**POLITICAL MODERNISATION**

Political modernisation stands for the transformation of the political culture in response to the changes in social and physical environment. Huntington describes modernisation as, “a multi-faceted process involving change in all areas of human thought and activity”. Modernisation is a process which affects men of all levels. It brings changes which are psychological, social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual and demographic.

**Definitions**

Karl Deutsch defines it as;” It is the process by which there emerges mass political participation by the people and increased political decentralisation”.

Clauden E. Welch Jr. Defines, “the process based upon the rational utilisation of resources and aimed at the establishment of a modern society”.

Political modernisation has been influenced by different factors, namely, social, cultural, psychological, economic and political. These factors are also inter-related. Communication is a vital factor in bringing about modernisation. It was the pressure of communication which brought about the downfall of traditional societies. The following are the instruments for modernising men’s values and attitudes – education, communication, ideology, charismatic leadership and coercive governmental authority.

**Characteristics of Political Modernisation**

1. **Application of technology and mechanisation –** the people give up their old ways of living, old methods of agriculture and travelling. As a result of modernisation, the people now live in well-built houses, cultivate their fields with the help of tractors and use other modern methods of agriculture. In other words, the people use modern methods of technology and mechanisation.
2. **Industrialisation –** the people give up their traditional, rural and agricultural economy. New factors and mills start coming up with the latest techniques.
3. **Urbanisation –** the people living in villages migrate in large numbers to the new centres in the cities in the hope that they would go back to their villages after earning enough of money. As it is not convenient for the villagers to come daily to the cities on account of distances, the people living in villages continue to migrate from villages to cities and settle their permanently.
4. **Increase national income and per capita income –** Agriculture alone cannot increase national income and per capita income. The same has to be supplemented by industrial growth and income from it.
5. **Growth of literacy –** Another feature of modernisation is that all possible efforts are made by the government and the people to wipe out illiteracy from the country. A venues of higher education are also made available to every person in all fields.
6. **Political mobilisation –** Modernisation also brings political mobilisation. The people who are educated and have enough of per capita income can afford to take part in the affairs of the country. Every voter reads newspapers and votes for the party which can deliver the goods.
7. **Mass-media –** Modernisation helps the development of mass-media techniques such as newspapers, broadcasting, movies, roads, railways and air services. Through these facilities, citizens become enlightened and well-informed and take an active part in the politics of the country.
8. **Social mobility –** When modernisation takes place, the people start migrating from the villages to the cities in search of better amenities and avenues for future progress. This brings social mobility.
9. **National identity –** Modernisation helps the cultivation of national identity. The people begin to give up their narrow loyalties and parochial considerations of caste, colour, sex or creed. Their interests are identified with those of the nation.

**Agents of Modernisation**

1. **Colonialism –** an important agent of modernisation was colonialism. The colonialists built roads, railways telegraph and telephone services, banking system, processing plants etc. When a country becomes independent, these very means are utilised to bring about further modernisation.
2. **Elite –** The elite have also played an important part in the modernisation of the country. The colonists set up schools and colleges to give education in their language and literature so that the people of the colonies may give up their cultural heritage and ignore their history and literature. However, when the native come back home, they find the existing conditions most unsatisfactory and they start agitation for reform.
3. **Military Leaders –** In certain backward countries, military leaders take advantage of the situation and capture power. Having done so, they take keen interest in modernisation. This was done when Kamal Ataturk captured power in Turkey and modernised it.
4. **Political Parties –** Political parties are also agents of modernisation. They develop a spirit of patriotism and secular outlook among the people.
5. **Bureaucracy –** Bureaucracy plays an important role in modernising the country as it is through this that all development programmes are implemented.

**Impact of Modernisation**

The impact of modernisation can be experienced in stages. In the initial stage of modernisation farmers move beyond subsistence farming to produce surplus food, which they sell in the market for money instead of bartering them for goods and services. Simple tools and traditional crafts are replaced by industrialised technology and applied scientific knowledge. Cities rise as industrial and commercial centres and attract migrants from the rural areas. It has given people in developing countries improved health, increased longevity, leisure and affluence. The people become more flexible about trying new ways of doing things and adopt a more positive and action-oriented attitude towards their own lives.

On the other hand, modernisation has generated many stresses as people have to cope with industrialisation, urbanisation, secularisation and rapid changes. The development of new kinds of social and economic activities creates conflict with the traditional way of life. To cope successfully with modernisation, a political system must be able, first, to innovate policy i.e., to promote social and economic reforms by state action. A second requirement for a political system is the ability to successfully assimilate the social forces produced by modernisation and achieving a new social consciousness to meet the changed circumstances.

**Criticisms of Political Modernisation**

The concept of political modernisation have been criticised on certain grounds. As the tolls of the concepts are not suitable to study the socialist countries like China, Russia etc., the concept is one-sided, distorted and politically motivated. Political modernisation is nothing but Westernisation. The tools of the concept are criticised for being ambiguous. They are including neo-colonialism to safeguard their interests of imperial exploitation.

**Conclusion**

The concept of political modernisation has certain weaknesses. In spite of all the weaknesses they contribute much for the study of political system. The concept are said to be more relevant. Almond and Powell praise the concept for the dynamism generated by them. Thus, the concept holds an important place in Modern political analysis.