CHAPTER 3
In the nineteenth century the problem was that God is dead; in the twentieth century the problem, is that man is dead. In the nineteenth century inhumanity meant cruelty. in the twentieth century it means schizoid self-alienation. The danger of the past was that men become slaves. The danger of the future is that men become Robots.

—Erich Fromm.

The first section of this chapter discusses the predicament of modern age that is reflected in our outer world, i.e., in the domains of science and technology, environment, social relationships, politics and religion etc. The next section discusses the fragmentation of humanity and its fragmented response which have only succeeded in revival of certain traditions. It is also explained that this tendency, more explicit today than ever before, is to invent traditions in order to find answers to various problems. Reflecting on all these, Krishnamurti considers that the core problem is with our consciousness since the world is an extension of human consciousness. According to him the outer is only a manifestation of inner psyche.

The Modern world in Crisis:

Modern world is passing through a serious crisis. A lot of changes are taking place in the world. A number of factors have influenced the modern world. Scientific advancement and industrialization have influenced the psyche of the contemporary individual. Capital investments, the market.
Western civilization with its scientific advancement and tyranny, also have had an impact on the human mind. The twentieth century has experienced devastating wars, the advent of dialectical materialism and skepticism about religious beliefs, activities, rituals and so on. The rationality of scientific thinking has penetrated into the structures of the society and the individual. The rapid increase of technology and the capital market have introduced many changes all over the world. "The old social order is breaking down, the various religious organizations, the beliefs, the moral and ethical structures in which we have been brought up, are all failing".

It seems that the world is in a transitory phase. The present-day human being is caught up in transition. He is in a state of terrible confusion and chaos. On one side science has brought about changes in life; and on the other, man is still conditioned by or is not free from beliefs and traditions. The crisis is manifesting itself in all the facets of life— the political, religions, social and psychological. Man is not able to overcome his cruelty and confusion despite scientific and technological advancement.

There is a deepening crisis in almost all the fields of human life. The crisis is not only political, scientific and social but also moral. Krishnamurti says that the crisis which we

are facing today cannot be solved by the politicians, because they are not aware of the root cause of the crisis, namely, thought. The crisis cannot be solved even by the scientist, for the scientist too is confined to the realm of thought which is conditioned and limited.

The Moral crisis is evident from the fact that values have been fast changing in the modern world. What is believed to be a value today may not be so tomorrow. The swift change of values is due to the shrinkage of the world effected by scientific and technological advancement. Rajini Kothari, a well known social scientist, in one of his discussions with Krishnamurti, says that a moral crisis arises from time to time essentially due to breaking down of institutions. He also holds that crisis is because of rapid transformation of everything and as a result of which everything is being re-structured.

However, Krishnamurti thinks that the crisis is essentially the crisis in consciousness. It is because human consciousness is divided and confused that the life and the world are in deep crisis. The outward crisis is the projection of the inner crisis. "The crisis is in our consciousness, the crisis is what we are, what we have become. Unless we meet that crisis, that challenge, we are going to perpetuate wars, destruction, and there will be outward chaos".  

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3 J. Krishnamurti, Mind without Measure (Madras: KFI, 1990), p.72.
The crisis continues because we are approaching it with a conditioned or traditional mind. The crisis in consciousness is on the increase. It is continuing because we are trying to approach it and solve it with a mind which is repetitive and confused.

Therefore the inward psychological transformation is essential to overcome the outer crisis or to transform the outer world. All the regulations, sanctions, decisions which one may have outwardly, are shattered by psychological desires, fears, anxieties, and by the longing for security, Krishnamurti says: inward disorder always overcomes that which is outwardly conforming, disciplined, regularised. There may be carefully constructed institutions—political, religious, economic—but whatever the construction these may be, unless our inward consciousness is in total order, inward disorder will always overcome the outer. We have seen this historically, it is happening now in front of our eyes.4

Crisis in Science and Technology:

Science and technology have brought many changes in society. They have freed man from superstition and destroyed many beliefs and traditions. The innovations in technology have helped in the progress of industrialization. However, science has its own adverse consequences too. There is increasing

4 J.Krishnamurti, Network of Thought (Madras: KFI, 1992), P.10
evidence to show that the knowledge of science is a threat to civilization and to human survival itself. Modern science, with all its applications, has the potential for a holocaust that could wipe out mankind.

The advancement in computers and bio-engineering are remarkable. They are going to revolutionize the whole structure of society. Computers are going to outstrip the human being. They have the capacity to minimize human labour or even to render it practically unnecessary. The world is becoming more mechanistic, and the science is going to make human relations mechanical.

Technology not only has a dehumanized face, but is also providing more leisure for man. More leisure brings its own perversions. It gives much scope for the alienation of the human being from himself, from nature and from fellow human beings. This is even extended to science and technology since man's psyche has not changed basically. Thus science and technology, used and aimed at domination and destruction, instead of solving the problems of society can also complicate the human situation. Many people have expressed the idea that modern science and technology are in crisis.

For instance, the advancement in genetic engineering has its adverse consequences on the future of society. Socio-biology seeks to promote a notion of humanity that sees intrinsic inferiority in the genes of certain racial and social groups. Sperm banks containing the sperms of intellectually superior people are being established. Those with the means and
the desire to produce offspring of a certain racial and intellectual purity will have access to appropriate sperms in the near future.

It has been argued by many people that domination and control are an integral part of the current scientific and technological enterprise. Scientists are not free from their beliefs and cultural ethos, which may compel them to reject diversity and complexity in favour of uniformity. The uniformity that is born of their own ethos is being extended by them to all other areas. Also science and technology helps in fulfilling the economic designs of dominant powers. There is also an active alliance of modern sciences with the nuclear weapons industry and the nuclear arms race. The consequences are well-known. There are major high-tech disasters such as the Three Mile Island nuclear accident in the USA, the Chernobyl nuclear explosion in Soviet Union, the Bhopal gas leak in India, the Challenger tragedy in USA, the SMON and Minamate tragedies of Japan.

It is ironical that more than half of the world population is still living in subhuman conditions, deprived of basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. But even with all scientific and technological advancement man's condition is not wholesome. Instead of solving the problems, science is being used for the exploitation of the poor.

Krishnamurti makes a distinction between material progress of man and his psychological well-being. Material progress can be achieved by the scientific and technological advancement, but it does not guarantee the psychological
well-being of man. Man may be comfortable, but it does not mean that he is happy and sane. There is been conflict 'within' man and 'without' despite the material progress. Psychologically, man is what he was a million years ago. The proper use of science and technology depends on the nature of the human psyche. If there is no change in the psyche, science and technology will be used only for destruction. Krishnamurti says that there is an unbridgeable gap between technology and the human psyche. He puts it strongly:

Technologically we have progressed, advanced so rapidly and psychologically our behaviour, our attitudes, and actions, are more or less unevolved. We are still aggressive, brutal, cruel, thoughtless, for thousands and thousands of years. Apparently man is still behaving more or less as he behaves, 40,000 years ago.

Ecological Crisis:

Mankind is facing challenges even on the environmental front. The ecological crisis is global and pressing. Environmental pollution is all—encompassing. It is spreading to every aspect of life. During the last two decades, rapid and indiscriminate industrialization all over the globe has destroyed the natural environment and depleted the earth's material resources. It is a paradox that all development is accompanied by environmental degradation. It is man's greed for wealth and

See J.Krishnamurti, *Mind without Measure*, PP.34-36
comfort that has resulted in the destruction of a number of natural cycles resulting in environmental pollution and health hazards.

The pollution and ecological degradation are a result of the greed. Human demands are increasing with the growth of population and modernity, but the resources at our disposal are limited. Reckless exploitation of natural resources is causing a serious ecological imbalance. The natural environment is fast disappearing. The spread of deserts, soil erosion, flood, droughty urban congestion, and extinction or threat of extinction of countless species of plants and animals are visible phenomena affecting the eco-system. The pollution of air and water is now recognized to be a problem of global dimension.

The green-house effect, acid rain, Ozone depletion, drought— all these reflect human interference with the environment. Kan is responsible for this ecological catastrophe. Krishnamurti says:

Man is destroying nature, cutting down trees to build more houses, polluting the air with cars and industry. Man is destroying the animals, there are very few tigers left. Man is destroying every thing because more and more people are born and they must have more space. Gradually man is spreading destruction all over the world.

J. Krishnamurti, *Krishnamurti on Education* (Madras: KFI), p.11
If we do not realize the problem of ecological imbalance, humanity may face the collapse of the life styles that different societies presently enjoy. This situation is not due to growing needs and comforts of human beings. It is because of greed and the aspiration for luxury of human beings. All this is leading to the destruction of humanity by itself. In the words of Krishnamurti, "when man destroys nature, he is destroying himself".7

Chaotic Society:

Society is the relationship of individuals. Its structure and nature are entirely determined by individuals. It is based on a set of beliefs, traditions, which we call religion, nation and certain economic values. In this sense, society is the extension of the individual self in various forms. It is the psychological projection of human beings.

Society is not only bound by traditions, rules and regulations, but is also divided into innumerable groups. Such division is the outcome of man's acquisitiveness, envy, greed and possessive pursuits. The institutions and patterns of living are dividing factors of humanity and are rooted in the depths of envy and acquisitiveness. Led by possessiveness and self-centered motives, man creates a society that is ruthless, chaotic and destructive.

In the present day society human relationships are strained. There is constant conflict in our relationships. Life is the process of relationship with people, ideas and things. All relationships of human being are self-centered and end-oriented.

The 'me' or the 'I' or the ego is the center of human relations. The 'me' creates the images in our relationships. It strives to achieve its ends by means of ideas, things and people— and thus it generates disorder in society. The individual is ambitious to be successful and treats others as means to his ends. Ambition is the struggle to become respectable and to be recognized in society. It is a form of self assertion which is the cause of conflict in society. To be respectable, men identify themselves in terms of nationalism, religion, class, ethnicity etc.

And the whole society is structured on the principle of pleasure and where there is pleasure, there is pain and sorrow. Seeking pleasure in relationships is a barrier to love. As Krishnamurti puts it, "The way we treat our wives, children, neighbours, friends, is an indication that in our relationship there is no love. It is merely a mutual search for gratification."  

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Society is the product of our relationships and if our relationships are confused, ego-centric, narrow, and limited, we project that and bring chaos into the world. Since the individual is ambitious and seeking after success, there is exploitation in human relations. The structure of society is founded on the structure of exploitation. According to Krishnamurti:

Exploitation implies fear, and fear inevitably leads to all kinds of illusions and misery. Conflict exists only in exploitation and not in relationship. Conflict, opposition, enmity exists between us when there is the use of another as a means of pleasure, of achievement.

Man has progressed scientifically and technologically. Though there is tremendous progress in science and technology, there is still poverty, starvation, exploitation, malnutrition, slavery, unemployment and corruption. Society is beset by overpopulation, inflation, inefficient governments and all kinds of divisions, like linguistic, communal, racial etc. The individual is in that situation still burdened with his rituals, superstitions and beliefs.

Being conditioned by all these, man is not free to face the situation of what is, as a whole as his response to the challenges of life is inadequate. Consequently there is tremendous disorder or chaos in the world.

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There is a deep crisis in society. The culture and the values on which the society is based are not genuine. There is tremendous conflict and violence in society. Society is being crystallized, becoming static, and is therefore fast disintegrating. The crises in society are the outward manifestations of the individual's inner consciousness. The crises in the society are the crises in consciousness. Since there is division and disintegration in consciousness there is a crisis in the world. For, after all, the world is the relationship among individuals. It is the nature and structure of the relationship that constitutes the world. The human being with all his or her wants, ideals, and innumerable motivations, becomes the prisoner of his or her own desires. As Krishnamurti puts it, "The society is ourselves, the world is ourselves, the world is not different from us. What we are we have made the world because we are confused, we are ambitious, we are greedy, seeking power, position, prestige."\textsuperscript{10}

Political Turmoil:

Political conflicts and struggles are prevailing all over the world. Whatever divisions, confusions, conflicts and interests exist in society, all of them find their reflection in the political realm also. In fact, any social relationship which involves a power differential is political. Political problems are about the nature and distribution of power. It is a fact that the power holders, generally the dominant groups, will tend

\textsuperscript{10} J.Krishnamurti, \textit{You Are the World} (Madras: KFI, 1986), p.42
to use power to further their own interests. They safeguard their power through the available institutions of the society, and those who are suppressed through that power, form another social group and they struggle against that dominance and for sharing power. An individual or group does not hold power in isolation, they hold it in relation to others. Power is therefore power over others. Power affects every aspect of social life. Due to unequal and authoritarian human relationships in society, there are very many political identities emerging all over the world in terms of caste, religion, race, language and ethnicity. All these condition human beings and therefore political activities are conditioned responses, which bring about conflict. The political groups that organize and come close on the basis of common culture, shared historical experiences, and a combination of ethnicity, religion and language, struggle with their distinctive and persistent collective identity. Identity of this kind divides humanity, and whenever there is division there is conflict. There are many political groups in the world today, and they are in conflict with one another. These groups are struggling for cultural and material interests. Consequently the world is divided into innumerable groups. With the increasing number of sects and groups all over the world, there are also more and more 'isms' and conflicting ideologies coming up. Man is totally absorbed into the ideology in which he believes. He is ready to sacrifice himself and also prepared to kill others for the sake of his ideology. He becomes a slave or an instrument in the hands of ideology, the system of ideas, whether it is left, right or center. Systems and ideologies are overpowering the individual. Krishnamurti says, "Systems become important, the philosophy of
ideas becomes important and not man, and for the sake of idea, of ideology, you are willing to sacrifice all man kind, which is exactly what is happening in the world."

Human beings are getting enslaved by the power of ideologicalemental regimentation. Ideologies use man as an instrument. And the individual finds security in ideology, whether political or religious. Ideology is one kind of framework through which groups of people, nations, classes express their self interest. But actually it is the self-interest of the individual identifying with that of the group or nation, Krishnamurti maintains that all the ideologies are stupid. They represent the conceptual thinking of the conditioned human being. By conditioning human beings ideologies separate them. The mind which is identified with an ideology cannot see the actuality. According to Krishnamurti:

You know, ideologies have no meaning whatsoever, whether they are communist, socialist, capitalist or religious. Ideologies—conceptual thinking with its words—have separated man and man. You all have different ideologies, and do not see clearly for ourselves the idiocy of having ideologies. They prevent seeing what actually takes place, what actually is.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} Mary Lutyens (ed), \textit{Second Penguin Krishnamurti Reader}, p.23.

\textsuperscript{12} J.Krishnamurti, \textit{Talks with American Students} (Boston: Shambala, 1988), p.11.
Krishnamurti contends that human beings have experimented with many kinds of ideologies to bring about change but in vain. Man has failed. There are many ideologies which promise the welfare of the people but when it comes to fulfilling the promise, ideologies bring about more confusion. They complicate the life. They fail in the eradication of poverty, starvation, slavery etc. The communist governments with their ideology promised to bring change in the whole of humanity but except for small changes, they have not succeeded. The communist countries have also experienced constant dissent and revolt. Krishnamurti does not appear to be interested in judging ideologies. For him the question is not which is right out of the several opposing ideologies and views— but whether opposites are at all there.

Every nation is paying lip service to the unity of humanity and world peace. But in fact, no nation is interested in it. Every nation with all its motives, with all its army prepares for war, as each nation dubs other nations as its enemy. The feeling of envy is developed by the politicians, who cultivate the nationalistic feeling in people from childhood. The very division of the world into nations, is a hurdle for the possibility of uniting humanity. Every nation is strong in its commitment to nationalism. Nationalism is a glorified tribalism, and there is no possibility for the brotherhood of humanity within the framework of nationalism. Krishnamurti argues. Where there is nationalism, there must be war. Where there are several
governments there must be war. All governments are corrupt. Every nation is concerned with its own advancement and wants to be supreme in the world. The nations are working for the economic exploitation of each other. All countries, particularly the advanced countries are interested in capturing the world market and monopolizing technology and communication media. But the politicians and nationalistic governments can never bring about a new world order. He further says:

Politicians will never bring the world together, on the contrary; there may be no actual war but there is an economic war going on. If you are scientist you are a slave to the government. All governments are more or less corrupt, some more, some less, but all are corrupt.

Political life is not disconnected with the psychological life of the individuals who constitute society. Therefore politics has to understand the psyche of the individuals in order to bring about a new social order. Society is the reflection of the inner being of the individual. It is the extension of the individual's mind. As Krishnamurti says:

Surely, if the political action is separate from the total action of man, if it does not take into consideration his whole being, his psychological as well


as his physical state, then it is mischievous, bringing further confusion, and misery; and this is exactly what is taking place in the world at the present time.

Irrelevance of Religion:

Religions are the product of history and geographical conditions, and are therefore conditioned. Every religion has its own beliefs, rituals and dogmas. Religion has importance when man is in misery, confusion, sorrow and fear. It is out of fear and desire for some kind of permanence that man accepts religious beliefs.

The world is also fragmented religiously or according to the religious beliefs of people. The religions provide certain patterns of behavior. The mind is programmed to believe in certain doctrines and beliefs—Christian, Muslim, Hindu and so on. Basically man is conditioned by the religion, whether it is Christian, Hindu or Muslim. And each religion is antagonistic to other religions.

However, all the religions claim to strive for universal brotherhood and preach love. Every religion demands virtue and love from its believers. But the history of all religions shows that they have been destructive, and have exploited people. In the words of Krishnamurti: "Apparently

J.Krishnamurti, Commentaries on Living, Third Series (Madras: KFI, 1992), P.55.
religion has lost its meaning, because there have been religious wars; religion does not answer all our problems, religions have separated people."

Man believes that religion and gods will solve all his problems. In fact, it has never happened. As Krishnamurti observes, religion throughout the world has lost its credibility. It has no longer has any significance in daily life.

The religions are irrelevant because they are rooted in the past. A religious man responds inadequately to the present through a mind conditioned by the past. Religious dogmatism has been persistent despite the tremendous explosion of knowledge in the realm of science and technology. People are not ready to see the irrationality of religions. Religions preach love and brotherhood. But at the same time, they resort to violence and war. People are being killed for the sake of religious beliefs, dogmas and false gods. Krishnamurti says:

All religions, organised or unorganised, have said, 'Don't kill, love some one'. But you go on killing, you go on worshipping false gods which is your nationalism, your tribalism. So you are killing each other. That is what you all call religion.  

J.Krishnamurti, *Awakening of Intelligence*, p.72
Fragmentation of the World:

Apart from the psychological fragmentation that human beings experience, the outer world is also divided into various fragments. The outer fragmentation manifests itself in the form of geographical, political, religious, national, linguistic, economical, racial, ethnic and other divisions. Each fragment acquires its own identity and is in conflict with other fragments. There is hierarchy and authority among these fragments. However, these fragments are not natural and real. They are carefully constructed in the course of time. They are the expressions of psychologically built social categories.

Every where in the world human life is 'fragmented'. The fragmentation exists in each individual, it is nothing but the internalization of the divisions already existing in the psychological structure of the society. The mind has divided existence into numerous social categories. The historical application of these categories makes real all kinds of differences— religious, economic, racial, cultural— which are rationalized, not only in a technical sense but emotionally, considered as 'givens' and then perpetuated. ¹⁸

This is also the case with human self identity. The so called individual comes to gain self identity only by sharing in the divided mind of the collective or when he comes to own all the divisions. And in the process, he alienates himself from the

natural wholeness or unity of humanity; while the divisive forces assert and proclaim their identity and claim meaningfulness and validity to themselves.

The world is divided on the basis of beliefs, castes, and classes resulting in conflict and cruelty, and creating the necessity to fight with each other or among themselves. Such conflict and disharmony are evident in our political religious, ethnic, linguistic and sectorial conflicts.

The fragmentation of the world is due to division at different levels. The divisions are the result of images, concepts, ideas, and opinions. Human beings are encouraged to fit themselves into these patterns from childhood. Parents, school and the whole social atmosphere make the child conform to established patterns. Each fragment operates with its limited energy and from its conditioned background, and by comparing and measuring itself with others. Each fragment is in opposition and conflict with the other.

Since time immemorial there has been conflict among individuals, and among groups. The source of conflict is the unequal and authoritative structures and institutions that are carefully constructed in the course of time. These established patterns and institutions are the basis for the domination and exploitation of one group by another. So there is constant struggle and conflict. One group wants to dominate and exploit the other for the sake of its own comfort and security. Krishnamurti thinks that conflict is growing more and more, and
is uncontrollable in the presentday world, because of the selfish acquisitiveness of human beings. One is used as a means for the pleasure and achievement of others.

The poor are collectively struggling for physical survival; for the fulfilment of basic needs like food, shelter and clothing they organize themselves in the form of caste, class, language, religion, tribe etc. But according to Krishnamurti, through the fragmentary approach, we cannot get even physical security. He maintains that, "There must be physical security for evry body, not only for the few, but that security is denied when psychological security is sought through nations, through religions through the family."\(^\text{19}\)

The political, religious, cultural, national and ethnic conflicts are the outward manifestations of the conditioned mind. The conflict moves from the inner to the outer world, and again from the outer to the inner. The outer conflict and crisis is inseparable from the inner conflict and crisis. Where there is conflict, there will be disorder.

According to Krishnamurti disorder means conflict. It is accepting authority, copying, imitation and all that.\(^\text{20}\) First, there is conflict where there is a difference between thought and action, that is, thinking one thing and doing something totally different to it.


different. Secondly, while pursuing ideals, whether political, religious or moral, there is scope for conflict. The inner division due to neglecting an actual state and pursuing an ideal causes conflict and disorder. And thirdly, conflict is generated by an acceptance of authority, whether of the book, or of the guru, or of the leader, or of spiritual people. In other words, disorder is due to an individual's attempt to become something. The pursuit after an ideal, or 'what should be', and the avoidance of the actual, or 'what is' can cause conflict and disorder.

The present day world is static, mechanical and lacks creativity in its true sense, because the individual is conditioned by tradition and its authority. The individual is not able to respond to a situation without depending on accepted authority, as he finds security in the authority of the tradition. To rely on authority is to rely on the past. Education, religion, politics, culture are all the forms of authority which make the individual a repetitive machine with conditioned responses. Krishnamurti says:

> Our responses are conditioned according to the patterns of society whether it is Eastern or Western, religious or materialistic, so one of the fundamental causes of disintegration of society is imitation, and one of the disintegrating factors is the leader, whose very essence is limitation.
Violence and War:

Violence has been on the increase all over the world. Violence is the result of political, racial, national, ethnic and religious divisions. Wherever there is fragmentation, there is bound to be conflict and violence. Violence is both physical and psychological. In all human relations, violence is growing or is becoming more and more widespread. One man is treating the other in terms of use, and human relations are being based on mutual exploitation and destruction.

Broadly speaking, there are two schools of thought which have tried to explain the origins of violence. One school maintains that violence is innate in human nature while the other school holds that violence is the result of the social and cultural heritage in which man lives. The two World Wars bear testimony to man's inward violence. It is the inward confusion, struggle, hate and antagonism of the individual that manifests itself in the form of war.

Krishnamurti says that nationalism is the primary source of war. Nationalism is the product of thought which seeks security in a limited circle'. The nationalistic mind cannot treat the vast movement of life as one unit. That is why each one has been killing others for thousands of years in the name of nationalism, the flag, and the country.

At present every nation is allocating half of its budget to defense. The scientific and technological discoveries are being used mostly for the purpose of war. Even after
Identity building is an important issue in the contemporary world with the resurgence of nationalist and ethnic conflicts. The problem of modern man is how to establish an identity for himself and maintain it. The past is used as a means through which ethnic, religious and national identities are established. Aldous Huxley rightly pointed out, "All civilized societies are war-like in the present day world".  

There are thinkers who contend that peace is possible only through war. Krishnamurti totally disagrees with this position. He holds that there can be no peace through war. Any kind of effort based on ideology and aggression is of no use for achieving peace, all organizations that are born to promote peace have proved themselves to be ineffective. World peace is a myth as long as the desire for supremacy is in the heart of every nation.  

Krishnamurti maintains that war is not there as such, it is the outcome of the desire the human beings to be powerful and secure in the psychological sense. And there is no such thing as psychological security.

(Quest for) Constructing Identities:  
Identity building is an important issue in the contemporary world with the resurgence of nationalist and ethnic conflicts. The problem of modern man is how to establish an identity for himself and maintain it. The past is used as a means through which ethnic, religious and national identities are established.  

formed and reinforced in the present. The group which is in
identity formation uses the past to play a legitimising role in
the present, since the past is accepted as a source of identity
without question. Many thinkers have explained the phenomenon of
identity formation and we may consider some of their definitions:

According to Brackette Williams, the racial, ethnic and
class identities are ambivalent, provisional and
simultaneously defined through the changing relations of
power groups in control of nation building and groups
whose is reified by that process.

Williams stresses that discourses of race and ethnicity
are deployed in third world states in order to simultaneously
build national cultural identity and to cloak the material
conditions defining class and class exploitation.

John Camaroff has recently outlined and analysed the
political economy of ethnicity, making clear that "ethnic
identities have over time developed as naturalized social forces
autonomous from and perpetuated by factors different from the
economic structures and divisions of labour from which they
originally sprang".

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23 As cited by Les.W.Feild, "Constructing Local Identities in a
Revolutionary Nation: The Cultural Politics of the Artisan Class
24 Ibid., p.787.
Every disputed identity undermines a fundamental element of a group's self-esteem and thus poses a threat to the very existence of collectivity. This existential fear in turn breeds an aggressive stance towards other groups. Thus identity building is a potential source of strife and devaluation of others. Identity-building always differentiates 'self from 'other'. And also the identification does not takes place in vacuuum but in previously occupied space. A newly created identity impinges upon others as it makes room for itself. With reference to identity construction, it is argued by Friedman (1992) and Hobsbawm (1994) that, "the situation is a response to political instability and the break up of the existing, very particularly about the resurgence of religious nationalism, hegemonic powers that held at least over conflict in check."

Modern man's search for the past also can be understood from the psychological point of view. J.C.Jung, the famous psychologist discusses the reasons behind modern man's search for the past. He explains that modern man is subjected to cultural forces such as urbanization, specialization of labour, industrialization and loss of contact with native soil which create the social need for energy discharge.

Modern man's consciousness is caught up in a conflict between natural, archaic and institutional endowment—

which found expression in the form of traditional religion— and his contemporary need to adopt rationalistic and collective norms.\(^\text{26}\)

Jung defined this conflict in the personalistic sense, as the collective unconsciousness. To provide modern man with a living relation to himself and to his past, Jung devised the concept of a pure self that stayed in touch with tradition— (the archetypes) but also transcended the erosive social and political forces of modernity.

However, Krishnamurti says all identities are unnecessary except 'human being'. Any kind of identity is limited, divisive, and therefore conflictive since it is fragmented from the wholeness of human being. All identities are conditioned, while conditioning breeds dogmatism. With identification comes the struggle to hold with it. Identities seeks the continuity with the past. As Krishnamurti says:

If I want to be secure psychologically as a Hindu, with all the traditions, superstitions and ideas, I identify myself with the larger unit which gives me great comfort. So I worship a flag. the nation. the tribe and separate myself from the rest of the world. And this division obviously brings about insecurity physically.\(^\text{27}\)


of jobs for other backward castes (OBCs); and the demolition of Babri Masjid which is a product of modern politics. The "Hindutva' ideology rejects the secular state which for long or so far has had unquestioned legitimacy. Hindutva ideology is an attempt to maintain continuity with the past especially with the Hindu culture. Hindu means many things. It is the name for India's traditional culture, and a specific religious community. There is no clear distinction between religion and general culture of a region. Even the words "India" and 'Hindu' are etymologically linked. Although 83% of India's population is supposedly Hindu, it is difficult to identify specifically what is Hindu. There are far too many internal differences within what has been called 'Hindu' religion and culture. Despite numerous differences within, there is the possibility of a common identity to a certain extent. Gabriella Fichinger Ferro-Luzzi, an anthropologist, has attempted to establish the continuity of the category "Hindu" by recourse to the Wittgensteinian idea of 'family resemblances' which allows a greater flexibility in accommodating changes in the definition of this category........

Regarding the definition of "Hindu" there is no clarity and so it is problematic. One can agree with Lawrence Babb's conclusion that, "despite the diversity of beliefs and practices vaguely labelled as Hindu, "Hindu means something when they call themselves that, what they mean goes deeper than mere matters of subcontinental politics or cultural chauvinism".

29 Ibid., p.726.
Though this militant Hindu identity appears to be rooted in the historical past of the country, it is argued that this assertion has taken place in a particular political context:

The fact is that the arguments about the recency themselves takes place in a highly charged political context in which the traditional forward castes claim of consensus, pluralism, and harmony in the system are being challenged by a revised vision of Indian history put forward by Dalits, Buddhists and others. 30

It is also to be considered that the challenge to secularism in India has come both from within and from external sources. Within the country the identity of Hindu is strengthened by pointing to the Muslims in Kashmir, Sikhs in Punjab, Christians in some North Eastern states and some others. And at the same time, in South west and South Asian regions, Islamic revival has been taking place. So the task of delegitimising secularism in India has become easier by pointing to Islamic fundamentalism as sufficient justification of the need for a Hindu Rashtra. Therefore the language of Hindus, is alienating to non-Hindu minorities and integrating for the majority Hindu community.

30 Ibid., p.726.
Simhala-Tamil Identities in SriLanka:

Srilanka, like India, was once a part of the British Empire. In both countries, there is a protest against secular nationalism, and a demand for a national identity more in touch with the nation's cultural past.

The Buddhist majority Simhala population usually represents itself as heir to an ancient tradition of Simhala-Buddhist nationalism. Historically, the country is the major center of Buddhism, specifically the form of Buddhism known as theravada. In the pre-colonial period ethnic and religious identities were not stressed whether in language or in culture. They were dormant during the colonial period. The most prominent view of national past in modern Srilanka is held by the majority Simhala population, who have exercised power since independence. The dominant view among them is that: "The Buddha himself entrusted the island's destiny to the Simhala people as guardians of the teachings. This view is now instantly proclaimed in the press, in the speeches of politicians, and in school books and history lessons". As for legitimizing the Simhala rule over Tamils, they put forward a history of pre-colonial period through the source of Mahavamsa, a Buddhist chronicle. The simhalese thrust towards communal identity takes the forms of a revival of Simhala as the national language, and on Buddhism as the historical national religion of Srilanka. The characteristic pattern of Simhala nationalism could be seen clearly in 1956, Jonathan Spencer (ed), "Introduction: The Power of the Past", SriLanka: History and Roots of conflict (London: Routledge, 1990), p.3.
when a new coalition government headed by R.P. Bandaranayike, who was elected on the wave of Buddhist nationalism, made Sinhala the official language.

The revival of Tamil culture is superficially similar to that of Sinhalese Buddhism. In recent times, the separatist minority movement of Tamil has taken an aggressive militant form and they are agitating for the founding of a new state of Eaalam in the 'traditional homelands' of the North and East of Sri Lanka.

Tamils not only protested against the Sinhala dominated Sri Lankan state, but also the Sinhala Buddhist claims on the national past. Alternative Tamil histories have been put together and propagated in the Tamil speaking North and East of the island. Both official history and opposition history, agree on the basic terms of the argument. Present conflict can only be explained by reference to the past.

In the Sri Lankan context the past is a highly contentious, contested and prized commodity that is often used for contradictory purposes by different, and often mutually antagonistic groups. This phenomenon clearly manifests the importance of legitimizing the present on the basis of what they consider to be the authentic past:

Construction of the past (through myths, legends, history or what is understood as history), is essentially a political and moral resource that has become an expedient tool in the hands of politicians, nationalists and scholars (sometimes of course these
different agents are the same), who use it for their own political projects involving nationalist religions or ethnic hegemonic and legitimization processes.

One of the myth constructed by both sides is that of 'Ravana':

The legitimizing the Ravana myths was a completely new phenomena in Simhala society currently it appears that both Simhalas and Tamils claim Havana as their own personal ethnic and cultural hero.  

On the Simhala side, a much more sustained effort was made to resurrect Ravana in the context of the Hela movement. The main aim of the Hela movement is to 'purify' Simhala by purging the foreign influences like Sanskrit and Tamil:

Ravana has been presented as the most famous of these early Hela (or yaksha) Kings. It has also been suggested that Ravana's mythical capital Lankapura was located within Srilanka. One of the main endeavors of activities involved in historicizing Ravana has been the attempted location of this capital. 

33 Ibid., p.63  
34 Ibid, p.67
The Tamil nationalistic side also tries to use the myth for its own ends. The construction, or rather the reconstruction of such political myths has to be understood in the context of Simhala myth-making when the Simhales trace their ancestry to Vijaya; the Tamils trace their origin more easily by using their version of the Ravana myths. The tendency here is clearly to assert that Tamils arrived in Srilanka prior to the Simhlas and therefore they should have equal (or better) rights than Simhalas.

It is true that the respective political identities have developed from old materials used in new ways as circumstances, ideas and institutions have changed. The use of these may provide some continuity with the past. However it should be understood that:

Both sides in the present political context back their respective claims through the selective use of histories and through the selective and competitive use of archeological evidence. Factions on each side have been willing to destroy, or reinterpret, evidence which would support the other party.

Religious revivalism in the former Soviet Union Republics:

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union the stage was set for a confrontation between religious nationalism and Soviet forms of secularism. Now, in the former Soviet Republics

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a substantial proportion of the population is asserting its religious identity. The republics are facing a severe crisis. The people are living with poverty, unemployment and a crisis in the economy. Out of this crisis, in each republic, religious nationalism comes to the forefront.

Indeed, the Soviet state was built on the principles of Marxism. After the Bolshevik Revolution, it aimed at a socialization process, which in turn aimed at the creation of the new Soviet man. Following Marxist theory, it called for large, international political identities that are based on alliance of working class people rather than any local religious or ethnic allegiances. It implied that the religious identities and all other parochial forms of social organization should have been subsumed under the political relationship to the state. Karl Marx regarded the practice of religions as "The best expression of the trivial, 'the sign of the oppressed'. At its worst it was an 'opiate'— a narcotic that exploiters used to ease the pain of exploitation"\(^{36}\)

Following the Marxist ideology, the state closed down many churches and mosques, and condemned any kind of religious activity. In the 1930's a great number of churches were closed, monastic communities were dissolved and Theological schools were abandoned. Perhaps the most rigid symbol of the anti religious

moods of the time was the burning of the icons in public squares. Similarly the religion was repressed in Muslim areas and in Central Asia, of the Soviet Union—by closing down the mosques and islamic schools and confiscating the wakf lands. They even changed the alphabets in which their sacred writings and teachings were published.

In the Soviet Union the old ethnic and religious identities persist despite Marxist doctrine and various attempts to enforce that ideology. So the religious identities slowly developed and are being aggressively asserted at present. The religious atmosphere even influenced the Soviet State, to the extent that they took a liberal attitude towards religion.

During the late 1980's the political elite began to realize the futility of repressing religion; Indeed by the late 1970's there was an increased evidence that religious ideas remained entrenched within the popular consciousness, and that at least some religious communities were enjoying a degree of revitalization. In such circumstances, it was perhaps inevitable that a new leadership committed to the renewal and humanization of the Soviet Union should address the religious repression.

In the time of Gorbachev, it can be seen that there was a fundamental liberalization of state policy towards religion, along with political and economic liberalization. By the end of 1990, the Soviet State had in effect dropped its assault on religious values and institutions, and provided a legal framework from within which religious groups could exercise freedom of consciousness.

After the Soviet Union's disintegration into different republics, religion played an important role in the resurgence of national identities in each republic. As it is observed in republics such as Lithuania, Latvia, and Tajikistan, campaigns for religious freedom were often closely linked to the emerging nationalist movement. In Ukraine also the renewed campaign for the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church provided a major starting point for the emergence of nationalist activity in that most pivotal of republics. In Albania, both Muslim and Christian movements were part of the resurgence of the Albanian nationalist identity, which began in 1990. After claiming independence, in many of the republics religious holidays were turned into national holidays. Even the democrats and nationalists were keen to be seen participating in major religious festivals. Religious communities themselves also had to adapt to the radical changes brought about by political culture and religious pluralism.

In the Russian republic, the formation of Christian Democratic groups after 1989 represents the attempt to develop a specifically religious approach to political life. In August 1989, the Christian Democratic Union for Russia (CUDR) was
founded by a group of orthodox activists and it elected three deputies to the Russian Parliament in 1990. It initiated the Russian Christian Democratic Movement (RCDM). The programme of the RCDM explicitly aims at a Christian revitalization of Russian politics. It rejected communism as an alien flower upon Russian soil. They are going back to the remote past and tradition which are prior to the revolution. So it opposes the Bolshevik attempt to build heaven upon earth, and the destruction of the spiritual dimension of human existence. They consider that the only way out of the crisis of the Russian society is the Christianity one, involving religious and moral rebirth.

In many of the republics, the Church continued to be in the forefront of the nationalist cause, rejecting Russian domination and Soviet control. In claiming a nationalistic identity, many people look to the Church as a source of inspiration and support.

Parallel to the revival of Christianity, there is the phenomenon of Islamic major resurgence. By the late 1980's the possibility of Islamic political activity had been increased by the general reform process. Religious activists began to organise movements and parties aiming to strengthen Islamic influence in the daily life of the region. On occasion this took the form of attempts to 'purify' the existing Islamic establishment.

During the year 1989–90 several religious organizations emerged. The most significant of these, in political terms is the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP). The IRP proclaims the
commitment to revitalizing Islamic life within the USSR. By the early 1991, The IRP claimed 30,000 members in three regional organizations. One of the IRP's Tajik leaders Dalvet Usman stressed IRP's aim as "primarily concerned with regeneration of faith after seventy years of anti-religious attack." And Valiakhmed Sadur, the spokesman for IRP, described the party's concern as the revitalization of Islam and the protection of the interests of Soviet muslims which the official clergy had failed to do.\textsuperscript{39}

Thus in the former Soviet Republics tradition is being used to understand and solve present day problems arising out of the decay and the final collapse of the Soviet Union.

Although in India, Srilanka and the former Soviet Union, the exact causes for and the concrete manifestation of traditionalism differ, one observes a recourse to tradition in time of crisis which has social, political and economic causes. The revival of religion becomes a rallying point for those who are disillusioned with the present. By projecting the vision of a glorious or golden past, revivalism tries to generate a hope for a better future. Thus the study of the revivalist movements shows that the 'past' is selectively appropriated to construct a specific, monolithic tradition which, even as it attempts to remove divisions within one community results in exclusion of other groups, some of which may be projected as an 'enemy' (the

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p.201.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p.201.
muslim for advocates of Hindutva, 'Tamil' for Simhala Buddhists). The result is a mass mobilization often based on distrust and hate.

**Traditional Revivalism:**

When man is caught in confusion, crisis, uncertainty, or faces a challenge; he turns to tradition. The more trouble there is in the world, the greater is the urge to seek security in tradition. In the state of disturbance, people seek authority or direction to solve their problem. Instead of facing and understanding the problem in the context of the present, people all over the world look back to the past or tradition, and this may give rise to fundamentalism.

At present revivalism is a worldwide phenomenon. All over the world revivalist movements are active in the name of religion, nationalism, language, culture and so on. It is true that what is sought to be revived is not a living tradition. It is only the dead that needs revival. The revivalist movements are spreading all over the world— it is taking place both in advanced western countries and also former socialist countries without any exception.

Revival is the perpetuation of confusion; to turn to the dead past in the movement of a living crisis is to seek a pattern of life which has its roots in decay, ... if you cling to the past, you prevent the quickening experience of the new.

Religious revivalism is taking place all over the world. One of the striking features of religious, or ethnic revivalism, is that people cling to a particular faith, or dogma, and treat others as enemies.

Krishnamurti is against all kinds of revivalism and religious revivalism in particular. That which is revived is not wholesome, and real religion is not that which is revived. That which is revived cannot be new and living.

Krishnamurti differentiates between true and false religion, and according to him true religion is in the present, it is living. Therefore, religious revivalism is not really religious. People simply carry over the dead past in the name of religious revivalism, for security. But there is no security in religious revivalism or in nationalism or in the knowledge of the sacred books. Krishnamurti says:

The mind has invented, the brain has invented, various forms of security—nationalism, religious figures, and the so-called sacred books. They have all given a certain quality of security. Actually, there is no security at all. It is an illusion.

The problems of the world cannot be solved through religious revivalism or nationalism. A Hindu state, for instance, cannot solve the problem of poverty. In fact, there is

J.Krishnamurti, *Hind without Measure*, p.27.
no need for a state or a nation to become theocratic in order to solve the problems of the people. The problems are global and are therefore to be solved on a global level. Poverty is a problem of the world, but not of any particular nation. Therefore trying to solve it piecemeal and in isolation only increases poverty or starvation. Krishnamurti says:

In India, for example, there are millions starving. The Hindu who is nationalist says 'Let us first become intensely national, then we shall be able to solve this problem of starvation'. Whereas to me, the way we solve the problem of starvation is not to become nationalist, but the contrary, starvation is a world problem, and this process of isolation but further increases starvation.

Individual and society (You are the World):

To Krishnamurti, there is no difference between the individual and the society. He regards the whole world as humanity. The sense of separation one feels as an individual, as an Indian, as an American and so on is illusory. The individual and the world are not separate. There is no gap between the two. Therefore, the individual's problem is the problem of the world and vice versa. The world is the outcome of the individual's inner nature or the extension of the consciousness of humanity. As the consciousness is fragmented and conflicting within itself the world is full of divisions and conflict. As is the

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42 J. Krishnamurti, Total Freedom, (Ohia Talks, June 30, 1934), p. 47
consciousness of the individual so is the world. The outer is the manifestation of the inner. Whether one is in Asia or in the West, or in the Middle East, or anywhere in the world, basically all are human beings. Basically human beings are not Hindus, Muslims, Americans, Russians; these are all the labels for human beings. The consciousness is similar in all human beings. The content may be different superficially, but essentially all human beings suffer, feel fear, insecurity, anxiety, uncertainty, agony, despair, depression. The individual and the society are not different. Society is the result of individuals and the individual is the result of society and each affects the other. Krishnamurti says, "World problem is our problem because we are the world. What we think does affect the world. What we do does affect the society, the individual problem is directly related to the world problem".  

Krishnamurti, time and again, says that divisions are illusory. The earth belongs to humanity, but not to the Buddhists, Americans, Christians, Muslims and Hindus, Russians etc. It does not belong to any ideological group.

Krishnamurti views life as a process manifested in each individual. No phenomenon is either objective or subjective exclusively, there is no difference between the two. He regards life both as a psychological and social phenomenon. His view of life is integrated as he sees the social, outer, or objective Phenomenon as a projection of inner, subjective, psychological

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J.Krishnamurti, Total Freedom, p.191
structure of the individual. In this way he perceives the conflict as a process of human consciousness. As he puts it:

We generally approach this kind either objectively or subjectively, do we not? We try to understand it either on the objective or the subjective level, and the difference is that the problem is neither purely subjective nor purely objective, but is a combination of the two. It is both a social and psychological process, .... One must approach it in its totality. 44

To overcome the crisis and chaotic human situation, there should be change in the consciousness itself.

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