Impact of Modernization on Indian Society

Dr. Ravinder Lather, ravinderlather06@gmail.,com

H. No. 4942, Sector – 11, Jind

Introduction: The impact of the West on India, following Alatas, can be discussed in five phases. The first phase is that of hostile contact with the conquest of Alexander, etc., followed by contact of peaceful interchange as the result of trade and commerce of successive centuries. The second phase began by the end of the fifteenth century when Vasco de Gama ar-rived with his ships at Calicut in 1498 A.D. Within a few years, the Portuguese occupied Goa.

But the effect of these westerners was relatively restricted. The third phase began when East India Company established its rule in the beginning of the eighteenth century and later on the British rule was established in the country by the middle of the eighteenth cen-tury. This was the first step in the expansion of western culture in India. The fourth phase commenced with the beginning of the nineteenth cen-tury following the industrial revolution. With the economic exploitation of India by the British as source of raw materials, began the spread and dominance of western culture in social and cultural fields too. The fifth and the last phase began after the political independence of the country in 1947.

Key words: Modernization, Society, Education

The impact may be briefly described as follows:

(1) Western institutions like banking system, public administration, military organisation, modern medicine, law, etc., were introduced in our country.

(2) Western education broadened the outlook of the people who started talking of their rights and freedom. The introduction of the new val-ues, the rational and secular spirit, and the ideologies of individualism, equality and justice assumed great importance.

(3) Acceptance of scientific innovations heightened the aspirations for raising the standard of living and providing material welfare for the people.

(4) Many reform movements came into being. Several traditional beliefs and practices dysfunctional to society were discarded and many new customs, institutions and social practices were adopted.

(5) Our technology, agriculture, entrepreneurship and industry were modernised leading to the economic well-being of our country.

(6) The hierarchy of political values has been restructured. Accepting the democratic form of government, all native states, which had been un-der a monarchic form of government, have been merged into the Indian State and the authority and domination of feudals and zamindars has been demolished. There have been structural changes in social institutions like marriage, family and caste, creating new forms of relations in social life, religion, etc.

(7) The introduction of the modern means of communication, such as railway and bus travel, postal service, air and sea travel, press, and ra-dio and television have affected man's life in varied respects.

(8) There is rise in the feeling of nationalism. .

(9) The emergence of the middle class has changed the dominant values of society.

The impact of western culture has also been described by Alatas in terms of four types of changes in our culture and social system: eliminative changes, additive changes', supportive changes and synthetic changes. The eliminative changes are those which cause the disappearance of cul-ture traits, behaviour patterns, values, beliefs, institutions, etc.

As an illustration, we can cite the example of total change in weapons used in fighting wars, abolition of sati, and so forth. The additive changes refer to the adoption of new culture traits, institutions, behaviour patterns and belief systems covering diverse aspects of life. These additions were not present earlier in the culture of people. Introducing divorce in the Hindu society, giving share to daughters in father's property, introducing elec-tion system in panchayats, etc., are a few examples of this type of change.

The supportive changes are those which strengthen the values, beliefs or behaviour patterns present in society before contact with the West. A simple example of this change is the use of Hindi system in loan transac-tions. The synthetic changes result in the creation of new form from existing elements plus adopted ones. The most simple instance is the crea-tion of residentially nuclear but functionally joint family which continues to fulfill social obligations to parents and siblings. Continuing dowry sys-tem but putting restrictions on amount to be given or taken, and associating children along with parents in mate selection are two other ex-amples of synthetic change.

This categorisation of changes due to western impact is only for ana-lytical purposes. In practice, it is not possible to isolate them from each other. Within one type of change, we may find elements of other types of changes too. For example, the introduction of the textile industry con-tains supportive element in the sense that it facilitates the production of cloth.

But at the same time, since it pushed back the traditional handloom and weaving industry, it may be said to have the element of eliminative change. Opening of the wall-less prisons in the prison system is another example of change having elements of three different types. So are the changes in the education system, banking system, family system, marriage system, and so forth.

The main question now is: Where has India reached after contact with the West? Has India progressed? Has it contributed to the welfare of the people? Is it possible to answer this question objectively? Can subjec-tivism and philosophical partiality be avoided in such analysis? Some intellectuals feel that India faced a number of problems at the end of the Second World War, like the problems of economic backwardness and a large number of people living below the poverty line, unemployment, predominance of religion in all walks of life, rural indebtedness, caste con-flicts, communal disharmony, shortage of capital, lack of trained personnel with technical skills, imperfect means for mobilising human and material resources, and so forth. The western impact has provided al-ternative solutions to handle these problems. But other scholars hold that western impact has not helped India much in facing the problems.

If some problems have been solved, many new problems have been created. And India is not trying to meet them through western models. It is using its in-digenous elements in its approach. It was only after the independence of the country that there was a rise in industrial development, dissemination of

education, rural development, control over population, and so on. It was, thus, independence from western rule rather than contact with the West that made modernisation possible.

The fact is that in certain areas of life, we may be justified in acclaiming the positive impact of the West. Modern medical science, modern technology, modern methods of combating natural catostrophies, mod-em methods of providing security from external dangers to the country, etc., will go down in Indian history as incontestable contributions of the West. But India is using at the same time its traditional institutions, beliefs and practices for the uplift of the masses. Thus, even after the impact of the West, and after the modernisation of various systems, India will re-main India. Indian culture will subsist and survive in decades to come.

The Hindu philosophy of today is different from the early Hindu philosophy. The new Hinduism, also called 'syndicated Hinduism', is dif-ferent from the indigenous one both in scale and scope. It is not the creation of a new sect but it is new religious form seeking to encapsulate all the earlier sects. The creation of this syndicated Hinduism is more for political purposes than the religious ones; hence it is called political Hin-duism too.

The Muslims and the Christians regarded Hindus as 'the other' as the Hindus regarded them as Malecchas. Inevitably, a new Hin-duism was unavoidable in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. The neo-Hindu movements in the twentieth century, particularly after inde-pendence, were given a political edge which remains recognisable even today. According to Thapar, this development was responsible for the emergence of the present-day syndicated Hinduism, which is be-ing pushed forward as the sole claimant to the inheritance of indigenous Indian religion.

The religious expressions of this syndicated Hinduism are directed more to the rural rich and the urban middle-class to bring into politics a uniform monolithic Hinduism to serve its new requirements. Under the guise of a new reformed Hinduism, an effort is being made to draw a large clientele and to speak with the voice of numbers. The appeal of this syndi-cated Hinduism has always a political purpose.

References:
1. http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/society/indian-society/impact-of-modernization-on-indian-society/39152
2. https://www.britannica.com/topic/modernization
3. http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/articles/modernisation-introduction-meaning-concept-and-other-details/47757
4. https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-causes-effects-modernization-please-give-465527