

Introduction

Walt Whitman Rostow was an American economist who created a model in 1960 to explain how countries develop over time. His model is called the "Stages of Economic Growth", and it shows that every country goes through five stages to move from a poor, traditional society to a rich, developed one. In this assignment, we will look at each stage with real-life examples to make it easier to understand.

Stage 1: Traditional Society

◆ Key Features:

People depend on farming

Little technology or machines

Slow or no economic growth

Example: Rural Ethiopia (past and present)

Many villages in Ethiopia rely only on farming and basic tools. There is limited industry and little access to modern education or healthcare. This is similar to what Rostow described as a traditional society.

Stage 2: Preconditions for Take-off

◆ Key Features:

Small improvements begin (roads, schools, trade)

New ideas about development start

Government begins to plan for future growth

Example: India in the early 1900s

During British rule, India built railways, schools, and banks. These developments helped prepare the country for later industrial growth.

Stage 3: Take-off

◆ Key Features:

Rapid growth in some industries

More people move to cities

Investments increase (factories, machines)

Example: South Korea (1960s–1980s)

South Korea started building factories and exporting goods like cars and electronics. The economy grew very fast, and the country became more industrialized.

Stage 4: Drive to Maturity

◆ Key Features:

Growth spreads to all parts of the economy

Use of new technology becomes normal

Better education and services

📌 Example: China (1990s–2010s)

China moved beyond just cheap manufacturing to advanced industries like electronics, trains, and even space programs. More people got access to education, healthcare, and better jobs.

Stage 5: Age of High Mass Consumption Key Features:

People have high incomes

More focus on services than factories

Most people can afford houses, cars, and education

Example: United States (1950s–Now)

After World War II, Americans began living in suburbs, buying cars, TVs, and enjoying a high standard of living. The U.S. economy focused more on services like healthcare, education, and technology.

Rostow's Economic Stage	Type of Society	Development of Society
1. Traditional Society	Rural, tribal, simple economy	Simple society: farming, traditions, small communities, little change
2. Preconditions for Take-off	Early modernization	Beginning of complexity: new ideas, basic education, leadership, small industries
3. Take-off	Industrial society emerging	Rapid social change: urbanization, industrial work, changing values
4. Drive to Maturity	Advanced industrial society	Complex society: modern jobs, tech use, organized government, infrastructure
5. Age of High Mass Consumption	Consumer-driven, service economy	Highly complex society: high education, healthcare, human rights, diverse cult

Conclusion

Rostow's model helps us understand how countries can grow over time. Not every country follows the exact same path, and some may move faster or slower. But the model gives a simple way to see how a poor country can become developed step by step. Real examples like South Korea, India, and the U.S. help us see how this theory works in real life

