]

A significant trend in the political development in India to them is the growth of built-in constraints in the political system which have led to a containment of conflicts through the process of accommodation.

The necessary outcome of such an analysis, is the pluralist vision of a stable democratic regime with adequate, not to much participation, adequate but not excessive awareness of issues and adequate but not excessive interest in politics.[6] Party identifications for most citizens become a substitute for meaningful participation in politics.

With the growing dependence on empirical oriented methodology and various methods of data compilation, trends such as generation of political consciousness, secularization in the behaviour of citizens were identified and in turn accessed penetration of the polity to the rural areas.[7]

> "Their prime focus was on institutionalization of the political process as an index of political development. They highlighted more the cultural elevage than the basic factors of unity underlying the panorama of

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cultural elevages and the historic and the newly emerging commenting factors. Thus their favourite analytic categories tended to be caste and religion, rather than class".[8]

Elections in India are seen an important area through which the party system and in a measure the political system achieve their evolution.

## Evolution of 'Modernization' prospective on elections

A more serious explanation for a systematic and scientific study of elections based in terms of a developmental paradigm started only in the mid 1960s. Such an analysis attempted to develop a systematic theory or a developmental perspective of the voting behaviour in India, associated with party system, traditional groups and its relation to the political system as a whole. It concentrated on the "key social psychological and political choices and the functional interrelationship obtaining between their behaviour and the achievement of the larger goals of democracy, social and economic development and cultural change".[9]

In an effort to give theoretical orientation towards election studies, in terms of a developmental paradigm 'a working paper for state election 1965'[10] prepared by the centre for developing societies, reviewed the literature on electoral process and specified the

dimensions of political behaviour in all modern societies and particularly in a society such as India. The 'working paper' represents first elaborate attempt at providing theoretical framework in terms of a paradigm of development for the Indian polity as a whole. The paper highlights the salient features of electoral politics in India, and its consequence of differential patterns of voting behaviour for the functioning of Indian society at its various levels.

Modernization theorists have frequently commented on the interaction between caste and elections. Lot of data that has been generated indicate how universal adult franchise has strengthened caste solidarities and caused castes to emerge as the major agency in involving electoral mechanism.[11]

According to them, patterns of political mobility caused by the penetration downwards of electoral and developmental politics and the articulation of local opinions and demands upwards has led to momentous changes in the hierarchy of influence and status in Indian society and is leading gradually to the disintegration of the time honoured institutions like caste and the closed system of loyalties.

This process has given impetus through the politicization of castes through outward and upward looking

orientations, resulting in the phenomenon of multiple membership and identities among the strata of the public and the leadership. The electoral process has given way to secularization of traditional groups leading to shift of influence and attention from both the traditionalist and the highly modernist to the modernising strata of the elite at various levels operating largely through the political structures. Caste associations are assumed to have become vehicles for internal cultural reform and external social change, and have enabled disadvantaged groups to use electoral machinery to participate in democratic politics. Thus, through using a variety of variables, most theorists, under the modernisation perspective have been concerned with assessing the influence of caste and religious affiliations on voting.

On the other hand a large number of studies show the role of other important political factors such as party loyalties of the electorate, ideological appeals of the political parties, and issue orientation of the voters etc.[12]

They wanted to show that eventhough, parties and candidates make emotional and irrational appeals to voters on the basis of primordial attachments of caste and religion one cannot assume that voters are merely passive instruments of others.

Rajni Kothari and Tarun Seth in their study of Baroda analysed the role of ethnic loyalties in voting behaviour, and stressed that Congress party which won the assembly seat was able to take advantage of leadership and factional conflict within ethnic groups.

Other studies concerned themselves on the change in the loyalty patterns, cohesion of ethnic groups, the nature, extent and limit of community voting in electoral behaviour, and the inroads made by other factors such as party organisation, loyalty and interest orientations. It disapproved the importance of casteism and communalism in politics.

The voters as members of groups, simultaneously has attachments to parties, kingroups, factions, caste and individual leaders and instead these having any influence on the voters, the modernization perspective on elections opined that voter had to make his choice among conflicting loyalties. This process of assimilation of more and more groups contribute the essence of political development.

Kothari, V.M. Sirsikar, Baldev Raj Nayar et.al. through their studies suggest that many factors cut into ethnic loyalties. In none of the elections under study they find that a candidate won merely because he had the support

of members of his own community. In some constituencies, the political cohesion of ethnic groups was high, but others factional and leadership conflicts within the community made it possible for candidates of many parties to win some support.

According to them the political process provides choice to individuals and groups, contributing to a process of individuation in the social system and in this process factors such as leadership skill, political issues and organisation, impinge upon the traditional social order.

"In the relationship between the ethnic and organizational factors, the important point is the inroads made by secular and political forces in the traditional structure of society. Political organisation and leadership constantly cut across existing loyalties and clevages, assume an autonomy of their own and in turn create new loyalties and elevages"[13] Moreover the changing aspirations of caste have been manifest in political life through the process of electoral mechanism. Middle and low status groups use the vehicle of political activity to change their social status.

The 1967 elections evoked great scholarly interest and constitutes a landmark. Prior to it the link between the candidate and the electorate generally conformed to the

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vote bank model where the act of voting is seen as a service rendered to a social superior, similar to the process of vertical mobilization.[14] The model broke down in 1967 when the voter leant the negotiable value of the vote and organized in various ways, for material rewards or political goals. This can be identified in terms of change in the image of the state from that of a distant, repressive authority to a means to ones welfare and the adoption of the electoral process for the purposes of local and regional power struggle.

## The 1967 and 1971 General Elections

The defeat of the congress party in 1967 general election in several states is interpreted as part of growing issue - orientation [Kothari, 1970; Seth, 1971, Madsen, 1970] and party identification [Eldersheld 1970] and crystallisation of internal competition within the congress party. This has been identified as a major realignment in citizens loyalties and the beginning of a new era in electoral politics. The 1967 election shows

> " ... two dimensions of the emerging
> electoral behaviour in India, one
> political and other economic. The
> first is the development of a firm party
> commitments in the electorate. This is
> what will give Indian politics its
> stability and predictability. The other
> is the dimension of comment and criticism

of the ruling party's performance discontent with the present and expectations of the future and judgements regarding a particular parties ability to produce results".[14]

Various studies made effort to show the implications of the trend thrown up by the elections for the political system, utilising both qualitative and quantitative analysis. This is identified as indicatives of the growing acceptance of the existing political institutions and processes on the part of the people at large. They examined the extent of change in the party system and explained that congress party, even amidst election drawbacks continued to enjoy the support of a group of consistent voters and account that growing party orientation of Indian voters would lead to emphasis on stability and performance orientation which in turn would provide dynamism to the system.

"There are convincing indications that votes decision is in large measure the consequence of a rational issue - oriented calculus"[16]. D.L. Seth identifies how partisan attitudes and political behaviour are more deterministic of the voting choice than socio-economic variables. He takes into account the implications of the observed attitudes of the voters for the growth of democratic politics in the country.

Bashiruddin Ahmed examines the political stratification of Indian electorate in terms of the variables of political development such as the growth and development of partisan orientation in the electorate and its relation to the development of party support.

The social base of the party has been expanded as a result of participation through political mobilization and socialization, and new groups have begun to be involved. Thus they argued that the voter has a relatively direct and independent role - not just being mobilized by party organizational elites and vote banks, but exercising his own judgement. "enormous shifting of political loyalties at state level ... brought out a major weakness of the congress organization its lack of sufficient institutionalization".[18]

Thus the electoral process involves according to the developmental perspective

1) the achievement of political integration, legitimising authority and building national consensus.

2) articulation of mass - elite relationship, by developing leadership roles.

3) re-distribution of the political power of social groups to altering the hierarchy of influence, leading to social change.

The 1971 elections became important for many reasons. Domestically, the parties which came to power after 1967, whether they were left or right proved equally

incompetent either in defending the interests of the ruling class or in generating hope for massive transformation of the economic or social structure.[19]

The period also witnessed the emergence of new power groups. "New agricultural elite at the state level started making inroads into the central authority which was being exercised by the urban industrial elite"[20] There was growing radicalization of popular mood, the constitutional misrepresentation of central authority to bring down the state governments of the opposition parties, with its populist slogan 'Garibi - Hatao' added to the crisis of the electoral system. By making it an ideological issue, a new alignment was created with the new political elite. Also "by nationalising the banks and creating a public image of hostility to big business, the government was able to give an impression of radicalism to the petty bourgeosie and the poor, while at the same time making clear that credit and licensing policies will further the growth of all but a few of the largest business houses"[21] Thus benefits of the radical sentiments went to the congress.

Consequently the results of 1971 mid-term parliamentary elections turned out to be as unexpected as in 1967, putting the ruling party back to its position of dominance on almost the same footing as in the first three

general elections.[22] Various theorists have identified this as a growing awareness and issue identification of the voter as intermediaries and vote banks have become dwindled. They looked this as a re-affirmation of stability in the congress government in the centre. It offered for the continuity and change in the political process of India.[23]

Pravin Seth has identified 1971 elections as a shift in trends towards the emergence of mass politics which is replacing the intermediating strata of rural leadership, caste leaders, sectional leaders, landlords, and the like. This he says because, of the development of a direct relationship between the top leaders and the masses, through the emphasis on issues and policy than on the appeal of the elite maintaining their place by the use of the traditional structure of influence and dominance.

He says "stability and change have become positively correlated variables in India's present phase of political development. The development of Indian electoral behaviour in 1971 and 1972 calls for the change in the style, substance, pace and idioms of Indian politics in a significant way and to convert it into new politics".[24] In Rudolph Lloyd's view there was a movement from "mobilization of support via local territoriable notables, or caste and village elders on the basis of traditional

loyalties and dependencies to ... the fragmenting of territorial and primary communities ... and influencing voter preferences by means of leadership, ideology and programmes".[25]

According to them elections have further moved the state on, in the process of political development, voting based. on national isses, national leadership and national party. It analysed the growing awareness of voters on problems and issues, and their ability to make appraisals of government performance. Thus 1971 election results were identified with organisational capability of the congress party, its level of institutionalization, in the terms of institutional loyalty of the voters. Thus stability and. change have become co-related variables in India's phase of development.

## 1977 Election and the Development Crisis

The period of 1970s witnessed the breakdown of the institutional order; the cabinet government, the federal framework, fundamental rights, judiciary etc. Such an institutional crisis only increased the social inequalities of class and caste in the rural areas, leading to serious repurcussions on the functioning of the democracy in India. When this discontent of the masses assumed shape of various

protest movement, especially in localized and peripheral areas, the ruling party resorted to tactical maneuvers and repression. Also there was compulsion of maintaining the balance with the alliance of ruling class coalition within the requirements of electoral politics.

Seen in this background the 1977 election provided an opportunity for self mobilization and initiative by the common people. It also marked the strength of Indian political system and set the trend against the hegemony of congress party. Defeat of congress party was a manifestation of the growing mass disillusionment, with its ferocious assaults on state power, against diffusion of egalitarian ethos and a growing secular political activity of the traditional masses given the right kind of issue.

Most of the studies have seen the 1977 election results from the point of view of referendum for the survival of democratic institutions under elite mobilization. Efforts have been made to see it as a popular enthusiasm for the overthrow of an authoritarian regime, and not at understanding the social crisis in the process of development.[26] In such an analysis, the rebellious behaviour of the peasantry, unorganized and disguised form of protest movements by the common people in the local areas etc. does not merit much attention. The 1977 election shows

the continuing trend in the electoral process, of the loosening political support of congress party, due to sharp polarization of its social base.

Also, the event leading to the crisis of political institutions made many developmental theorists to rethink their premises. Seeing the election of 1967 and 1977 in a comparative outlook, they now identified that congress party has undergone complete transformation, the performance and potentiality of the party in relating meaningfully to the interest structure of society and has now entered into consolidation, extension and contraction of the support base of the party.[27]

Kothari is of the view that the social background to the erosion of democratic institutions in India after 1967 consists in the pre-emption by the urban middle class elite of political and economic power and the gradual cutting out of the emergent rural leadership from access to the power at higher levels. This led to a reversal of the democratic process expanding beyond the middle peasant castes and instead narrowed the social base of the polity to a city-based elite.

By 1967 the inherent tension between the two tendencies came to the force. The following years saw the urban elite occupying critical positions in the structure

of state power and engaged in modernising the indigenous decentralized character of the Indian political process and instituting in its place a conception of power which led to centralisation of power. He says that holding of election in March 1977, should be seen as a part of this authoritarian order to return to a path that was more workable. Emphasizing on the role of non-party political movements at the grassroot level, to counter this conflicting interest from surfacing again and again. He says, "personality cult in India have endowed the politics of survival, with a highly personalized aura, accelerated the legitimacy of alternative centres of power and authority".[28]

In the years after emergency, there is a considerable decline in systematic study of electoral behaviour and its future trends for the political system within a modernization perspective. This is due to the realization among some of the theorists that, with erosion of political institutions, and deepening crisis of the political system, the mainstream framework is unable to grasp the reality of Indian social and political structure, and state power.

In the 1980s the instability due to wholesome fueds among politicians for position and power made an

anarchichal situation in turn leading to congress victory. This re-affirms the need for strong opposition viable enough to check the hegemonic control of congress party. Some modernization theorists have identified the return of congress party as a pattern of both electoral and elite behaviour, also of organisational and leadership capabilities of the congress party.[29]

Rudolphs on the otherhand emphasise on the centrist future of Indian politics, and says that multi-cornered contests involving several parties open the way to vote fragmentation, that can advantage parties with more focused appeals to class, community or special interests. They are of the opinion that the social and institutional determinants of centrism is likely to prove more powerful than class politics at the centre.[30]

Also return of the congress in 1980 elections is identified as the continuity of the voting behaviour, its return to a dominant party system through powerful leadership style and ideological orientations.[31] The key to institutional structure is identified with the role of party and leadership capacities in sustaining the democratic system.

A perusal of the electoral studies in India and the key impression in them point out limitations on its

assumption of the extent of political development in India. The pluralist model ignores the logical contradiction between party identification which leads to ritualisation or issue orientation in Indian democratic system and in turn considered it as a progression from tradition to modernity. The growing contradictions and legitimising role of the ruling class, and a critical questioning of the system is absent in the pluralist analysis of electoral studies. It is necessary to recognise the impact of the prolonged and deepening crisis of the path of capitalist development in India, in attempting an interpretation of the phenomenon.

An analysis of the social and economic structures that link Indian politics have to be taken into account. It is limited by the fact that most of these studies have viably ignored the political history, the colonial experience, the socio-cultural mileu and socio-economic aspects of its citizens. Thus it fails to analyse the highly rational attitude of the 'ignorant' population at times, dependent of the socio-economic environment of the society as a whole.

The election verdict of 1967 and 1977 is a clear indication of the ability of the electorate to make rational choice. The crisis of 1969 marked the decline of political

institutions in India, leading to the proclamation of emergency, which was a collapse of the political system itself. The institutions most adopted to expression of public opinion became weakened. The emergency epitomized the fragility and the resilience of the Indian political system, with its contradictory task of preserving the hegemony of particular class or the political and institutional structure. "Confronted by a crisis of hegemony and the political system, it (congress leadership) declared emergency not to establish something new but basically to maintain the previous statusquo. In terms of class, the statusquo meant the perpetuation of the hegemony of the middle classes in the framework of their alliance with the big bourgeoisie within the bloc in power".[32]

The election verdict of 1977 has to be looked upon as an act based on the process arising out of the socio-economic structure and not a choice for particular leader or group as interpreted by the modernisation theoritsts.

The voter turnout in India is large and always comparable to western democracies. But in the absence of a clear bi-party set up congress party enjoys continuous victory. "The efficacy of the Indian electoral process to bring in a change had come to be very much doubted and elections were viewed as a mere confirmation of continuity.

The political system allowed a party that was minority among the people to emerge with a dominant position in parliament".[33]

Elections become a chance for political parties to display their best through various populist means, where large participation in elections have come to be successfully carried out. In this mechanism of alignment and counter alignment, the ruling party has an edge because of its stronghold of power and state machinery at its disposal. "Elections in India has tended to be essentially a manipulative process by the elite".[34] Also elections have become personality oriented, instead of being issue-oriented. In most cases, the constituency oriented development has created distortion in the process of development, leading to individual loyalties.

This is not to ignore the academic potential of electoral studies, offering awareness of the significant aspects of the political system such as the role of opinion leaders, vote banks, pattern of politization, party identification, political participation etc. Some of the conclusions emerging from these analyses do not reflect concrete realities of the situation, as they have not sufficiently explained the patterns of relationship between

political elite, groups and individuals in terms of voter mobilization.

> "It is difficult to sustain the conclusions of the mainstream political analysis that increasing electoral mobilization and consequent induction and participation of the people in the political process leads to a growing assertion of the people's power and their enhanced bargaining capacity vis-à-vis the entrenched groups and classes".[35]

It ignores the increasingly powerful class relations operating in the society and among the power apparatus, its ability to manipulate, adopt and control the electoral mechanism for individual and class interests.

## Conclusion

The Indian experience in election clearly shows the citizens alertness to make rational choice and the capacity in asserting their interests at times. The present electoral system helps in the maintenance of the hegemonic power structure, with its primacy of the social forces in politics. The growing developmental crisis due to the erosion of social structure of the political system is reflected through various social and political movements in the country. At times, the grievances arising out of the contradictions of the system and its failure have showed serious repercussions in the form of various antagonistic

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and discontent movement against the system as a whole, bypassing the electoral mechanism.

A study of the elections in India should begin from the backdrop of the inherent contradictions within a weak capitalist system, in its transitory phase, the nature of the state, class and groups that exists within its socio-economic structure. It should emphasise election results as a part of the trend arising out of the various social and economic disparities of the society as a whole. Elections should be seen in the background of social and regional inequalities, the socio-economic conditions of the agricultural labour, peasantry and urban proletariat. An important problem confronting the Indian politics is the conflict of interest between the urban rich and the working class, the newly emerged capitalist farmers and the landless labourers on the other.

Such a study should look at these internal components in the functioning of democracy in India; components that would reveal the interrelations between the larger social process, and struggles of the people in terms of party support and base for various radical and regional parties at the local level. Political change and electoral process in their complicated interconnections has led to conflicting interests among dominant classes at the local level.

A proper analysis of the Indian elections can be done only in the context of the hegemonic control of particular classes in the economic order, and the differences relating to it such as bonded labour, zamindari system, communalism, casteism etc., the nature of the state in such a system and its attitudes towards change.

**NOTES**

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3.  Iqbal Narain, et.al., "Election Studies in India", <u>Teaching Politics</u>, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1978, P. 47.

4.  See, (i) Rajni Kothari, "The Congress System in India", <u>Asian Survey</u>, Vol. IV, No. 12, Dec. 1964.

    (ii) _____ "Party Politics and Political Development", Economic and political Weekly, Annual Number, Feb. 1967.

    (iii) _____ , "Congress and Consensus", <u>Seminar</u> 94, June 1967.

5.  Rajni Kothari, 1964, Op. cit, P.2.

6.  See, Jayant Lele, "For a Critical Political Sociology in India : An Examination of its Heritage", in Iqbal Narain (ed), <u>Development Politics and Social Theory</u>, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1989, P. 293 - 94.

7.  See, S.J. Eldersveld and Bashiruddin Ahmed, <u>Citizens and Politics : Mass Political behaviour in India</u>, Chicago, Chicago Press, 1978.

8.  Iqbal Narain, Election Studies in India : An Evaluation <u>Report of I.C.S.S.R. Project</u>, Bombay, Allied Publishers, 1978, P. 45.

9.  Ramashray Roy, "Electoral Politics : A Trend Report", <u>A survey of Research in Political Science</u>, Vol. II, <u>Political Process</u>, New Delhli, Allied Publishers, 1981, P. 173.

10. The working paper was prepared by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies for a pilot study of Kerala Elections in 1965 and later developed, 'Voting Behaviour in a Developing Society' - A Working Paper, in 'Party Systems and Election Studies', - Rajni Kothari et.al., Bombay, Allied Publishers, 1967.

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# CHAPTER - IV

## ELITE STUDIES AND SOCIAL CHANGE

With the growing interest of developmental analysis of politics, the study of elites assumed significance through the sociological theories of Mosca, Pareto, Michels etc. They were skeptical of the reality of classical theory, and maintained that democracy in its classical sense, as the government of the people is an impossibility in practice. According to them in every society the political power is shared by a minority (elite) rather than the majority. The elitist theory opposes popular participation in the political system and is in accordance with the realities of the western liberal democratic political systems as it arose due to the need for maintaining stability and equilibrium in these countries. To them democracy implies rule of the political elite who has been elected by the people and without elites there can be no democracy.

The idea of elites was originally conceived in opposition to the Marxian notion of class. The elites theory in rejection to Marxism maintains that in every society, the basis of elite is its higher technical and administrative copertise rather than the ownership of the means of production. The theory does not see any conflict

between the elite and the non-elite, the leaders and the masses, as always harmony is maintained. Marxism assigns due role to masses, whereas elitist theory regards the masses as passive and fragmented, incapable of bringing about change without the elite or leaders.

The two main assumptions behind elite theory are (1) There is basic inequality among people on the basis of difference in abilities. (2) In every society the political power is shared by an elite rather than the people.

In a society which is characterized by tradition and modernity, it is assumed that there is close relationship between changes in the social structure and the type of elites who exercise power. The elites are assumed to play crucial role in the modernization of a traditional society and this process is created and sustained by society as a whole for its own benefit. Society while differentiating the elites from other groups enhances and upholds their power and authority to enable them to perform developmental functions.

## Theories of Elite

According to Pareto, the outstanding idea in the term 'elite' is 'superiority'. He defines elites as "people

in a society who possess, in marked degree, qualities of intelligence, character, skill and capacity of whatever kind".[1]

Parry describes them as "small minorities who appears to play an exceptionally influential part in political and social affairs".[2]

C. Wright mills gave the concept of power elite. He says - "we may define the power elite in terms of the means of power - as those who occupy the Command Posts".[3] To him elite is the product of institutional landscape of the society, and hold the leading position in the strategic hierarchies.

Bottomore maintains that the minority which rules over the majority consists of those who occupy posts of political command. He applies the term ´elite' to functional, mainly occupational groups, which have high status in society.[4]

According to Lasswell, the political elite as distinct from other types of elite, comprises the "power holders of body politic".[5] Like Pareto and Mosca, Manheim attributes actual policy-making and implementing roles to the elite.

From the above observation, it is clear that the term elite it used to identify mainly functional and occupational groups of status. All these theorists pertain to the view that the process of modernisation is affected mainly by the governing elites or decision makers of a society and it depends to a great extent on their outlook, which inturn is shaped and influenced by their socio-economic background.

Robert Dahl on the otherhand is against this type of leadership formations. Robert Dahl developed the pluralist model of the elite.[6] Unlike the classical elite theorists pluralists concern themselves on the power structure of the community and maintains that power in society is shared by many groups and not enjoyed by a single elite. The main contention is the decentralization of power.

On the basis of power he divides the individuals in four groups - apolitical strata, the political strata, , the power seekers and the powerful[7]. Among these groups, the last two groups may be termed as political elite. Thus he sees the political systems as a persistent pattern of human relationship that involves, to a significant extent, power, elite rule and authority.

The following section attempts a critical review of some of the studies dealing with the question of political elites and leadership formation in the context of social change and development in India.

Political elites in India is identified as a necessary condition for the facilitation of the modernization process. These studies tried to examine the extent to which changes in the economic, political and social conditions in the Indian society result in corresponding change in the attitudes and values of rural leadership.

Most important among such interpretation is that with the introduction of modern institutions of political decision - making, traditional loyalties like caste, language, religion brought about change in the style of leadership and decision-making, as well as change in the socio-economic composition. As a result, these emerged a transition from the hereditary to the elective and from the ascriptive to the functional type of leadership. The traditional village leaders are either undertaking new functions and adjusting themselves to the emerging patterns of power, or are being replaced by new leaders. In this process of break through to modernity, role of local and national leaders was envisaged consistent with the evolution

of new institutions and structures that would embody new set of values.

The study of elites is an enquiry into the structural determinants of power process in society. Power, rural stratification, caste, economic aspects of rural social structures and similar themes became the main focus of these studies. Socio-economic development of the rural community depends on the role of elites. The functioning of local political system depends on the harmonious relationship between the various segments of the system, and the position of bargaining has assumed to play a significant role in local polities under the control of emerging leaders. In this process, all around development of the communities in underdeveloped countries can be brought about only with the competence of the dominant power groups and the strategies adopted by the political elites in the application of their power. It was on this assumption, in the midst of changes in the tradition of village India that studies of rural elites, leadership and power structure emerged in India.

Most of these studies have identified the role of local and national elite in the process of social change and modernisation of India. With the democratization of the electoral process and the establishment of new political

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institutions, the development of national and local leadership received new impetus and helped in the emergence of new social groups. As a result new elites began to appear. The new elite is the local leaders of the party, the local councilors and their officers, whom the government can place responsibility to bring about changes of outlook and attitudes among people.

With the shifts of power to new groups, changes in the influence of political parties, and a new constructive leadership, it was hoped that there is a tendency of shift to new roles, new performance levels and new expectations. It was assumed that, gradually, political process comes to be dominated by new leaders who act as catalyst in the process of modernization.

Almond Writes,

"A ... common feature (of the process of socialization and recruitment) has been the emergence of rural or 'provincial' political elite whose influence has become increasingly determinative in the political process ... These new rural politicians tend to be vernacular speaking and less educated; they are also more securely rooted in the traditional social structure than are the urban - based politicians who constituted the vanguard in political action in the pre-independence period"[8]

Political development is defined as the improvement of the institutional arrangement through which

political elite can perform various tasks. The capacity of
a political system includes not only the resources available
and the skills of the elite, but also the institutional
arrangements available for identifying and processing
demands, mobilizing support, making and implementing
decisions. The modernizing elite performs the role of
linking village and urban centres within the national level
to the tasks demanded of a transitional order. The
modernizing elite or the new elite also mobilize sufficient
power to initiate new social goals or respond to systemic
crises. Kothari has described a group of 'new leaders'
dedicated to the re-structuring of Indian policy.

> "The new organization-men ... are to be
> found, away from the urban centres of
> state power, in small towns and district
> capitals, closer to the traditional order
> and exhibiting a new style in Indian
> politics. They are pragmatic man less
> oriented to modernist idiom but
> modernisers in their own way, men who
> understand the subleties and nuances of
> local society, powerful persons who have
> taken time in coming up, and who are
> therefore confident of their own
> strength".[9]

According to Henry Maddick, large number of people
have acquired leadership status at local levels, and the
composition of local self government institutions are
changing from the hands of landlords, merchants and
traditional family leaders. He identifies a 'new breed of
politicians'. "The old party men, both the stalwarts and

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the hacks are giving way to younger - more energetic
candidates. These are a new breed of politicians-with
different approach to politics and power, to problems and
their revolution..."[10]

## Village Leadership and Power Structure

The generalized committment of village studies,
sensitised the need for further study of men of power in
village, and social scientist began to treat village as a
link between the wider network of locality, region and
nation. This realization has paved the way for the creation
of theoretical context of the leadership and power
structure at the village level.

Village studies in India began with Oscar Lewis[11]
and H.S. Ohillions[12] studies on the leadership,
highlightening the role of kinship and caste in decision-
making in rural India. Another pioneering study was
'leadership and political institutions in India', edited by
Park and Tinker in 1960. It covers the various aspects of
leadership in the context of changes brought about by
panchayat Raj and community development programme. B.N.
Singh[13] in his study of Etawah district (U.P.) has
identified the emergence of new leadership. Evelyn Wood[14]
is of the opinion that aristocratic leadership has been

supplied by Brahmins and Rajputs. Henry Orenstern [15] in his study observed that in the newly established panchayats, leaders tend to embody the functional roles more in their capacity than make efforts to institutionalize it.

According to Srinivas [16] the concept of Dominant caste is crucial for the study of leadership. Within the modernization perspective, Srinivas argues that the concept of Dominant caste is functional for the maintenance of village community. The concept incorporates changes in Indian society as this helps the lower caste to improve their position, both social and economic.

There are studies on the village panchayat highlighting the local level, functioning as the agent of socialization and evolution of new leadership through the process of electoral politics. [17] Also study of panchayat elections in Gujarat revealed that important changes had taken place, in the social relations between traditional caste groups as well as in the village leadership and political attitudes of the villagers. [18]

Beteille, in his study on Tanjore noted that, "some of the old bases of power, such as birth and ritual status are being partly supported by new ones, such as numerical support, party membership and contact with officials". [19]

Studies on state politics also focused on the tradition-modernity approach in the study of leadership in the rural areas. The important works in this category are by Weiner[20] and F.G. Bailey[21]. These studies dealt with adaptive process used by the leaders in the interaction between traditional social structure and modern democratic forms.

Stanley A. Kochanek made study of the leadership in Congress party from the point of view of socio-economic composition. He writes, "Analysis of Indian decision makers drawn from various levels of the elite seems to indicate that, as one moves up from village to district to state to national levels, and from the secondary legislative elites to the top of the elite pyramid as represented by the central and state minister, one finds Indian decision-makers drawn increasingly from the top of the social pyramid in terms of occupation, caste, education and social status".[22]

The basic assumption has been that the interest of elite coincides the interest of the society in general. The aim of these studies is to examine the role of leaders in bringing about change at the village, consistent with the developmental programmes. The changes in the system brought about by panchayat raj and community development programmes

is considered as encouraged the local leadership in the process of change.

The main questions confronted such an enquiry are

(1) Whether the emerging leaders are traditional or modern or combination of both.

(2) What is the impact, the process of modernization has on the emerging pattern of rural leadership.

(3) What is the attitude and values of leadership towards important issues concerning village politics, development and change.

In the following section some of these studies are examined in detail.

Sirsikar[23] in his study designates a sample of panchayat samiti and zilla parishad members from the 3 district of Maharashtra during 1967-68. He analyses the socio-economic and political component of the leaders, their values and orientations, their perception of community problems, their evaluation of panchayat raj institutions and leadership roles. The study of leadership from the perspective of panchayat raj is related to the structure of power in the local units.

The study has resulted in showing the socio-economic background of the leaders in 3 districts. "the local political system is under the control of a leadership which comes form the richer peasantry which has tradition, social status, wealth and other factors on its side. The

gap between the 'led' and the leaders is to say the least, quite shocking from the ankles of wealth, landholdings and property"[24].

The basic assumption is that a mixture of traditional and modern elements is to be expected in a transitional society like India. With the increasing levels of educational attainment and democratic process, it is hoped that new leadership emerges and the forces of modernisation and social change would finally be dominant on the traditional bonds on caste, kinship and neighbourhood.

It is expected that with the process of modernization, there would be significant changes in the leadership structure which play crucial role in the transformation of the masses. The rising expectations of the masses would create "necessary pressures on the leaders to achieve more for the rural community. The cumulative effect of democratization through adult franchise, panchayat raj, political parties, might result in a better circulation of the rural elites, leading to better life for the masses".[25]

Ram Ahuja[26] in his study deals with the functioning of elites in Bihar, and their efforts to bring, economic, social and political change in the process of

modernization. He takes into account for the study, the elected and appointed members of state legislatures and individuals of political prestige and power at the state level. The members of the political elites have been evaluated in terms of traditional-modern countries. Political breakdowns are identified with change of new breed of elites.

"In recruitment, we find an upward movement of elite from lower strata at micro level to higher state of governing elites at macro level".[27]

It is assumed that patterns of development depends on the large or small number of modern elites in action. The attitudes, perceptions and ideological values attained and developed by the elites in the existing political and economic conditions helps in the process of modernization. Social mobilization of masses for making them ready to accept change in social and ideological structures is the primary function of political elites. He writes "modernization of a state does not depend on the dispersal of power or 'power structure pluralism' only; it also depends on the outlook of the political elites who exercise power to change society in a predetermined direction"[28]

The lack of change or break in it is identified as the non-permeability of elite in lower and middle ranks to

reach to the top because of the traditionally oriented elite. He concludes that "modernization of any society have been determined by and will continue to be determined by the character and abilities of its political elites"[29]

In his study of elite position in rural India Carter[30] concludes that, thirty officers (position holders) in various formal bodies such as the panchayat, credit society and irrigation society of GIRVI - a village in Maharashtra are members of twenty four joint families and belong prepondernantly to the Maratha caste.

He finds a functional equivalent of mills concept of 'power elite', to illustrate the hold of few families have over the formal bodies of villages. Carter writes,

"It is apparent, then , that power in western rural Maharashtra is concentrated in the hands of relatively few persons and that a large majority of those who hold power are members of one small section of the population. To borrow terms from the study of political stratification is occidental countries there is (in GIRVI village) what C. Wright Mills calls 'power elite' consisting of a relatively small number of persons who are in a position to influence public decisions"[31]

Most of the studies on elite are based on the apriori assumption that power resides in positions or holders of positions. They have not taken to examine the fact that in village areas positions does not necessarily signify power. The real power holders are persons who are outside formal position of village bodies.

In a similar stance, Narain, et.al.[32] in the study of Rajastan, probes into the profile of the emerging rural elite, in view of the rural power structure. The main focus of the study is based on identifying, (1) to what extent emerging elite differs from traditional elite ie, the difference between ascribed status and achieved status.

(2) Concentrates on the political consciousness, the patterns of political affiliations, role perceptions and behaviour and the development orientation of the new emerging elite, and thus,

(3) Examines its role as an agent of democratization, developments, and change within the perspective of tradition and modernity.

They have showed that the linkages that the rural elite develops with the district/state level elite are functional to preserve the elite structure at the village level. The role of elites as a modernizing agent should be

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seen "under the tremendous pressure building up within a rural society in the throes of modernization, the development-orientation is going to become a value, a criterion to judge whether one is of the elite group or not".[33]

The traditional leadership incapable of withstanding pressures of democratic politics, is giving way to new leadership but the "hope lies in the disposal of various sources of power so that the ruling elite does not become oppressive and partisan in its quest for self-perpetuation", or a "shift from cumulative inequalities to dispersed inequalities"[34]

Rajendra Singh[35] in a study of rural elite in Basti District of Uttar Pradesh examines the relationship between the rural elite and agrarian power structure and identifies two types of elites - the established elite who are traditional and the emerging elite, who act as agents of modernization. The modern or the merging elite initiates changes in the society and are for displacement of feudal, colonial bases of power. Thus identity according to him is changing the traditional power ethos of rural India, in relation to land, power and people.

A review of the above studies illustrate the functional aspect of leadership which provides a conceptual

framework, as agents of modernization for the explanation of dynamics of leadership and rural elite in India. Within the functional perspective the role of the leaders is identified with the functions, attitude and behaviour and are evaluated by the group for the maintenance of the system. The above theorists attribute primary role to political elites or leaders in the modernization process and see the role of masses in the process of development and change as negligible. It falls into the assumption that the character and ideology of the modernising elite as agents of change, determine the kind of development process, society undertakes.

The basic fallacy in such an analysis is that changes is not seen as part of the ongoing and structural conditions arising out of the problems and needs of the society. This has to seen in relation to the class-alliances in the village, within the weak capitalist model of development and hegemony of both the urban rich and rural peasant classes. It should take into account the structural contradictions inherent in "... a stunted and retarded capitalist expansion on social forms and the ways of their expression in the sphere of politics".[36]

A large section in the Indian society remain excluded and discouraged from realising their political

interest and economic potential and are reduced profoundly defenceless against traditional forces of conservatism and division. Studies in the developmental process have revealed that, "... gains of development have remained largely confined to the upper middle and richer sections constituting the top 40 percent of the population"[37] It needs to take into account the social classes at the village level in terms of basic socio-economic characteristics, and in terms of social stratification of the population in general. In India, "over the years the process of intense bargaining and hard fought apportionment of benefits among the different partners of dominant coalition, have come out more in the open and politics has acquired a more unseemingly image in public"[38] This in Indian situation directly relates to the larger problem of societies structural transformation in the process of its modernisation. The discordance between the old and new values therefore entails conflicts and tension at the village level, in its transition from feudalism to capitalism in India.

Because of this antipodal power structure, little improvement has occurred in the conditions of traditional poor, in favour of their upward mobility to elite ranks and the dominant classes continues to desire shelter from the

tradition and provides support to the existing power structure in the Indian situation.

A structural analysis of leadership roles and power structure in Indian society should answer,

(1) What is the character of power and how has it exercised in India and its resultant consequences ?

(2) It should seek to define the nature of power in Indian village structure.

(3) It also needs to analyse the nature of Indian state, its role in the formulation and implementation of policies for socio-economic justice.

Balance has to be maintained between the demands and aspirations of the people and their representatives. With the penetration of institutional and political structures, at the village level through various local bodies, still large sections of the population are unmobilized. The role of new and emerging leaders in the process of modernization shows a slow change.

The existing power structures in the rural areas use the institutions of democracy to ligitimise their domination. This becomes clear, as the local governments and other forms of democratic institutions are controlled by rich peasants. "The landlords and the emerging capitalist farmers have increased their economic power because of capitalist development and the inter-class

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conflict in the bloc of exploiting classes is that the rural rich wants more control over state power for controlling the resources of the state. The rural rich wants to change its position in the bloc of classes to control the state power by displacing the leading capitalist classes which want to give second position to the rural rich gentry in the bloc of classes"[39] In this situation, the chances of lower in hierarchy acquiring power is blocked by the existing power structures. In the process, the landless labourers becomes the victims of feudal and capitalist oppression.

## Conclusion -

Social change in the village level cannot be grasped in its totality from the point of view of behavioural characteristics like motivation and attitudes of elites towards change. On the other hand, class structure in the village level, on the basis of caste, patronage and factional systems widens the gap between dominant and the labouring classes, preventing their mobility to higher positions. The contradictions emerging at various levels in the Indian political system point out the unduce reliance on institutional mechanism,, and the role of elites as agents of change. The democratic institutions in rural areas are controlled by the rural elite and has created crisis in the system. The undue reliance by the rural elite

on the traditional social structure has thwarted any firm
political measures for bringing about fundamental changes in
this structure. This has created a situation whereby the
structure of politics is lagging behind economic
development.

This fragmented and uneven development has created
conditions of backwardness, leading to abject poverty of
living standards in rural areas. It has widened the gap
between the elite and the mass, the rich and the poor. The
dominant classes on their part, overt a structural
transformation which endangers the continuance of their
authority and advantage. The continuing domination of a
particular class at the economic and political process in
India, has made structural constraints in the process of
modernization and thereby threaten the political stability
of the society.

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# CONCLUSION

Our review of the theories of Political development and Modernization has revealed that this framework, in its attempt to arrive at value-neutral conclusions, failed to grapple with the reality in Indian Politics. This is evident from the fact that in transitional societies, the traditional social structure in interaction with the modern political institutions, instead of adapting to new roles, creates tension in the path of development. Also the traditional order based on feudal, semi-feudal formation is transforming itself to a process of capitalist economy, within the overall process of capitalist development. The contradictory tendency in the process of development in India is reflected in the pattern of economic development, the agrarian reforms, the Green Revolution, and also the concentration of economic power at certain sections of the society.

The Political Development theorists emphasis on a polity based on consensus, through participatory and institutional stability of democracy has shown only one sided picture. The process of modernization has highly destablised Political institutions and Social System, and has been utilized by political elite to acquire power and retain hegemonic control. Uneven process of development, with its beginning in the colonial period continues to

persist even today and has created new class
differenciations in the society. The persistence of fuedal
relations in rural areas has created pre-capitalist forms
sharper in the political sphere in India. Overall, the
weaker sections did not achieve significant upward
mobility.

Also another aspect that merits attention is
imperialism, which the political development and
modernization theorists often conveniently ignore. The
developmental theorists fail to analyse imperialism in its
various forms, and the growing disparity between the
developed and developing countries. It is to be noted that,
the Industrial Revolution was responsible for the
underdevelopment in the third world, and development and
underdevelopment are two sides of the same coin and not
discrete evolutionary stages. They have not sufficiently
taken into account the centre-periphery relation in the
transfer of surplus and the mechanisms through which
imperialism in its various forms operate. Earlier as
mercantalism, free trade, finance caplital and recently
through transnational agencies imperialism operates as a
logical expression of the needs of advanced capitalism.

Undue reliance on ahistorical categories has been
common in the discussions of Indian politics. The
modernization theorists conceptualization that the political

institutions helps the social structure to a synthesis of two cultures is only a partial reality from the political experience of India. The Introduction of democratic and other institutional mechanisms have not so far been able to democratise the base of power in the rural areas. There is growing structural differentiation and transformations in the social institutions in its relation to politics in rural areas. This is because the existing power structures in the rural areas use the institutions of democracy to legitimise their domination.

This is to be seen in relation to the policies undertaken by the government for the guarantee of rural vote, and the peculiar development of capitalism in India. The green revolution has been responsible for the rise of rural peasantry, the land based middle castes to higher positions, and has led to the control over the rural democratic institutions, an exclusive privilege of the rural elite. The upper castes because of their already entrenched positions continues to wield considerable influence. This has created new conflicting situation in the rural areas between the rich farmers and the landless labourers.

The political development theorists assumption that the state and political institutions aided by other agencies assume the role of an arbiter has become faulty, and is revealed by an objective understanding of India's

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path of capitalist development. Various contradictory structures have come to be manifested in the political system, elite structure, electoral politics etc. in India. This becomes evident from the reality of the Indian situation, where the weak capitalist order tries to serve the traditional social structures, created major structural imbalance in the path ofn development. The major factor in the crisis of the process of development in India can be attributed to the policy of various political parties deflecting intra-class and inter-class contradiction into the streams of existing social theories to serve partisan interests.

By accepting the interpretation of tradition and modernity and by not examining them in the light of reality, the political development theorists in India, undermined the existing class divisions, the economic basis of political power and the role of the dominant strata in manipulating the system to maintain the hegemonic power relations.

In the rural areas, the upper castes and the affluent growing castes have been able to assert substantial control over new demoncratic institutions of power. Thus caste which represented inequality now gets sanctioned by the modern political structures, in turn corrupts the political process in India, and contributes to the breakdown of the political order.

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This is evident from the increasing instances of caste - conflicts occuring in rural India. Caste has become one fo the strongest weapon for the rich to divide the poor and work as an important variable in politics. This has led to further strengthening of caste identities leading to tension in rural areas. Various forms of caste conflict in rural areas are evident against the tribals and Harijans. Studies on Dalits, landless labour and peasantry have revealed the graveness of this situation. It also shows the extent of the Dalits capacity to challenge the power holders of the village. Also the mobilisation strategies of political parties played an important role in reinforcing social cleavages. They have often used primordial loyalties such as caste, kinship etc., to achieve partisan ends. The congress being the dominant party in elections often used this as a tool to preserve its hegemonic control and provided an easy mobilization principle in electoral politics.

The assertion of a Dalit counter-culture based on electoral process or mobilization around economic issues and labour unions reveals the emptiness of the claims of the mainstream developmental analysis. The resistance and activities of the Dalits are clear pointers to the growing awareness of ideological linkages. Thus politics, instead of being weakened has further perpetuated caste domination,

with in the existing power structures. Hence it is fallacious to see caste as an agent of social transformation, as it lacks in social transformative capacity. A large section of society who are below the poverty line belong to lower castes. Thus the modernisation theorists have failed to conceptualize social conflict within a weak capitalism. The modernization perspective has failed to identity changes in terms of the economic structure and the manipulation of electoral process in India. Thus the traditional Indian society greatly conditions the political process, thereby the capacity of politics to resolve conflicts gets undermined.

Seen in this context, the modernization perspective, in the absence of a proper analysis, with its emphasis on institutional mechanisms and leadership capabilities has become a copy of inequality. Relying heavily on functionalist explanations, the theorists of Political Development in India were too optimistic in their outlook, without taking into account the reality of events.

This is also clear from the reliance of modernization framework on the functioning of electoral mechanism to show the participatory and institutional stability of democracy. They analysed the relationship between voters choice, and the development of the political system. The voting behaviour studies were not able to

substantially bring forth the internal components of the functioning of Indian democracy. The growing developmental crisis of the political system which manifested through the process of electoral politics has created various antagonistic movements against the system often bypassing the electoral mechanism. The political development theorists analysis of elections as a process of integration of various forces, as a channel for the development of leadership roles, and for re-distribution of the political power of social groups have not been proved adequately sufficient.

Also their theorisation of voting behaviour on various elections as an opportunity for growing awareness, and issue identification of the voters as intermediaries and vote banks has not been sufficient explanations. The main focus of this explanation has been on the organisational capacity of the Congress party, its leadership capacity in terms of institutional loyalty of the voters. They have looked at the electoral mechanism only from the point of view of voters choice among conflicting loyalties, contributing to the essence of political development and the inroads made by factors such as party organisation loyalty and interest orientation. Various shifts in the electoral mechanism over the years have been identified in terms of growing awareness of voters on problems and issues, and their ability to make assessment of

government performance. The main motive behind such explanations has been the stability of the party system, this in turn offering continuity and change in the political system.

On the whole, the assumption built into the mainstream analysis within the perspective of political development seeks to view it in terms of institutional mechanisms and their sustaining capacity.

The electoral mechanism on the otherhand has been manipulated by the elite for maintaining the existing relations of socio-economic order. This is because the democratisation of franchise in India has not led to a meaningful acquisition of power by the people. Thus the electoral politics in India should be seen in relation to the existing economic relations and social cleavages in the society. The meaning of vote has to be analysed in relation to the classes, structure of society and its contradictory relations. Elections should be seen from the point of view of political parties manipulative tendency through populist measures to sustain the seat of power. This has led to distortions in the process of development.

The breakdown of the institutional order has shown the limitations of mainstream framework. Some theorists began to look for alternative framework of

analysis. But they have not been able to adequately understand the graveness of the situation and are only mere 'prescriptions' within a broad pluralist framework. This is becasue they have not looked into the functioning of capitalism in India, from the point of inherent contradictions in the social structure in its historical context.

We also find a substantial decline in the intrepretation on Indian politics after 1977, in terms of political institutionalization and socialization of traditional order as the developmental theorists have failed to grasp the reality of Indian political and social structure. A critical questioning of the system is absent in the developmental framework. Thus it is necessary to recognise the deepening crisis of the capitalist path of development. This has to be seen in relation to the existing social and economic structures that link Indian politics. The emergency was clear example of the collapse of the political system, due to erosion of social and institutional order.

The interaction between politics and society cannot be explained without understanding the way in which the ruling elite at various levels has acted in India. The study of elite assumed a great significance as a part of

developmental analaysis of Indian politics. Various writers
have identified the role of new leaders, who act as
catalysts in the process of modernization. The main focus
of the elite studies in India has been on the attitudes and
values of leadership towards issues concerning village
politics, development and change. Their perception of
community problems, value - orientation and leadership roles
were given primary significance. Thus the modernization
theorists emphasized that with process of modernization,
there would be larger changes in the leadership structure
that play crucial role in the transformation, of the masses.

The modernization perspective in envisaging that
the attitudes and values of the elite behaviour in
formulating a new course of action for the Indian society
have ignored the role of masses in developmental programmes
and of bringing about change. The electoral politics has
helped in legitimising the power of the traditional elite
and the urban rich in India. This has created a situation
whereby undue reliance by the rural elite on the traditional
social structure has thwarted any firm political measures
for bringing about fundamental changes in this structure.
They have not taken into account an analysis of village
power structure in terms of socio-economic characteristics.

Little improvement has occured in the condition of traditonal poor. On the otherhand, class structure at the village level becomes the preventive structures for the mobility of the lower strata.

This brings the importance of understanding the nature of Indian state and its role in bringing about change. In India, the states difficulties should be seen as a structural crisis, common to all transitional societies. The various policies like the Green Revolution, uneven implementation of land reforms etc. reveals the class alliances of the party in power, and the hegemonic power structres both in the urban and rural areas that thwart the formation or implementation of programmes based on socio-economic justice.

In India, in the interaction between politics and social structure, politics has lost its separate identity and has become a reflection of the social order. The traditional social structure has come in confrontation with the modern political institutions. This has eroded the power of political institutions and the participatory mechanisms.

The conclusions emerging from the analysis of developmental theorists do not reflect concrete reality of the political situation in India. The serious lacuna in the

analysis of developmental theorists tends to be the
isolation of political phenomena from the economic
context. They ignore the powerful class relations
operating in the society and its ability to manipulate and
control the existing political institutions for individual
and class interests.

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