CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Every society is bound by certain customs, followed blindly by everyone. Indian society is no exception to it. It has been the cradle of traditional beliefs and practices. Social structure and tradition in India remained impervious to major elements of modernity until the contact with the west began through the colonial regimes, which dominated India for about two centuries.

Tradition constitutes a bundle of beliefs, customs and attributes which are handed down to us by our ancestors. According to Singh (1973), Hindu society consists of certain traditions which are in fact, value themes. Before the emergence of modernization, the Hindu society was based on the following value components: a) Hierarchy b) Holism c) Karma and d) Transcendence. These value components are found ingrained in Hindu scriptures such as the Gita, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, the Vedas, Puranas and Upanishads. The structure of tradition grows in two stages, first through orthogentic or indigenous evolution and second through heterogentic encounters or contacts with other cultures or civilizations. The social structure of these civilizations operates at two levels, first that of folks or unlettered peasants and second, that of the elite or the reflective few. The cultured processes in the former comprise the little tradition and those in the latter constitute the great tradition. There is however a constant interaction between the two levels of traditions. The nature of tradition is characterised by the presentness of the past, the past as an object of attachment, the present as a reinforcement of responsiveness to the past and the strength of traditional beliefs. The primary socialization process in the families insists on strict adherence to traditional values. But exposure to western culture, education and various other media has brought tremendous changes through the process of modernization.

Indian society has its own particularities and therefore its own identity. Singh, K.S. (1992) in The People of India reports that there are 4,635 communities inhabiting our country. These communities are actually ethnic communities which include numerous castes, minority groups, scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. There are thus, multi-ethnic groups in this country. When modernity was introduced in this country, the traditional structures challenged the
inroads made by modernity. Our traditions are numerous. In a way, each caste or ethnic group has its own bogey of traditions. These traditions decide the fate of modernity.

Before seventies, tradition in India has largely been defined with reference to structural-functional analysis. It stressed the strengthening part of tradition. With the publication of Dumont’s *Homo Hierarchicus* (1970), there appeared structuralist approach to the study of traditions. The pivotal notions of structuralism, such as ideology, dialectics, transformational relationships and comparison through which a unity of principles among a variety of societal or civilizational forms is established, have been brought to bear upon the analysis of caste stratification in India. In his study of caste stratification in *Homo Hierarchicus*, Dumont has established that India is a religious society and the concept of pure and impure is solely guided by traditions. The hierarchical caste stratification, in fact, is a tradition-bound social order. It is based on the principle of inequality.

Dumont (1970) has considered ethnomethodology as a heuristic device to understand Indian society. Ethnomethodology, as its originator Harold Garfinkel defines it, is an effort directed to the tasks of learning how members’ actual ordinary activities consist of methods to make practical actions, practical circumstances, common sense knowledge of social structure and practical sociological reasoning analyzable. Whatever meaning one might give to ethnomethodology, it means the role of traditions in the life-world of an individual. In this sense, the common sense knowledge is nothing but the knowledge about traditions. And the traditions constitute fundamentalism. Status quo is the core of ethnomethodology. The post-Dumont sociology in India, therefore gave prime importance to traditions in the study of Indian society.

Doshi (2003) in his book *Modernity, Post Modernity and Neo-Sociological Theories* has discussed that during the 1970s and 1980s, the study of Indian social structure was made with the strong emphasis on traditions. These studies took three main theoretical and methodological directions: 1) Structuralism 2) Ethnosociology or cultural analysis approach, and 3) Structural-historical. During this time, Indian society was located at the grass roots level in terms of family,
caste and village traditions. Within structuralism, symbols and representations as parts of Indian traditions were identified and analyzed. Sanskritization, parochialization and dominant caste were the concepts which explained the local traditions. The perspective of ethnosophiology or cultural analysis included the material drawn from textual traditions such as the Vedas, the Puranas, the Upanishads and other epics. It also included the oral traditions laid down in the folk songs, dances and tales.

The third perspective on tradition refers to structural-historical approach. It centered around the analysis of social structure in the process of change and transformation in a historical setting often under the ideological framework of modernization. It treats tradition only, on a cultural-historical legacy of values, beliefs and customs, which are adaptive and regressive. This notion of tradition is drawn from the empirical contexts rather than the texts which serve as source material both for structuralism and ethnosophiology. The major shift in the meaning and definition of tradition is that it is analyzed at the grass roots level, particularly at the level of village and caste. Second, besides its source in oriental texts, it is also examined from empirical reality. Social changes in the structure of tradition is generally analyzed in the broader framework of transformation and continuity. Yogendra Singh says, in the process of social change, no concern is shown for the processes which have linkages with nation-building. It has also been overlooked that the social change processes have heavily strengthened the traditions. It appears that in most of the cases the traditions have been empowered and the forces of modernization are weakened at the hands of fundamentalism. Increasing modernization, couched with liberalization and globalization has brought traditionalism face to face with modernity (Doshi, 2003, pp. 118-120).

The term modernization refers to the transformation of the traditional into a more modern one. It implies a gradual but fundamental change in the life style of the people and in their outlook of the world. Hence modernization is the new facet of tradition. One cannot understand modernization in isolation because an individual is made up of a past and a present. Modernization is both a theory and a process. As a theory it has given place to the condemnation of a large number of traditions; as a process it has landed itself to post modernity, which is in fact
hypermodernity or late modernity. There are four facts of modernization: technological, institutional, valuational and behavioural. (Marion J. Levy, 1969)

The society will be considered more or less modernized to the extent that its members use inanimate sources of power and tools to multiply the effects of their efforts, which is obvious from the technological facet of modernization. Institutional facet of modernization is as important as is technological. It refers to the emergence or preponderance of modern institutions like bureaucracy, professions, market economy, factory system, formal system of higher education etc. A distinctive feature of modern institutions is their formal organizational character which is what distinguished them from their traditional counterparts. Rational reorientation of the given value system is the third integral facet of modernization. In the sense, modernization implies a transition from traditional to modernity. Used in its ideal, typical sense, tradition signifies a constellation of such values as sacredness, ascription, particularism, fusion of roles and subordination of the individual to the group. On the other hand, modernity comprises of such values as secularity, achievement, universalism, role specificity and individuality. Transition from the former to the latter value system, thus constitutes the process of modernization. Of all the values that comprise modernity, rationality is regarded as of generic significance. Accordingly, Myrdal contents: In one sense all of the modernization ideals are contained in and derived from the ideal of rationality and planning (Myrdal, 1970). Modernisation thus implies a process of rational examination of the value system of a society with a view to purging it of its irrational elements and incorporating into it more and more rational elements. In other words, it signifies a process of socio-cultural transformation along rational lines.

Finally, there is the psychic-cum–behavioural facet of modernization which refers to a great deal of psychic, physical and social mobility that characterizes the process of modernization. Because of its cardinal principle of man’s ability to acquire mastery over nature and shape his own destiny, the ideology of modernization stirs peoples’ aspirations and makes them achievement–oriented. This in turn leads to physical as well as social mobility in pursuit of better careers. It also tends to generate protest mobilizations against
structures of oppression, exploitation and injustice. Thus modernization declares the passing of tradition.

Smelser (1959) describes the process of modernization as multidimensional in nature. At the economic level, modernization is built upon scientific knowledge, involves the change from subsistence farming to commercial farming, replaces animal and human power with machines, entails the spread of urbanization and involves the concentration of the industrial work force in towns and cities, whereas at the non-economic levels modernization involves the passing from tribal systems to democratic systems, the development of education systems to provide training, a diminished role for religion, a shift from the extended family to the nuclear family and greater social mobility, with class position based upon achievement. In his *Social Paralysis and Social Change: British Working Class Education in the Nineteenth Century*, Smelser (1991) argues that every society can be regarded as in transition along a number of basic cultural and institutional lines. For Smelser, any account of social change will involve looking at a developmental sequence in which different combinations of factors are identified and no one explanatory factor or set of factors can be singled out as the most important factor in determining the process.

Many theorists believed that a new era, a modern era, was at hand that would produce the emancipation of humanity from poverty, ignorance, prejudice and the absence of enjoyment (Lyotard, 1984). Modernity would bring the victorious struggle of reason against emotions or animal instincts, science against religion and magic, truth against prejudice, correct knowledge against superstition, reflection against uncritical existence (Bauman, 1992). As a new–evolutionist, Parsons (1964) saw modernization as a world–wide goal, with subgoals of industrialization, economic development and political independence. All these will lead to a unified world system with shared modern values.

Modernization theory of the 1950s – 1970s was basically a sub branch of twentieth century evolutionary theory. It included the major value judgement - the concept of progress. Sahlins and Service (1960) defined progress as improvement in all-around adaptability. Speaking of cultures, they asserted that the higher forms are again relatively free from environmental control, i.e., they
adopt to greater environmental variety than lower forms. And other evolutionists added, higher forms adapt their environment to meet their needs. Nisbet (1969, p. 52) remarked that the theory of social evolution had been a justification for the ascendancy of the west, and that, aside from empirical research the theory had changed little since the 1800s. Much recent thinking on modernization has given a more positive role to tradition and suggested a complex relationship between tradition and modernity.

In India, as elsewhere in the world, modernization is understood as growth of a uniform set of cultural and role–structure attributes. Myrdal (1968, p. 57) says that each has two sets of values which are differentiated as (i) Categorical or independent values, and (ii) instrumental values. The categorical values enjoy autonomy over instrumental values. Thus in the area of modernization, there are standardized values and role structures.

There was a consensus among social thinkers that modernity ultimately led to progress and development (Doshi, 2003). Admittedly, modernity started with an economic thrust, and finally took to a political shift, which divided the world into modern and modernizing and developed and developing. India witnessed modernity during the British rule. Though modernity has been introduced soon after the downfall of Mughal Empire, India got democracy despite having industrialization and urbanization after the attainment of independence and the promulgation of constitution. It is certain that the European countries experienced modernity in the aftermath of enlightenment, and India experienced modernity after foreign invasion.

Doshi (2003) pointed out that India’s modernity is specific to Indian social structure. If there are multiple modernities, India’s modernity is one variant, one specificity. If modernity is multi-dimensional, Indian modernity is determined by Indian traditions. This refers to modernization traditions. It is because of the specificity of Indian social structure, sociologists like Singh (1973) and Gupta (2000) are in a way obsessed by the role of tradition in social structure. Neither of them could talk about modernity without reference to traditions.

According to Yogendra Singh Indian society has entered into a new phase of development. There has occurred a phenomenal change in the institutions of
kinship, marriage, caste, power and economy. The total social stratification has taken a new shape. Indian traditions have increasingly become modern. Even, the tribal India, which was based on kinship and barter economy, has entered into the mainstream structure. Similarly, the weaker sections – scheduled castes and women have now become extremely sensitive and up in arms on any trivial provocation.

Is India a modern society or is it a society caught between tradition and modernity? (Batabyal, 2002). In the context of the question raised by Batabyal it is important to remember that the assertion of modernity is not the end of the traditional culture. Infact tradition has often used modernity to project itself in a new fashion. Modernity implies the constant pursuit of improvement in human lives and of the pursuit of progress. Unlike traditional settings, where virtue lies in things remaining the same, in modern worlds change, development and improvement are the goals. Max Weber defined modernity as rationalization. George Simmel, a contemporary of Weber had a similar opinion. Both theorists pointed out that the benefits of rationalization and industrialization embodied in science and technology were offset by the environmental and military excesses that scientific and technological progress allows. Further more, modern life produces a great deal of alienation and anomie among individuals.

Simmel’s analysis of modern society was focused primarily on the individual experience of modernity, especially the experiences of the modern city dweller. In his analysis, the excitement of metropolitan existence was tied inextricabaly to the anomic and alienation that the perceived in modern life. Simmel’s ambivalence about modernity did not lead him to conservative nostalgia for some past social existence or to radical suggestions for change. Rationalization and objectivity offered greater freedom to individuals while at the same time constraining and regimenting life. Money was a prime symbol of these contradictions. Money provides individuals with greatly expanded opportunities for social interaction at the same time that it depersonalizes the relationships that emerged from those interactions. The abstract measure of value that money represents stands in contrast to the human value of the individual. Individuals are alienated from one another not because they isolated from others, but because
others are anonymous. This anonymity engenders an indifference to their individuality a relationship to them without regard to who it is in any particular instance.

By modernity, Giddens (2001) refers to the institutions and models of behaviour established first of all in post-feudal Europe, but which in the twentieth century increasingly have become world-historical in their impact. Modernity can be understood as roughly equivalent to the industrialized world, so long as it be recognized that industrialism is not its only institutional dimension. The sub parts of Giddens’ theory of modernity include distanciation, power, trust, and risk. Distanciation refers to the fact that relationships are no longer tied to specific locals. An important aspect of Giddens’ theory is power – the capacity to make decisions and do things. Power both constrains and enables. Power as constraints is not force, it is restriction of choice. In other words, even without the power that goes which domination, individuals in the modern world still have a certain amount of power (or control) over the choices they make.

Power, then is not only domination, but also transformative capacity or the ability to make things happen. Thus to Giddens, the modern world is empowering because it has freed people from the structures of traditional pre-industrial society. Like Luhmann, Giddens also refers to trust and risk. As with Luhmann, trust is required in the modern world because we know so little about the systems with which we have to deal. Giddens defines trust as confidence in persons or in abstract systems, made on the basis of a leap of faith which brackets ignorance or lack of information. The issue that Giddens raises, that is most closely related to Luhmann’s theory, concerns risk. Giddens emphasises the agency or choice aspect of risk. His view of risk goes beyond Luhmann’s. Human beings continually try to calculate future risk. In a rapidly changing modern society, individuals attempt to lessen risk through planning. A good example is health or life insurance. Giddens calls this colonization of the future.

Giddens has devoted considerable attention to Meads’ theory of the self. Meads’ theory does not situate the reflexive and reflective individual within the differentiated larger society. Giddens addresses the influence of the self on others, society, and even global strategies. In fact, Giddens’ view of the modern self is
quite different from those of Cooley, Mead, and Freud. In his books on Self-identity (1992) and Intimacy (1993), he has discussed the connections between the modern life and the individual. The individual exists within a structure but is also agent, meaning that the self must be created. One further issue in self-creation is self-actualization, or the effort to make oneself into what one wishes to be. To Giddens, self-actualizations is possible because of reflexivity, or self-reflection, but is also a goal that is often impossible to attain. Thus to Giddens, the modern world change includes distanciation, power, trust, risk and the created self.

According to Ganguly (1977, p. 52), modernisation consists in modifying the existing tradition and creating room for new and better way of doing things which suits the present world. He feels, it helps in enriching the existing culture but not the cancellation of the old pattern. There is a continuous overlapping of tradition and modernity in all walks of life. The dynamics of tradition and modernity in India can be better understood in terms of symbolic interactionist perspective (Mead, 1934). The symbolic interactionist perspective differentiates between two forms of interaction: Passive and Active. The passive form of interaction that takes place between the role performer and circumstances is called adjusting. In this type of interaction the role performer does not so much seek to control the circumstances as to conform to them. On the other hand, the active form of interaction is called situating which signifies an activity on the part of role performer by which he seek to control the situation rather than conform to it. Situating may again be of two types: Conservative and Innovative. Conservative situating implies a commitment to a particular status or strategy and for the same reason it is destructive of the self as mere role performer. An innovative situating involves the possibility of transferring from one circumstantial set to other, of escaping the past influence for the present or of alternating from one social world to another. Applying this frame of reference to the interaction between tradition and modernity in India, it is not really adjusting that defines the nature of response of the Indian tradition towards modernization, but the response of the Indian tradition signified by situating, not conservative but innovative situating.

Apart from symbolic interactionist perspective, there are two sets of theories which explain the emergence of modernity. They are (i) Classical
Theories of modernity and (ii) Contemporary theories of modernity. Among the classical theories, Ferdinand Tonnies’, theory of tradition – modernity continuum and Emile Durkheim’s theory of mechanical solidarity are taken into consideration as it can be applied to the study undertaken. Similarly Beck’s (1992) and Ritzer’s (1996) contemporary theories of modernity are also best suitable to study the shift from tradition to modernity.

The German sociologist, Ferdinand Tonnies explained the emergence of modernity from historical–evolutionary perspective. His concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft are based on the continuum of tradition and modernity. European modernization is explained by Tonnies through these two concepts. Tonnies’ theory is that European society has passed from tradition to modernity that is Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft through a rationalizing process involving a move from relationships based upon family and kin to those based on rationality and calculation. Tonnies’ theory of tradition – modernity continuum implies that no traditional or modern society is exclusively traditional or modern. There are elements of modernity in traditional society and vice versa. What is important is that traditional society in the process of rationalization becomes modern society.

Emile Durkheim explained modernity in terms of evolution of society from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity. In mechanical society, the general cohesion of the people swallows up the individual within the group. The society which existed in Europe before the onset of industrialization was a mechanical or traditional society. Traditions and the form of collective conscience, repressive law and restitutive sanctions held the society together. Emergence of modern industrial society in Europe gave rise to excessive individualism. He has demonstrated how the division of labour and the development of autonomous individuality affect social solidarity. In his words the greater the individual autonomy and specialization, the greater the individuals’ dependence on society. Specialization creates social stratification and stratification in this respect means functional interdependence. The dependence of individual, despite his being autonomous makes society cohesive and integrated. It is in the context that he defines modernity as social differentiation
and social stratification. Durkheim’s finding is that modernity creates social solidarity and harmony (Doshi, 2003).

Beck, the contemporary theorist of modernity who has written extensively about risk and globalization argues in his book Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity (1992) that the risk which is inherent in modern society would contribute towards the formation of a global risk society. In a modern society, there is technological change. And technology produces new forms of risks and we are constantly required to respond and adjust to these changes. This risk society, he argues, is not limited to environmental and health risk alone, it includes a whole series of interrelated changes within contemporary social life such as shifting employment patterns, heightened job insecurity, declining influence of tradition and custom, erosion of traditional family patterns and democratization of personal relations. What is particular about the modern risk society is that the hazards of risk do not remain restricted to one country only. In the age of globalization, these risks affect all countries and all social classes. They have global, not merely personal consequences. Similarly, many forms of manufactured risk, such as those concerning human health and the environment, cross national boundaries.

In the personal era of industrialization, the nature of risk has undergone tremendous change. Earlier, there was no absence of risk. But these risks were natural dangers or hazards. There was earthquake, there was epidemic, there was famine and there was flood. But, the risks in the modern society are created by our own social development and by the development of science and technology.

The modernity, which is found in the present world, is called new modernity by Beck. It essentially gives birth to a risk society. Beck has made his perspective on modernity very clear that new modernity has abandoned the old modernity and enables the individual to take his own decisions without any reference to his class or caste consideration. If his self-evaluation of society is faulty, he is likely to succumb to risk. Now, most of the risk emerge from the modernity in which he lives. The new modernity is different from the industrial modernity. In this new modernity, social relations and institutions have to be individually chosen. In fact, in this new modern society, social ties and
connection have to be established, maintained and renewed by individuals themselves. The shift from industrial society to risk society is a major break in the process of transformation.

Ritzer begins his theory where Weber ends it. Weber argued that modernity is rationalization. He talked of formal rationality which has importance in structures such as bureaucracy. But there are other two types of rationality namely (i) substantive rationality and (ii) theoretical rationality (Max Weber). Substantive rationality entails the dominance of norms and values in the rational choice of means and ends, whereas theoretical rationality is concerned with rational cognitive processes. What Ritzer finds is that in a modern society people pay all attention to formal rationality and the other two types substantive and theoretical – are callously marginalized. And hence, the need for hyper rationality. Hyper rational system is one that combines and interrelates all the three of Weber’s forms of rationality – formal, substantive and theoretical or intellectual. Ritzer develops a vivid metaphor to express his view of the transformations taking place in industrialized societies. He says that there is a trend available in the society which shows that it is moving towards highly standardized and regulated model for getting things done. Many aspects of our daily life, for example, now involve interactions with automated systems. It shows that there has been hyper rationality in our modern society. To illustrate his argument of hyper rationality, Ritzer refers to Mc Donaldization. Mc Donaldization is “the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurants are coming to dominate more and more sections of American Society as well as the rest of the world”(Doshi, 2003).

Giddens developed a theoretical perspective on the changes happening in the present day world. In a world of rapid transformation, traditional forms of trust tend to become dissolved. But living in a more globalized society, however our lives are influenced by people we never see or meet, who may be living on the far side of the world from us. Living in the information age, in his view, means an increase in social reflexivity. Social reflexivity refers to the fact that we have constantly to think about, or reflect upon, the circumstances in which we live our lives (Giddens, 2001). When societies were more geared to custom and tradition,
people could follow established ways of doing things in a more unreflective fashion. For us, by earlier generations many aspects of life that were simply taken for granted become matters of open decision-making. For example, for hundreds of years people had no effective ways of limiting the size of their families. But with modern forms of contraception and other forms of technological involvement in reproduction, parents could limit their family size. Similarly the forms of family in which men and women participate in an equal fashion is also emerging in everyday life. Virtually all forms of traditional families were based on the dominance of men over women, something that was usually sanctioned in social law. The increasing equality between the sexes cannot be limited only to the right to vote, it must also involve the personal and intimate sphere. The democratizing of personal life advances to the degree to which relationships are founded on mutual respect, communication and tolerance (Loyal, 2003).

Modern versus traditional is closely associated with cultural change. Culture is a meaningful zone each community ought to evolve in order to make sense of the world. It is man’s culture that teaches him the specific way to lead his life. Any culture has to be seen as a living tradition. This means that there are possibilities of innovation, multiple interpretations and contestations. It is therefore, important as Yogendra Singh has argued to conceptualize both tradition and modernization as sets of values and role – structures which interact as they come into contact and between them a selective process of assimilation and syncretism starts. Modernity gives a new momentum to tradition. In our everyday existence, this complex interplay of tradition and modernity has perhaps led to a kind of cultural schizophrenia (Beals and Spindler, 1967).

According to Moore (1987) there is interplay between traditionalizing and modernizing trends in every society. Some of the ways in which traditionality change to modernity are through innovation, gradual modification of traditional norms and gradual modification of the attitudes of the custodians of traditional beliefs. Amongst all, women are the custodians of traditional beliefs. But the career and non career women have different levels of thought with regard to tradition and modernity. In the transition, women have to face opposition from men and traditional women. They are caught in an ambivalent situation in a
dilemma to adopt the established codes of the past and the practical realities of the present to find a way to the beckoning expectation of the future. This process usually leads to conflict. Merton’s concept of ambivalence refers to the co-existence of opposing emotions, attitudes, or traits in the same individual or the state of being pushed towards or pulled between two opposite goals. It is a state of uncertainty, situations where a dilemma prevents people from taking right decisions (Merton, 1976, p. 6).

Shah and Rao (1965), in Tradition and Modernity in India, have pointed out that an individual becomes a marginal person, who stands on the border or the margin of two cultural worlds, but is fully a member of neither. He is said to be marginal to both groups. He may find it impossible to be regarded or to regard himself as a full fledged member of either.

It is widely believed that radical changes are needed for the improvement of the status of Indian woman, because our cultural traditions and its institutional practices, are not particularly favourable to women. Women are oppressed or women are idealized in a way that our culture fails to understand women, their aspirations and dilemmas. Perhaps it is often thought structural transformations, egalitarian values and cultural innovations would produce a new situation conducive to women’s emancipation. Women’s emancipation requires a modern secular culture – a culture that rescues them from the bondage and oppression implicit in traditional religious institutions and social practices. Modernity or the process of secularization (or rationalization) demystifies the naturalness of the male – female division and hierarchy and shows how gender is essentially a constructed category. It gives women the confidence to come out of all imposed ideals and see the world with their own eyes.

**Traditional Role of Women in India**

Although one is tempted to see Indian women as oppressed, what is worth recalling is that in the vedic society the status of women was not really very bad. Not simply because there were women like Gargi, Atreyi, Lopamudra and Apala who were the great Philosophers of the times and were among the composers of the Rig Vedic hymns, but even the average woman found herself in a relatively equalization milieu (Majumdar, 1953). This is not to suggest that there was no
element of patriarchy in the vedic society. There was certainly an attitude of indifference towards the female child and marked partiality for the male child. Yet, girls like boys underwent the upanayana ceremony at an early age. There was no glorification of child marriage. Widows were permitted to remarry and the highest education including vedic studies was open equally to men and women. It would therefore, not be wrong to say that within the framework of the patriarchal system, the position of women in the vedic society was remarkably good. The later Hindu society failed to retain the vedic ideals thus women lost their earlier status. Gradually, pre-puberty marriage became the normal rule. Women lost the status of a duija or twice–born, and came to be regarded as sudras. Naturally, like sudras, they were declared unfit for reciting or even listening to vedic hymns. In fact, as it has been repeatedly argued, the manu smriti created a theoretical basis for the legal and social subordination of women. Never did Manu approve of the vision of a free and self-determining woman. Instead as he argued women were destined to remain dependent on the males of their families. Except streedhan (Cash or kind given to the bridegroom by the bride’s family at the time of marriage), women were not supposed to aspire for any property. Manu attached a negative connotation to woman hood.

India passed through many stages and it was difficult for women to prevent themselves from getting affected by societal transformations (Desai, 1957). In the Puranic period, the story of the subjugation of women repeated itself with more intensity. In the name of the ‘pativrata dharma’ women were denied even the slightest independence. Pre-puberty marriages were widespread and widows were not allowed to remarry whereas the horrible practice of sati was eulogized as an ideal. The arrival of Islam was a significant event. Polygyny and the pardah (covering the entire body from head to toe) were two of the most important social institutions of the Muslim conquerors of India. And these institutions did affect even the destiny of Hindu women. For example, before the Muslim conquest Brahmins had not followed the custom of sati (the practice of ending a woman’s life at the funeral pyre of her husband), but following the conquests, instances of Brahmin women practicing sati were also recorded. Yet the cultural innovation that followed because of the fusion of these two religious systems gave a new meaning to the women’s question.
With the Bhakti movements, the equality of men and women in the religious sphere was reasserted. Great women devotees like Mira, Jani, Mukatabai and Gangubai were born (Bhattacharya, 1953). To summarize, the cultural ideal of Indian womanhood is full of ambiguities. To begin with, continual efforts were made to silence her and deny her autonomy. The ‘ideals’ imposed on her were often designed to repress her free and natural growth. On the other hand, in the cultural ideal one sees great respect to the potential of motherhood. Nothing would be complete without good mothers or benevolent mother goddesses. Again women were seen as destructive seducers or destroyers. Although these ambiguities were real, the fact was that the average woman in the post-vedic society, apart from some remarkable exceptions during the Buddhist era and the Bhakthi movement, lived in a state of utter subjugation. As a result, the encounter of cultures (colonialism) the perceptions of a new and modern India and the resultant freedom struggle witnessed stimulating debates on the destiny and status of women (Pathak, 1998, p.117).

**Modern Role of Women in India**

Colonialism created a situation in which cultures were continually reinterpreted. The modern Indian intellectuals – from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Gandhi responded to the new age, looked at the west, its liberal, rational and scientific world view and reinterpreted their cultures and traditions. As a result, we saw the interplay of tradition and modernity, science and religion and the urge to create a new India combining the past and present. These cultural experiments and innovations gave a new meaning to the women’s life. The identity of a tradition was often equated with its notion of womanhood. Retaining the ideal of one’s culture was like retaining the ideal of womanhood. Yet the new age or its creative and intellectual spirit – realized that much of our tradition ought to be altered. These twins urges that of resisting the colonization of our culture, yet embracing changes, led to the imagination of a new-women. A woman willing to welcome the new age, while not forgetting her tradition, exhibits her ideal. In fact, in this new woman, modern India sought to see her identity her experiments with tradition and modernity, secularism and religion (Pathak, 1998, pp. 117-118).
In the modern era, many women in India have entered careers which were once male dominated. They have become more rational and individualistic in outlook which is contradictory to tradition. Industrialisation has brought a continuing shift from family centered to factory centred production. A large number of women left family located tasks for the factory, office, classroom and service establishments. The shift to employment for married women, particularly mothers is obvious from their socialising service and affectional functions in the home. Cultural change has increased the free time of mothers and simultaneously provided extensive employment opportunities. For many women, it has presented an attractive opportunity to play a significant new role. As the proportion of employed married women increased, the relative power of these women increased adding further to a development of egalitarian ideology. As a result of the wide challenge to the ideology of male supremacy and responsibility, the emergence of the married women as a second wage earner posed less of a personal threat to the husband. In the emerging egalitarian ideology, there is no compulsion that all the income should be earned by the husband. Most Indian families however still support male dominance, at the same time allowing greater say to wives in domestic decision making.

Working women in India living with their husbands may be put into two categories. These categories are (a) those to whom an employment gives an opportunity to use their individual talents and educational qualifications, (b) those who are least likely to experience major conflicts in their responsibilities towards their children and to receive negative reactions from their husbands and relatives. But women have become aware that if they wish to contribute to the well being of the family, the best way to do so is by becoming a wage earner.

In the shift from traditional to modern society, a number of significant qualitative changes occurred. Traditionally, females have identified with the expressive – private realm and males with the instrumental public one. As women increasingly have entered the public arena, they have been expected to take on instrumental qualities that clash with their traditional expressive ones. This clash between expressive and instrumental and between private and public orientations is one of marginality of being caught between the margins of public and private
worlds. Feminists are likely to be women who have one foot firmly planted in each world – home and work (Rani, 1976). The intuitiveness, gentleness and supportiveness acquired through their expressive heritage clash with the assertiveness, competitiveness and individualism expected in their instrumental work roles. From the vantage point of caught–betweenness, feminists have begun to question the need for the wide gulf between public and private lives.

**Feminism and Marginality**

Women who identify with feminism are usually those who are firmly caught in the gulf that separates the expressive private realm from the instrumental – public one. Although all people- men and women, old and young, black and white find their lives divided into two in a technocratic society, middle class college–educated women experienced the plight of marginality earlier than most and became feminists. They were bombarded with the double message to be assertive, creative, independent (all instrumental) and supportive sensitive, gentle (all expressive). Few of these women found institutional structures that would integrate home and work worlds. They tried to juggle both roles, shifting back and forth between the sweet, deferring girl and the independent quick–witted woman. A case can be made that feminism is at the center of the subjective and structural rises of modernity. While all people must confront, be a greater or lesser degree, the ambivalences and ambiguities engendered by modernity, the woman question combines these confrontations in multiple ways. Female represents an ascribed categorization recognized as defining a being who is different and separate from, and in most societies subordinate to male.

Modern presuppositions define humanity in non ascriptive terms, but females in modern society have conventionally been perceived as not – quite–belonging to the same species as males by virtue of their biological distinctiveness from males. Differences in anatomy, in the part played in the birth process and in physical strength have been socially defined and taken for granted as significant in human as well as sexual identity (self–concept) and sexual identification (definition of self by others). Power has been allocated to males in a hierarchal order and females have been typically apprehended as sub-ordinate others. Such a perception of females is clearly at odds with modern, universalistic – achievement
promises about humanity. To the extent that ascriptive premises about women are found in modern society, and to the degree that power is monopolized by males in that society, females typically find themselves caught between traditional and modern identities regarding sexual and human natures. These women are the archetypical marginals in modern society. The marginality women experience today is more structural, that is, the women are caught in the dualism that runs through the whole society. So, while modern assumptions about human nature lessen the strict reading of an inherent biological dualism, at the same time the society seems to be approaching an era of ever-increasing dualism. Thus it is a matter of coming to terms with the whole duality puzzle. From a strictly structural view, the middle class college-educated women experience a marginality that produces discrepant expectations about the role of women; these discrepancies promote an awareness of the unequal treatment of men and women; and such awareness sets the stage for the emergence of feminist consciousness.

Inspection of the sociological literature on marginality reveals differences in interpretation about the consequences of marginal social location for personality development. On the one hand, marginality has been interpreted as inducing demoralization, a tendency toward deviance, a lack of incentive feelings of resentment, alienation and anomie. On the other hand, marginality has been viewed as resulting in a debunking orientation toward social reality, a sharper critical ability, a detached and rational world-view, a wider horizon keener intelligence, the cosmopolitan role and higher creative capacity. Perhaps marginality in social location – the experience of being caught between two different social cultural orientations and at the same time participating by inclination or necessity in both – enables individuals to have a lesser hold on an unshakable, taken-for-granted reality. From this vantage point of relative distance, from a single embracing world-view, they have more opportunity to see-by-contrast the world that others take as given, as the world. This distance prompts the individual to develop awareness of the precariousness of social reality; this awareness may lead to a habit of critical insight, cynicism or both.

Marginality implies the potential for dual internalizations, that is, dualized values, interests, life styles, identities, relevance structures, and the like, a
potential that has consequences for personality articulation. The personality may remain dualized or become a synthesis of the two fold internalizations, depending on the nature of the discrepancies between the two structures involved. If the personality remains dualized, either ambivalence or conflict may result unless the discrepant reality is kept in place. Of course the two sources of internalizations may diverge to a greater or lesser degree, the greater the clash between the two, the greater the degree of conflict or sociological ambivalence (Merton, 1976).

The chances for duality if not fragmentation in general, in a modern technological culture are far greater than in a traditional society. Marginality may even be said to be alien to traditional societies except in the light of the role of the stranger – who stays. Marginality is rooted in larger social realities. This root age must be kept in mind in approaching the possibilities for personality articulation. Two conflicting spheres of relevance, located in divergent structures may be subsumed or even neutralized by a larger, overarching world, taken for granted.

Pluralism or increasing structural differentiation, which characterizes modern urban technocratic societies, is the macro social fact that sets the stage for increasing numbers of marginal personalities. As society becomes increasingly differentiated, there is an increase in the possibilities for marginality, because marginality implies being caught between at least one set of two discrepant, salient structures. The greater the number of structures within societal organization, the more structural interstices for individuals to find themselves caught between. With progressive pluralization, more individuals may find themselves spun-off, unable to fit comfortably in anyone embracing structure.

The feminist movement has given rise to a large body of theory, which attempts to explain gender inequalities and set forth agendas for overcoming those inequalities. Men and women are alike as human beings and yet categorically different from each and culture. Feminism highlights the paradoxes rooted in the situation of women. It not only aims for individual freedoms by mobilizing sex solidarity but also attempts to describe women’s oppression, to explain its causes and consequences and to prescribe strategies for women’s liberation. Feminist analyses have always seen women’s access to earnings as an important source of
their greater autonomy and self-determination, because it lessens their economic dependency on male earners within family-households.

**Liberal Feminism**

Liberal feminism looks for explanations of gender inequalities in social and cultural attitudes. Liberal feminists are concerned with sexism and discrimination against women in the workplace, educational institutions and the media. They tend to focus their energies on establishing and protecting equal opportunities for women through legislation and other democratic means. It is claimed that female subjugation is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that block women’s entrance in the public world. Societies’ false belief that women are by nature less intellectual and physically less capable than men exclude them from academic, political and economic sphere, resulting in exclusion. Liberals say society must provide women with the same civil liberties and economic opportunities that men enjoy aside from equal opportunity for education. Social inequality, they say, is not the result of nature’s decree but of society’s customs and traditions. Liberal feminists want to free women from oppressive gender roles. They seek to work through the existing system to bring about reform in a gradual way. In this respect they are more moderate in their aims and methods than radical feminists as they are not interested in the overthrow of patriarchy and capitalism but being accommodative of the ability of women to make it within the system with a few cosmetic changes.

**Radical Feminism**

Radical feminists believe that it is the patriarchal system that oppresses women because the system characterises power, dominance, hierarchy and competition. The analysis of patriarchy – the systematic domination of females by males is of central concern to this branch of feminism. Patriarchy is viewed as a universal phenomenon that has existed across time and cultures. Radical feminists often concentrate on the family as one of the primary sources of women’s oppression in society. They argue that men exploit women by relying on the free domestic labour that women provide in the home. As a group, men also deny women access to positions of power and influence in society.
Radical feminists differ in their interpretations of the basis of patriarchy, but most agree that it involves the appropriation of women’s bodies and sexuality in some form. Fueston, an early feminist writer, argues that men control women’s roles in reproduction and child-rearing. Because women are biologically able to give birth to children, they become dependent materially on men for protection and livelihood. Other radical feminists point to male violence against women as central to male supremacy. According to such a view, domestic violence, rape and sexual harassment are all part of the systematic oppression of women, rather than isolated cases with their own psychological criminal roots. Even interactions in daily life such as non-verbal communication, patterns of listening and interrupting and women’s sense of comfort in public – contribute to gender inequality. Moreover, the argument goes, popular conceptions of beauty and sexuality are imposed by men on women in order to produce a certain type of femininity. For example, social and cultural norms emphasizing a slim body and a caring, nurturing attitude towards men help to perpetuate women’s subordination. Radical feminists believe that gender equality can only be attained by overthrowing the patriarchal order (Singh, 1997).

There is a growing awareness among nations that women need to play a significant role in all aspects of development process. Trained and educated on sound lines, women become an asset in accelerating economic growth and in ensuring social change in desired directions, as education develops basic skills and abilities and fosters a value system conducive to national development goals. It is believed that education and vocational training for women will enable them not only to seek jobs and become economically independent but also exhibit their talents in all walks of life. The independence will reduce their stress, bring fundamental changes in their values and believes and make them bold enough to demand and standup for their rights. The present demand of the women for the provision of increasing opportunities outside home is the shift over from the traditional role of the women subservient to menfolk to the neotraditional phase, in which the women have been up in revolt against all types of exploitation reiterating their equality with men in all fields of rights and responsibilities ranging from education, employment, health, institutionalized welfare facilities, coupled with the participation of women at different levels of social and national
activity. Then emerged a highly developed society based on harmonious relations, allowing no exploitation, economic, intellectual or otherwise by eliminating all traditional taboos, that have led to restricting the women’s life to certain spheres only.

Fortunately, in the past 200 years various socio-economic cultural movements have spearheaded the struggle against this discrimination and oppression, and the struggle for women’s liberation has been gaining ground. In India, the national movement under the leadership of Mahatama Gandhi was one of the first attempts to draw Indian women out of the restricted circles of domestic life into equal roles with men. In the words of Gandhi, ‘Woman in the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutest details of the activities of man, she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he’. The advancement on the economic, social, political and cultural fronts and the conversion of tradition-bound society into a modern one are pervasive throughout the society. Social transformation, a whole metamorphosis of habits, a wrenching reorientation of values concerning time, status, money, work and unweaving and reweaving of the fabric of daily existence, is necessary.

Pandit Nehru once said that in order to awaken the people, it is women who have to be awakened. Once they are on the move, the household moves, the village moves, the country moves. Social and cultural values which were once accepted as part of one’s life are now assaulted as outmoded and irrelevant to modern conditions. Since women are regarded as having special responsibility in safeguarding the value system, their education should not only be encouraged but should help them to effect a healthy synthesis between all that is most enduring and valuable in the old ways of life and the great advantages which modern knowledge and techniques of production and administration can bring about. There is no denying the fact that no society can change without the consent of and a consensus among women.

Process of change in women’s position depend primarily on the interrelation between transformative factors and forces, spontaneous of consciously directed, and the inherited matrix of social and cultural institutions, values, norms and practices, forms of production and distribution. These are
manifested in the division of resources, labour and power (Jayaswal, 1992, pp. 142-145). The world today is facing both the quantitative and qualitative changes – quantitative in term of economic growth and technological change and qualitative in terms of a new paradigm of a society governed by altogether different sets of values and methods. The traditional Indian values expected women to be subordinate altruistic and self-sacrificing whereas their new jobs and positions expect them to be independent, self-confident and assertive. It results in conflict in values.

There are three groups of women. Those who are traditional in appearance but modern and rational in their thought belong to the first group. The second group consists of women who are modern in their appearance but very narrow-minded in their outlook, whereas the third group constitutes women, who are both traditional and modern. They act according to the tastes of the people around them. So a woman cannot be, what she actually wants to be. She has to behave according to the whims of her parents before marriage and her husband, in-laws and children after marriage. Because of ambivalent status, a women cannot have conviction of her own. Social situation has made women uncertain and as a result they are in a confused state.

A state of ambivalence is observed in the major areas like career, marriage, decision making, gender issues and freedom. Apart from this outward appearance also holds a significant place since women are in a dilemma to go for fashion or remain traditional. This study uses the concepts, methodologies and theories in Sociology and Women Studies which are applicable to Indian conditions. It studies the unstable state of mind of women in their practical life.

Objectives:

1) To study the level of traditionality and modernity in the life style of women teachers.

2) To find out whether women teachers like to preserve tradition or go for modernity.

3) To study the modernity principles related to freedom, self-determination, gender and marriage.
4) To find out the changes in values, customs and behaviour patterns of women teachers.

5) To measure the ambivalence existing among women teachers on tradition and modernity.

Methodology

The researcher studied the ambivalent situation of women with regard to tradition and modernity. Career and non career women have different levels of thought regarding tradition and modernity. Even among career women the attitudes differ according to the profession or work they do. For this study, women in teaching profession especially the teachers in co-educational colleges were selected not only because they have the advantage of dealing with the younger generation (boys and girls) who are in the crucial stage of transition from tradition to modernity but also they are the ones who update their knowledge according to the present trend and lead a modern way of life. Added to this, change in life style could also be seen among the college teachers as they have a higher economic position and educational level. By and large, teaching has been accepted as a profession as it possesses a systematic body of theory, professional authority, community’s approval and has a culture of its own. Teaching was one of the first professions open to middle class Indian women. It is also considered as a feminine profession due to sex role stereotype. Hence women teachers were confined to be the unit of the study.

Selection of Area of Study and its Significance

Madurai city was chosen as the research site as it is considered to be a place where the traditional and modern social forces interact. It also maintains the identity of Tamil culture and at the same time has assimilated various cultural traits of people with whom it came into contact during different periods.

Madurai is the second largest city next to Chennai. It is situated on the banks of the river Vaigai. The district consists of many towns and villages with a population of 25,62,279. It has religious and historic importance. The famous Meenakshi Amman Temple is in the heart of the city symbolizing the essence of Tamil art and culture. Mariamman Teppakulam, Thirumalai Naicker Mahal,
Pudu Mandapam and Gandhi Museum are some of the places of historic importance here. Moreover one can see the co-existence of all socio-economic combinations of people in Madurai. Madurai city has many schools, colleges, hospitals, factories, mills, industries and a University too. Since this is an indepth micro study, the area of study was limited to one district.

Compilation of Population and Research Design

The universe includes the women teachers working in co-educational colleges in Madurai District. It is a census study as it constitutes only 137 women teachers working on permanent basis in co-educational colleges in the District of Madurai. Among 137 women teachers, the researcher was able to meet only 135, because two teachers were not available during the period of data collection due to child birth and health problem. Regarding research design, explanatory design has been adopted by the researcher as it is considered to be the suitable design for the study. Analytical frame work of the present research sufficiently covers the basic aspects of the phenomena under study and it further tries to analyse the causal relations in a qualitative manner. Hence the present study is qualitatively explanatory in character. It helps to study the existence of ambivalence and to measure the level and changes based on the data.

Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

This study is mainly based on primary data. The interview technique and observation are used for data collection so that more information can be gathered from conversation and gestures of the respondents. The respondents were interviewed both at home and in their work place. Face to face contact in the interview helped to understand the real ambivalent situation of the respondents. As good rapport was established, the respondents freely revealed their thoughts and attitudes and also shared their experiences with the researcher. This helped the researcher to understand the perception of the respondents with regard to tradition and modernity.

Pre-testing

Validity and reliability of the interview schedule was ensured by undertaking a pre-test. In this regard, the researcher selected 20 women teachers
from an area which has similar characteristics of the present study area. According to their response, the questions were modified and re-arranged in order to get accurate and authentic response from the respondents.

**Analysis of the Data**

The data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively in order to accurately measure the ambivalent state of mind of women teachers. Statistical analysis through coding process also enriched and enhanced the data by various means. Inductive method of reasoning was applied to derive inference and generalizations are based on it.

**Limitations and Difficulties**

1. This study purely pertains to Tamil Nadu cultural pattern.

2. The researcher had to wait for long hours in order to meet the teachers in between the class hours without disturbing their work schedule.

3. It was not only difficult for the researcher to meet the respondents in their work place but also at home because in the former case they were busy with the students and their academic work and in the latter they were busy in their household work.

4. The study is made from the perspective of women teachers and not a comparative study with male teachers.

5. The women teachers working in professional and in women’s colleges are excluded and only those working in co-educational Arts and Science Colleges are studied here.

Inspite of all these difficulties, by convincing talk and good rapport, the researchers was able to interact with the respondents and collect valid information from them.

**Chapterization**

1. The introductory chapter includes the meaning, significance, theoretical explanation, objectives, methodology and limitation of the study.

2. The second chapter consists of review of various studies based on tradition and modernity.
3. The third chapter deals with socio-economic profile of women teachers in the light of the variables such as age, religion, caste, education, income, marital status etc.
4. The fourth chapter analyses the level of traditionality and modernity among women teachers.
5. The fifth chapter deals with the social parameters and tradition – modern dichotomy.
6. The sixth chapter measures the ambivalence existing among women teachers on tradition and modernity.
7. The seventh chapter is the concluding part with the summary of the findings.