EDUCATION AND MODERNITY OF WOMEN:
A STUDY OF BENGALI WOMEN

CHAPTER I

EDUCATION AND MODERNITY:
The Conceptual Framework
I

Modernity - What does it mean? Subjective and Objective connotations:

There is no unanimity among social scientists concerning the concept of modernity. The literature abounds with variations on the theme of modernity or modernism\(^1\). Most of the scholars do not make any serious difference between modernity and modernization. The two terms are often used interchangeably. Some Western scholars, particularly American, propound a theory of modernity marking it

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off at least conceptually from modernization. For the purpose of the present study, we have set aside the vast array of literature on modernization and concentrated on those dealing specifically with modernity. However references have to be made from time to time to several authors who dwell on both modernity and modernization. The literature on modernity is marked by considerable amount of confusion and vagueness arising out of the difficulty to assimilate the diverse social experiences obtained from different parts of the world into a consistent conceptual framework. Notwithstanding the confusion and vagueness accompanying the term, we may begin with a working definition of modernity conceding some heuristic value to the term without being uncritical about its use. Modernity denotes changes in the attitudes, values, orientation of thinking/mental make ups of an individual so as to make him or her rational, secular, innovative, liberal, self-conscious and self-confident in a constantly changing world and at the same time it involves changes in the socio-economic and political structures facilitating urbanization, industrialization, mass communication and democratization which may create an atmosphere congenial to the state of mind we call modern.

A major bulk of the literature on modernity and modernization
produced by scholars, western and Indian, is characterized by two interconnected tendencies. First, this literature focuses on the attributes, psychic dispositions or states of mind of the individual which may be regarded as passing from a traditional to a modern state. Modernity is essentially a mode of identifying an individual being in society. Such a method of analysis fits in closely with the empirical situations to be found in most societies where we may come across a modern man irrespective of the environment besetting him. Secondly, such literature concentrates more on the realm of ideas, values, norms and belief systems and less on the crucial sphere of structural arrangements of society, i.e., social relations which are built around a particular social formation and which condition the unfoldment of the various processes of modernization, urbanization, industrialization, mass communication etc. Even while taking into account the tempo of such processes in any society, such literature seeks to measure their impact in terms of changes brought in the mental make up/attitudinal pattern of the individual.

Now, we may refer to the views of a number of scholars who consider that modernity, especially individual modernity can be explained in terms of changes in psychic attributes,
i.e., attitudinal pattern or other traits of individual personality.

According to Encyclopaedia of the social sciences, "modernism may be described as the attitude of mind which tends to subordinate the traditional to the novel and to adjust the established and customary to the exigencies of the recent and innovating"². Needless to mention, this definition clearly exhibits the importance of state of mind of the individual. It fails to take note of man's critical - practical intervention in his environment as an essential precondition of modernity.

Here, the author has not referred to the concrete influences which incline the state of mind of individual to the novel. The author contends that "the modernistic attitude, in sum, arises where a fission develops in the social or intellectual order because a new invention or discovery has become powerful enough to impose adjustment to itself upon the resistant environment"³.

It is doubtful to what extent a single piece of discovery or invention can produce 'modernistic attitude'. Rather we may

³ Ibid., p.567.
argue that a whole series of factors, interconnected and mutually reinforcing, may bring about a process of cumulative change leading towards modernity.

Rudolph and Rudolph have provided a comprehensive definition of modernity:

"'modernity' assumes that local ties and parochial perspectives give way to universal commitments and cosmopolitan attitudes; that the truths of utility, calculation, and science take precedence over those of the emotions, the sacred, and the non-rational; that the individual rather than the group be the primary unit of society and politics; that the associations in which men live and work be based on choice not birth; that mastery rather than fatalism orient their attitude toward the material and human environment; that identity be chosen and achieved, not ascribed and affirmed; that work be separated from family, residence, and community in bureaucratic organizations; that manhood be delayed while youth prepares for its tasks and responsibilities; that age, even when it is prolonged, surrender much of its authority to youth and men some of theirs to women; that mankind cease to live as races apart by recognizing in society and politics its common humanity; that government cease to be a manifestation of powers beyond man and out of the reach of ordinary men by basing itself on participation, consent, and public accountability" 4.

It is to be noted here that the Rudolphs tend to overlook the other aspect of modernity i.e., the objective condition of a country in which one is. They have never considered that socio-economic structure is also as important as the psychocultural aspect relating to the idea of modernity. Above all, they have not focused on modernizing influences which are essential pre-requisites for acquiring 'cosmopolitan attitude'.

We may argue that inspite of delineating an exhaustive idea of modernity their approach has remained one-sided and piecemeal in the last instance.

Rudolph and Rudolph have offered useful critical insights into the concept of modernity as it is comprehended by many western scholars. As cogently pointed out by the Rudolfs, western scholars often adopt a unilinear view of modernity equating it with all that the western civilization has acquired or assimilated over the last two hundred years. They therefore project a false dichotomy between tradition and modernity and look for those preconditions in the traditional societies which have made the west modern. Rudolph and Rudolph view tradition and modernity as "continuous rather than separated by an abyss", as "dialectically rather than dichotomously related". They adopt a process-view of modernity in contradistinction to those who look upon it as a package of finished products. They also trace the source of modernity in a socialization process creating "friction or conflict rather than integration and control" and precipitating "incremental or fundamental social change". If such change is a precondition for modernity as the Rudolfs seem here to believe, then the coming of modernity cannot but be seen in terms of the destruction of the objective conditions of tradition and their replacement by the

5 Ibid., pp. 3-8.
6 Ibid., p. 10.
7 Ibid., p. 11.
objective conditions of modernity. In such a perspective, "the modernity of tradition" is only relative. Here Marx's formulations appear to be more consistent notwithstanding the findings of the Rudolphs on the Indian society. Moreover, the Rudolphs move on very uncertain grounds in their conception of modernity as can be seen from their accepting as "heuristically useful" a definition of modernity which rests on the very liberal, individualistic and Western assumptions which they question and criticise. The net result is that the Rudolphs tend to overlook the all important question of structural changes which create the condition for a modern man or a modern society to emerge.

We get a picture of modernity constituted by its twelve characteristic attributes which have been referred to by S.C. Dube from his summing up of the works of Lerner, Almond and Coleman, McClelland, Ithiel de Sola Pool and Wilbert Moore. These twelve attributes are: (i) Empathy, (ii) Mobility, (iii) High participation, (iv) Interest aggregation, (v) Interest articulation, (vi) Institutionalised political competition, (vii) Achievement orientation, (viii) Rational ends - means calculations, (ix) New attitudes to wealth, work, savings and risk taking, (x) Faith in desirability of change, (xi) Social, economic and political discipline, (xii) Capacity to put off immediate and short-run satisfactions for
higher satisfactions in the longer run.\(^8\).

No doubt, Dube has made a seminal contribution to our understanding of modernity assembling its twelve characteristics. But he does not question the individualistic approach to modernity which has been adopted by most of the authors cited by him. Particularly, McClelland's theory regarding economic development cannot be applied to explain the course of development of a society like ours. McClelland argues, achievement orientation motivates and sustains economic growth.\(^9\) Not the social structure "but only a high degree of individual motivation or need for achievement is alpha and omega of economic development and cultural change."\(^10\)

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People in high 'n Achievement' (need for achievement) category learn faster and work harder at certain tasks, motivated not by overt rewards - recognition and prestige - but by a covert feeling of personal accomplishment. McClelland's emphasis on achievement orientation fits into a purely psychological model of modernity which raises a host of questions. While a country suffers from economic deficiencies, achievement orientation does not necessarily bring about self-sustaining growth in economy. At present, in an underdeveloped society, individual's personal accomplishment may not lead to the spread of industrialization which produces goods essential for the consumption of the people of the country. In order to develop the economy of a country, one should realise the basic needs of the people. Accordingly, people in general should make decision regarding economic development. Hence, not individual's achievement orientation/personal accomplishment, but the structural changes may contribute to the progress of total economy, i.e., the economy should be developed in such a way that the majority of the people consume the benefits of the development of economy.

The nature of political authority determines the way of developing the economy, and specially, political authority should play a role with regard to distribution of wealth. People should develop such a political system as has communication and relation to the majority of different strata of the people. Moreover, McClelland has devalued those very modernizing influences which help one to develop modern ideas.

Among twelve characteristic attributes of modernity, only three attributes, viz., interest aggregation, interest articulation and institutionalized political competition, adopted from the Almond-Coleman model, highlight the political structure of a society. Although, the rest of the scholars, as cited by Dube, tried to locate modernity in various spheres of life - economic, social and cultural, to the exclusion of the political one, the primary focus of their analysis and exposition of modernity has invariably centred around the individual.

Dube suggests that an integrated combination of these attributes leads to modernity. But he does not explain how these attributes can be integrated in a society. Some of the attributes may be incompatible with others. In the

discussion of twelve attributes of modernity, he has not referred to any composite model subsuming all these attributes of modernity. Dube's own conception of modernity will be taken up later on.

We may turn to A.B.Shah for his conceptualisation of the tradition - modernity continuum or dichotomy in the specifically Indian context, in his 'introduction' to Tradition and Modernity in India edited by Shah and Rao. The author looks upon the three interrelated aspects of traditional Hindu Society, namely, the Hindu view of life, the value system of Hinduism and the social institutions of Hinduism as obstacles to modernity as these are based on essentially transcendental-ethical values, assigning a secondary place to secular values and are authoritarian in culture and spirit, discounting "individuality, initiative, and free inquiry", which are "among the core elements of the modern outlook". The author refuses to begin his inquiry by evolving "formal or comprehensive definitions of the key terms, 'tradition' and 'modernity' " and suggests that "what is necessary for a fruitful inquiry in

such a situation is not precise definitions of terms but a clear conception of the scope of their meanings and the characteristic elements of each in their bearing on the problem of transition from a traditional to a modern society.\textsuperscript{14} However, Shah has a tentative notion regarding tradition and modernity which is unfolded as he proceeds. For example, he states:

"the modern world-view is based on empirical, scientific knowledge and is incompatible with the traditional one on all essential points. It relates ethics to certain basic human urges and looks upon it as a system of norms governing interpersonal relationships. Consequently, the morality it implies is rational, secular and relative, without necessarily losing its universal character. Being secular, it does not belittle worldly success, provided it is achieved by fair means. Being rational, it recognizes the necessity of relating means to ends and of integrating one's ends among themselves as also with those of others with the aid of knowledge and experience. It is relative because its source is to be found in the consciousness of man interacting with its historical environment rather than in a Divine Being or a metaphysical principle governing the universe.\textsuperscript{15}

As a state of mind, modernity, according to Shah, "shuns dogma and the dogmatic attitude" and "encourages criticism as a necessary corrective to those in authority and a precondition for the uninhibited flowering of human creativity.\textsuperscript{16}

The emphasis in Shah's conception of modernity has all along

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p.8.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p.11.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p.12.
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been on a philosophical revolution, a thorough going change of values accompanying, if not preceding institutional innovations and rearrangements. His approach is marked by a tendency to accord primacy to ideas or consciousness over material conditions of being. He blames Indian intellectuals for their inability to embrace modern, secular values and provide leadership to the movement for bringing about all out social modernization. What he fails to take note of is that modernity cannot be wished into existence without a necessary structural change. The orthodox Hindu view cannot be transformed overnight by instilling modern values and ideas artificially from an alien culture. Ideas are no doubt important as agents of change but they are to be effectively linked up with material forces of society.

It will be relevant to refer to the contention of Dr. Rajkrishna regarding the concept of modernity. He also makes a crucial distinction between modernity and modernization which needs to be stressed in the climate of developing societies. He views that modernity has a wider connotation than modernization. Modernization refers to civilization and mainly implies a high level of literacy and urbanization with vertical and geographical mobility, a high per capita income and a

sophisticated economy that has gone beyond the take-off stage. Modernity, on the other hand, connotes a certain type of culture whose quality is determined by rationality, the liberal spirit in its broadest sense, plurality of opinion and centres of decision making, autonomy of the various fields of experience, secular ethics, and respect for the private world of the individual\textsuperscript{18}.

We may say that he has also been guided by a few western authors who present the concept of modernity in abstraction from societal conditions. Hence, despite stating wider connotations of modernity, he confines the term modernity within only the psycho-cultural framework.

Dhirendra K. Vajpeyi, in his Modernization and Social Change in India\textsuperscript{19}, discusses the concept of modernity in its psychological aspects. Here, referring to the statements of Lucian Pye and McClelland, who wholly concentrate on psychological attributes of modernity, he defines modernity in terms of 'Psychic mobility'.

Now we may present a number of propounders of the concept of modernity who refer to both the objective and subjective

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid

\textsuperscript{19} Dhirendra K. Vajpeyi, Modernization and Social Change in India, Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 1979, p.4.
dimensions of modernity but focus on the belief system, attitudinal pattern and orientation of thinking of the individual.

According to International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, there appears to be a large area of agreement, despite conceptual and terminological differences of more or less importance, that among the salient characteristics (operational values) of modernity are (1) a degree of sustaining growth in the economy - or at least growth sufficient to increase both production and consumption regularly; (2) a measure of public participation in the polity - or at least democratic representation in defining and choosing policy alternatives; (3) a diffusion of secular-rational norm in the culture; (4) an increment of mobility in the society - understood as personal freedom of physical, social and psychic movement; and (5) a corresponding transformation in the modal personality that equips individuals to function effectively in a social order that operates according to the foregoing characteristics - the personality transformation involving as a minimum an increment of self-things seeking and an increment of self-others seeking.

These five characteristics of modernity cover all the basic aspects of modernity. It should, however, be pointed out that

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there is no universal criterion to determine secular rational culture. It is historically and regionally varied. Even within a society, at a given point of time, the perception of what is secular or rational will vary from person to person or group to group, subject to the material conditions of living of each.

According to C.E. Black, "within the past generation 'modernity' has come to be widely employed to describe the characteristics common to countries that are most advanced in technological, political, economic and social development."\(^{21}\)

He also suggests that modern societies are characterized by the growth of new knowledge and that this presumes the existence of men with an increasing capacity to understand the secrets of nature and to apply this new knowledge to human affairs.\(^ {22}\)


While presenting his own conception of modernity, Dube writes, "Modernity denotes the common 'behavioural system' historically associated with the urban, industrial, literate and participant societies of Western Europe and North America as well as those of U.S.S.R. and Japan".  

Dube does not clarify the meaning or characteristics of common "behavioural system", although he has laid emphasis on common "behavioural system" relating to the concept of modernity. If he use the term 'modernity' as a synonym for modernization then the clarification of "behavioural system" is noticed in his discussion of the attributes of modernization.

"Modernization involves the emergence of a new behavioural system with certain distinctive characteristics. Such a system implies considerable value change. Unless the traditional values undergo a radical modification, an innovative ethos and an entrepreneurial and industrial ethic cannot be created. Value-change is necessary also for institutional rearrangement considered essential for modernization".

Here, the emphasis has been on the dimension of value-change. Dube defines the attributes of modernity in both subjective

24 Ibid., p.37.
and objective terms and traces the same at both the individ­
ual and societal levels.

To follow him again, it implies that personality must open up, ideas and values must change and institutional arrange­ment must be reworked. Changes at each level affect and stimulate one another.25

David H. Smith and Alex Inkeles contend that the term "modernity" may refer to two quite different objects. As used to describe a society, "modern" generally means a national state characterized by a complex of traits includ­ing urbanization, high levels of education, industrializa­tion, extensive mechanization, high rates of social mobility and the like. When applied to individuals, it refers to a set of attitudes, values and ways of feeling and acting, presumably of the sort either generated by or required for effective participation in a modern society.26

True, the authors have made a distinction between modern society and modern man. They have also related individual modernity to modernization of the societal conditions into

25 Ibid., p.40.
which an individual is placed. They have emphasized attitudinal changes as criteria for individual modernity, but, at the same time, they have touched upon the objective conditions of society which may make for individual modernity. We may point out however that the distinction between the two objects of modernity, i.e. the individual and the society, is not conceptually much useful. A modern man cannot exist as an unsocial being. He is, or can be, modern only in the context of a network of relationships which also have to be transformed so that individual modernity makes any sense.

Alex Inkeles in his article, 'The Modernization of Man', recognizes the two factors of modernity, i.e., the condition of society and self-perception of individual. He says "The characteristic mark of the modern man has two parts: one internal, the other external; one dealing with his environment, the other with his attitudes, values and feelings".

Referring to the external condition (objective condition) of a modern man, he mainly attaches significance to the psychological aspect of modernity. For him, although one's exposure to the modern setting may certainly contribute to the

transformation of traditional man and although that setting may in turn require new ways of him, it is only when man has undergone a change in spirit - has acquired certain new ways of thinking, feeling and acting - that we come to consider him truly modern.  

He has pointed to the contribution of a series of influences, such as education, urbanization, mass communication, the development of economy and politics, to the transformation of a traditional man into a modern one, but he repeatedly stresses a set of personal qualities in making a man modern. He does not recognize the impact of cultural differences upon individual while analyzing modernity; he has not focused on the immediate environment of the individuals or on the relationship between the individual and the socio-cultural setting he is acting upon.

A majority of the Western scholars engaged in studying modernizing processes of the non-Western, Afro-Asian societies have been guided consciously or unconsciously by their experiences of living in a highly urban - industrialized and educationally advanced society so much so that they have tended to overlook the deficiencies in the objective structural setting of the non-Western/developing societies.

28 Ibid., p.153.
29 Ibid., p.159.
M. Francis Abraham remarks that most of the western scholars have described modernity as "the abstracted quintessence of the socio-cultural system of the western industrialized society. Their referent is the ideal typical 'modern' capitalist society and their model of 'modern' man is every actor in this social system who is the embodiment of rationality. In this curiously one-sided notion of modernity, social change in the developing areas becomes meaningful only in so far as it reflects a motivated emulation of the so-called modern societies and their constituents". He contends that "modernity is not what is grafted on to a traditional society from an alien system, but change is ubiquitous and built into any system...".

The spirit of modernity/ modernism has been most succinctly put forward by Wilfred Cantwell Smith, in the following words:

"To be modern does not mean to live in one particular kind of environment rather than another. It means to live in the environment that one's society has deliberately chosen to construct (or to accept); and to do so rationally, self-consciously. This is what science makes available; the power and the knowledge to be effectual, to determine results, to control change. The knowledge of what is possible - an ever-widening knowledge of ever new possibilities - and the technique of implementing these, this is modernity."
More precisely, "awareness, plus technology—which is crystallised, materialised, awareness—constitutes the basis of modernity".33

He also emphasizes individual's self-perception by repeatedly saying that intellectual and moral awareness is primary, economics and technology are important but secondary 34.

We would like to argue that both factors—the ideological (subjective dimension) and the economic—are equally important for a clearer conceptualisation of modernity. It is beyond all question that attitudinal change/intellectual awareness is an important dimension of modernity. It makes an individual self-conscious, self-confident, innovative. But an individual cannot become self-confident unless his/her societal conditions permit the same. Intellectual awareness/new type of attitude, feeling is not to be viewed in abstraction. These are related to socio-structural changes which bring about changes in psychological attributes leading to modernity. Again structural changes, leading to betterment of the material condition of individual are not the only dimension of modernity. Structural changes must take close account of ideological factors which help one to understand the benefit,

33 Ibid., p.21.
advantages, necessities of the new type of social structure leading to modernity. Many a time, psychological/ideological factors help to bring about certain structural changes for the upliftment of status of different sections of society. Hence, two factors should be equally counted to explain the concept of modernity. But according to the specific problem of each society, priority may be given in one sphere for achieving modernity in accordance with the specific context.

Regarding the concept of modernity, in underdeveloped societies, some socio-cultural reforms are the pre-requisites for the abolition of rigid and superstitious norms and practices. These reforms should be backed up by legislative measures. Movements for socio-cultural reform which spring up from the womb of the traditional society often play a significant modernizing role, in developing new outlooks conducive to modernity.

In fine, modernity is a value-loaded concept and hence liable to be defined in terms of the value-preferences of scholars who use it. In our conceptualisation of modernity we are also being guided by certain value perceptions. In our view, modernity involves changes in two interrelated domains - the objective social condition or material condition in which one is
and the state of mind one possesses. We are, for example, opposed to that conception of modernity which looks upon the Western societies as the model to be mechanically grafted on to the third-world countries. Similarly, we reject any stereotyped image of a modern man abstracted from his social setting. Modernity involves in our conception of it, reorientation of the social structure bringing about material prosperity through increasing unfoldment of the productive forces of society and equitable distribution of social wealth. Similarly, it involves reorientation of thinking/mental make-up/value system causing the emergence of secular, this-worldly attitude, boosting faith in oneself and one's capabilities. The profile of a modern man or a woman is to become rational, calculating, self-conscious. In our perception, at the same time, one is modern to the extent of his/her having an awareness of the conditions of others in society and the readiness to intervene in the social milieu to change the whole network of relationships around.

Modernity of Women

We have not yet seen any full length study where the theoretical or conceptual framework of modernity of women has been worked out. We may however refer to two writings which have
touched upon the theme of modernity of women. One study is *Modernization of Working Women in Developing Societies*, written by Raj Mohini Sethi. In her book, the author has dwelt at length on the concept of modernization. But she has touched upon the concept of modernity in the Second Chapter of her book. She considers that the concept of modernity is greatly conditioned by the environmental and the cultural factors prevalent in any society. Based on this premise, she has taken two different sets of indices of modernity for India and Turkey so as to get a comparative profile of women in two countries. The profile of a modern Indian woman may be referred to here. She has cited five popular themes which have been considered as connotations of modernity. According to her conceptualisation, a woman may be called modern:

(a) If she asserts herself increasingly against the authority of traditional figures like father or husband;
(b) If she participates actively in mass-media;
(c) If she does not involve herself deeply into the ritual and worship aspects of religion;
(d) If she takes cognizance not only of the immediate environment but also of the outside one, that is, interest in 'extra-local' conditions;

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(e) If she feels free from extended-family ties.

The author in this chapter of her book mainly concentrated on the indices of women's modernity. She has not elaborately defined the theoretical concept of modernity of women. However, she has laid stress on structural changes in bringing about value changes of women.

The other writing is 'From Purdah to Modernity', an article written by Rama Mehta. She has made a study of women of Oswal Community of Rajasthan. She shows how the traditional Oswal women have been gradually proceeding towards modernity. They are receiving education; they have engaged themselves in the employment market. She describes modern outlook in terms of women's exposure to emerging new social values. But she has not clearly spelt out the concept of women's modernity. It may be said that she has attached significance to women's education and employment as necessary preconditions for women's modernity.

It should be mentioned that various studies have been made with regard to status of women. Women's modernity may be

explained in terms of their changing status but conceptually the two cannot be equated. We have also related the concept of women's modernity to changing status of women. Accordingly, we have arranged three chapters on women's status in the family, their economic status, and political status respectively. We propose to test the levels of modernity of the women under study in terms of changes in their status in the three different but closely interrelated spheres of society, the family, the economy and the polity. If women's objective condition and subjective perception have changed leading to a change in their overall status, they may be regarded as modern. In the three chapters dealing with women's status in family, employment market and politics, we will refer to those studies which have been made on changing status of women.

Let us clarify the concept of women's modernity. From our discussion of the concept of modernity it is obvious that modernity of women involves changes both in their socio-structural condition and their psychological make-up. That is to say, a change in their objective social condition and in their world of beliefs and attitudes determines their modernity. When a woman gets equal opportunities in the employment market, enjoys an equal status in the family and
shares equal position in political power structure, she is regarded as modern from the perspective of her objective condition. On the other hand, when a woman changes her orientation of thinking towards certain socio-economic issues which determine her status, and develops her attitude according to the constantly changing social condition, she becomes modern in her subjective perception. In other words, from the subjective level women's modernity depends on their self-consciousness and self-transformation. The indicators of women's modernity in their subjective level will be discussed elaborately in the next section: the measurement of modernity.

It should be explained here that a change in the subjective perception of other members in society is needed for changing the objective social condition of women, i.e., for enjoying an equal status/honourable status by women. Various societal institutions and agencies have a role to play in bringing about the desired change in the objective conditions of women. For example, legislations, administrative actions, intellectuals, political parties, pressure groups and mass media can play an important role in this regard. Hence women's modernity depends to some extent on certain factors of society. Side by side, in order to change their objective condition, viz., to
ameliorate their objective condition, women's own efforts and initiative are essential. Needless to say, women's changing self-perception is a precondition for this.

More precisely, by modernity of women, we mean a change in their self-images and self-perceptions along with betterment of objective conditions of life, leading ultimately to their acquiring a sense of emancipation from various structural, cultural, and ideological bondages.

II

The Measurement Of Modernity:

The measurement criteria of modernity bristle with difficulties. From the study of modernity by different scholars, it seems that there is a lack of consensus on this issue. Some scholars tend to emphasize universal criteria of modernity, i.e., criteria which should be so chosen as to be applicable, irrespective of the context of modernity. Others are of the opinion that the criteria of modernity should be selected in
local terms, i.e., the indicators should be chosen according to context. We may mention a number of authors who in their studies have shown a tendency to adopt universal criteria of modernity.

Inkeles states very cogently that the indicators of individual modernity should be universal. What defines man as modern in one country also defines him as modern in another. Because, the elements or components of personality do not vary randomly or even relatively freely.

Dube's summary of the attributes of modernity as cited in the previous section shows his preference for the universal criteria of modernity.

Allan Schnaiberg has also chosen to define and operationalise the concept of modernism in an absolute fashion rather than relying on relative or perceived change. He states that the legitimate areas of investigation which come under the rubric of modernism should be treated as universal.


Now we may present the views of other scholars who stress context specific criteria of modernity. Stephenson and Weinberg adopt a relativistic, context specific perspective in measuring modernism. Similarly Sharma and Napier contend that the concept of modernism needs to be defined, operationalised and measured completely in local terms.

We would like to opine that the diversity of views among social scientists on this question indicates that the criteria of modernity cannot be adopted universally. The concept of modernity has still not acquired a universal connotation. One criterion may or may not be suitable to one society. Hence, the criterion unsuitable for one country should not be selected in measuring modernity of that country. Hence, some criteria of modernity should be selected in consonance

39 Ibid., for the views of Stephenson and Weinberg.
with specific context. On the other hand, some criteria or some characteristics of modernity have been highlighted in all the writings of the propounders of modernity. We may say, modernity has some characteristics which are universal. So, some universal indicators should be adopted for measuring modernity of any particular society.

In our study, we have chosen both universal and context specific criteria to measure the level of modernity. In selecting the indicators of modernity, we have been guided mainly by their heuristic value, knowing fully well that there may be many other indicators of modernity as well.

It is worth emphasizing here that although we have borrowed our indicators from Western scholars who are in favour of universal criteria of modernity, in framing our questionnaire we have so arranged our questions as to make them context specific and relevant to measure the modernity of women of our society.

Let us discuss the indicators of modernity as used by various scholars in their measurement of modernity and from which we have also chosen selectively our own indicators for measuring the modernity of the women of West Bengal.

Recognizing certain modernizing influences, Alex Inkeles considers that modernity test is a test of attitudes and values
touching on basic aspects of a man's orientation to nature, to time, to fate, to politics, to women and to God. Accordingly, he refers to a set of personal qualities which may be regarded as outstanding characteristics of a modern man. These are: (1) Openness to new experience both with people and with new ways of doing things, (2) The assertion of increasing independence from the authority of traditional figures like parents and shift of allegiance to leaders of government, public affairs, trade unions, cooperatives and the like, (3) belief in science and medicine and a general abandonment of passivity and fatalism in the face of life's difficulties, and (4) ambition for oneself and one's children to achieve high occupational and educational goals. Men who manifest these characteristics, (5) like people to be on time and show an interest in carefully planning their affairs in advance. It is also part of the personal qualities to, (6) show strong interest and take an active part in civic and community affairs and local politics, and (7) to strive energetically to keep up with the news and within this effort to prefer news of national and international affairs. 41

Some of the characteristics of modern man as suggested by Inkeles are particularly suitable to Western countries. On the other hand, some of the characteristics may be adopted as universal. Accordingly, we have adopted some of the characteristics referred to by him and discarded others which are not relevant to our study.

Making a distinction between attitudinal modernity, i.e., individual modernity and societal modernity, David H. Smith and Alex Inkeles refer to a complex but coherent set of psychic dispositions manifested in general qualities such as a sense of efficacy, readiness for new experience and interest in planning, linked, in turn to certain dispositions to act in institutional relations as in being an active citizen, valuing science, maintaining one's autonomy in kinship matters and accepting birth control.

Most of the indicators of individual modernity which have been described as personal qualities are acceptable to our study. But the above-mentioned indicators are inadequate regarding the testing of modernity of women. Hence we have chosen a few indicators from the works of other scholars which fit in with the purpose of the present study.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith has attached significance to certain characteristics of modernity. As pointed out by him, "modernity in the world at large is in process of rendering feasible the gradual transformation of human life from what it has been into what we choose to make it. Our awareness that this is so, our choosing that we will strive for one thing rather than another (whatever that choice be; but it has to be made), and our ability to implement our decision technically - these are the measure of our being modern" 43.

He has rightly hinted at some of the criteria, applying which modernity can be measured in precise term. What is needed is the elaboration of these characteristics covering various aspects of life. Among various indicators of modernity we have taken, those of Smith's also have been incorporated.

Allan Schnaiberg focuses on the coherence of the behavioural and attitudinal characteristics of individuals who have been exposed to modernizing influences such as urban residence and education. He uses six indexes with reference to which modernity can be measured. These are: (1) mass media, (2) extended-family, (3) nuclear family role structure, (4) religiosity, (5) environmental orientation, and (6) production/consumption behaviour 44.

According to him, a common denominator among the measures appears to lie in an "emancipation" complex, consisting of participation in mass media consumption and an egalitarian nuclear family structure. He further states that the emancipation of women appears to be the root of modernism, at least female modernism\(^{45}\) (emphasis ours).

The criteria of modernity used by Schnaiberg seem to fit in with our study. He throws light on the indexes through which one can measure the level of modernity of women at least within the family spheres. The idea of the emancipation complex employed by him is again of utmost significance as pointing to the root of the problem of female modernity. In framing our questionnaire, we have incorporated the indicators used by him, as we consider those quite relevant to the specific socio-cultural context of our country. The major snag we came across in his analysis of the roots of female modernity is that he does not touch upon the question of economic freedom of women or even though he might have subsumed the same under his idea of an emancipation complex, he does not show clearly the relationship of economic freedom to such a "complex". He does not also refer to politics as an important variable impinging on modernity of women.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., p.399, p.419.
Going through all these indicators/criteria of modernity as adopted by various scholars, we have chosen a few indicators in framing our questionnaires for testing the level of modernity of our respondents. What follows will be a brief enumeration of these indicators and also the rationale behind the selection of those.

At the outset, however, we would like to note, following Schnaiberg, that each of the measures of modernism represents a distinct behavioural sphere, so that individuals may be modern in one sphere and traditional in another. We have chosen six indicators of modernity which have a bearing on women's modernity. These are as follows: (a) openness to innovation and change and readiness to new experience. It is generally agreed by all the propounders of modernity that the notion of modernity is related to change and novelty. It is considered that a man should adopt changes which are needful and rational in changed condition of a society and should adapt himself to new ways of life in the passage from tradition to modernity. We consider that this indicator is equally applicable to the measurement of modernity of women in India. Since women have a special role in family we prepare our questionnaire on the basis of this indicator with reference to some important social issues which are related to the family spheres.

The Indian family system is undergoing a process of transition at present. Traditional joint families are gradually disintegrating, causing the emergence of nuclear family. Our women's exposure to such changes calls for a change in their attitude toward family relationships. Their readiness to adapt themselves to such changes may be considered an indicator of their modernity. A woman will be regarded as modern if she is in favour of abolishing old social customs and practices such as child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage etc. Similarly the level of a woman's modernity is indicated by her attitude towards romantic marriage, registry marriage, intercaste marriage, divorce etc.

(b) Belief in science and technology and a general abandonment of passivity and fatalism -

From our discussion on the concept of modernity, it is obvious that the advancement of science and technology and their growing application to human life constitute an essential prerequisite for modernity. Science and technology, on the one hand, emancipate the human being from various bonds of supernatural forces and on the other make human life easy and comfortable, producing various modern gadgets. Due to the progress of science and technology, human beings have been to
some extent able to develop scientific, rational outlook. They have minimized their reliance on fatalism. In order to achieve prosperity in life, they stress human control and not the intervention of other supernatural forces. In this way, one may become self-confident.

We have adopted this indicator because it is particularly relevant to test the modernity of women of orthodox Hindu society. It is considered that Indian women are generally religious minded i.e., they stress supernatural forces rather than science as the means of their salvation. But now the women, although very limited in number, are receiving science education. Hence they may change their outlook in this direction. Particularly, the family planning method, a great scientific invention has relieved them from the agony of bearing too many children. To what extent women are consciously making use of family planning devices will be an index to measure their modernity. It is also useful to see whether the advancement of science makes them self-confident which is an important factor of modernity.

Accordingly, we have arranged our questionnaire centering around this indicator. For example, we have enquired about our respondents' attitude towards family planning, their
readiness to take up jobs and confidence in their own abilities. To what extent, our respondents have abandoned passivity and fatalism can be measured in terms of their attitude to marriage and employment.

(c) Interest in planning -

To be modern, a man or a woman should regulate his/her life through reasonable thinking. So planning is another feature of modernity which makes men and women conscious about themselves. In order to measure the modernity of women in our society, this indicator is useful. Generally it is believed that our women are guided by other male members of the family. They let others determine the course of their lives. Through this indicator we may try to find out whether they deliberately choose their activities of life. To be modern, women in our society must develop a positive approach towards leading a planned life.

On the basis of this indicator, our respondents have been asked questions the answer to which would reveal their awareness and also interest about planning. For example, we have enquired about our respondents' interest in getting a job after marriage, planning for marriage, child bearing and child
rearing. We have also enquired about the goals behind taking education.

(d) Interest in politics -

To engage in politics means to get involved in larger society which is a distinctive indication of modernity. Politics makes one aware of the socio-political problems around oneself. Political involvement enables a man to articulate his demands through political channels. Various sections of people may organize themselves in and around political organizations. Interest in politics at least indicates one's attitude towards socio-political problems.

In our study of modernity of women, this indicator is crucial for determining the political status of women in our society. In order to explore the extent of their interest and involvement in politics, we have arranged our questionnaire keeping in mind, the indicator of political interest. Women's involvement in politics indicates their willingness to involve themselves in political activities beyond their household activities. At least, interest in politics shows their level of consciousness about politics. A woman who is not at all interested in politics can not be regarded as modern. Because she wants to keep herself aloof from one important part of life, namely, politics.
(e) Contact with mass media -

Exposure to mass communication is universally acknowledged as an indicator of modernity. In order to test the modernity of individuals, both men and women, this indicator may be taken. This has special relevance to the measurement of women's modernity in our society. It is generally presupposed that women want to confine their knowledge within local community. So this indicator will help us to see whether they extend their knowledge beyond their narrow boundary of lives. The inquisitiveness of our women about the larger society will be detected through this indicator. We have framed our questionnaire in such a way that their contact with various types of mass media would reveal their level of modernity. A modern woman will be interested to collect various kinds of information through newspapers, radio, T.V., magazines, books, movies etc. Thus she will be in a position to shift the focus of her interest from local affairs into larger issues and events.

(f) Consciousness about the emancipation of women -

Needless to say, this indicator is most vital for testing the modernity of women. This is more applicable to our women,
because several socio-economic bondages have been imposed upon them through centuries. We consider that the economic emancipation of women will bring about changes in the status of women both in the family and in the larger social sphere.

The conception of our respondents about their emancipation - economic and social - has been tested through a barrage of questions we have put to them. Since we look upon women's economic emancipation, that is, their economic self-sufficiency as the core of their social and political emancipation, we have framed our questions in such a manner as to elicit responses from them regarding their conception of economic emancipation. That is why our questionnaire focuses on women's vocational training, women's employment as an essential condition for their liberation. Their attitudes towards economic status have been tested through a series of questions.

So far we have discussed in brief the six indicators which we have used in preparing our questionnaire. We should make here one final observation - the list of indicators chosen by us is by no means exhaustive.

Through the answers to our questionnaire based on the six
indicators of modernity, we propose to measure the modernity of Bengali women at the subjective level, in the spheres of family, employment and politics. To measure their modernity at the objective level, we explore the extent to which their status has been raised in these spheres. Since the major focus of the present study is on the impact of education on modernity of women of West Bengal at both the subjective and objective levels, as we have interpreted those, we make a brief digression in the next section, to examining the relationship between education, especially higher education and modernity.

III

Relationship between Education and Modernity:

After dwelling upon the concept of modernity, we will now examine the relationship between education and modernity. It should be referred to here that by education, we mean formal education which is imparted through schools, colleges, universities and research institutions. The formal educational
system has twin aspects—formal aspect, viz., curriculum, content etc. and informal aspect, viz., organization. While we will be examining the relationship between education and modernity, we will take into consideration both these aspects of education.

The relationship between education and modernity has long been recognized by social scientists. They consider education as an independent variable and they take modernity as a dependent variable. It is considered that modernity, especially individual modernity, is dependent on educational system of a country. That is to say, education, particularly higher education, has a pivotal role in bringing about individual modernity. It leads to changes both in the socio-economic structure providing skills and technology and in the value complex/orientation of thinking of an individual. According to S.C. Dube, education can be a most potent instrument of modernity. On the one hand, it seeks to promote knowledge and to develop skills, both of which are essential for the furtherance of the goals of modernization. On the other, it produces changes in values and attitudes which are also not without significance⁴⁷. No doubt, education is not the sole factor leading to modernity.

There are other ingredients of modernity such as urbanization, mass communication, industrialization (economic development), democratization (active political participation of men and women) etc. We may argue that all these factors are related to education. One cannot deny the fact that in an age of science and technology, and rationalization in the economy, educated and trained manpower is a precondition for industrialization and urbanization. Education enhances the opportunities of employment which enable one to be self-confident along with being self-sufficient. That is why priority is attached to education by planners and policy makers of developing countries.

Consumption of mass-media is a function of education. Needless to say, the utilization of mass-media is to a large extent dependent on education, e.g., reading newspapers, books, journals are directly connected with the extent of growth of education.

Higher education is also related to active political participation. Certain political philosophies are instilled into the minds of the students for serving political purposes, through education. Thus they get inspiration from the educational system to participate in political activities. In a vast country
like India, the students often play a vital role in electoral politics. Education is also leading our women to come into politics.

Hence, one may argue that education is the most powerful determinant of modernity. One may examine the extent to which education may contribute to modernity. We attempt to ascertain the relationship between education and modernity from two different but inter-related standpoints. First, we judge the relationship between education and changes in the objective conditions of men and women creating the necessary ambience of modernity. In other words, we see the extent of the contribution of education towards national development which leads to the improvement of the objective condition of an individual. Second, we examine the impact of education on the subjective aspects of modernity. That is to say, we examine, to what extent, education plays an effective role in working to change the attitude or the mental make-up of men and women, congenial to modernity.

Now, we are dwelling on the first aspect. There is no doubt that education, particularly higher education, can produce objective conditions of modernity in several ways. One cannot conceive of modernity without the existence of higher education. It is perhaps a truism that education positively
correlates with economic growth and development of a country. Investment in education is necessary in a developing country like India for better utilization of the huge manpower and also for building up the social infrastructure that will facilitate modernization of the economy. Expansion of female education is functional not only to modernity in a narrow sense but also to modernization of the objective conditions of society.

Following Edward Shils, we may point out here that "the universities are emblems of modernity. They are the institutional instruments for the creation of modernity in polity, economy, society and culture." Higher education may particularly lead to economic development, providing scientists, well-trained technicians, who may help in rapid expansion of industrialization and also may increase the agricultural production using scientific method in it. Social sciences may also play a role in effecting modernity through pointing out the various problems of society.

In a developing country, social scientists may also spread modernity by highlighting the backward areas of society and suggesting certain changes of social structure to keep an eye on various types of social problems which retard modernity. Through the results of their research work they may

make some policy suggestions for accelerating the modernization of a society. Hence not only the scientific-skilled people and technologists play a role in creating modern society, but also the planners, policy makers and political elites play an effective role in the creation of modernity. And the planners and policy makers of a country are generally drawn from specialists in various branches of social sciences. Besides, education, leading to the growth of art, literature and fine arts, may enrich the culture of a country, which is also an aspect of modernity. Education may also create political leaders who are capable of modernizing the country.

Arnold Anderson has also shown in his article "The Modernization of Education" that education contributes to the all-rounded development of a society and thereby modernizes it. In every society, including the most democratic ones, the schools help to single out those individuals who are to become part of the elite and instruct them in some of the special skills they will need, to play their part as leaders. Education helps to select and train the culture bearers, the

creative men and the rulers. Arnold points out very aptly that education helps individual to earn a living. And it prepares men to transform occupational structure while they are working in it. 50.

It is generally assumed that education facilitates the development of industrialization. The development of industry leads to urbanization. The amenities offered by urbanization make the life of individual more easy-going. It may be mentioned that cultural institutions that develop around educational institutions provide mental pleasure and recreation. These are the ways in which education may create a favourable objective condition for modernity of men and women.

However, the correlation between higher education and various facets of modernity requires further probes. From the above discussion it may be said that economic development is the main factor which brings about other developments in social structure and thereby ensures material prosperity in individual life. Hence we stress the relationship between higher education and economic growth.

It is a truism that higher education and economic development are intimately connected. That faith is recorded in the

documents of all the international agencies and in the scholarly magazines, and it is echoed in the popular press. Of course countries cannot escape from poverty until their citizens become literate, learn to carry on complex, complicated organization. But the question is, can education alone develop the economy of a country by providing jobs and releasing productive forces in society? Education can never do that. If so, the unemployment problem of educated people would not arise. The underdeveloped societies have failed to develop job opportunities to keep pace with the expansion of education.

Secondly, no doubt education provides scope for employment. But one may raise the question, can education always provide productive employment? In a developing country, productive employment leads to total growth of economy. Otherwise, unproductive employment may create inflation which stands in the way of improvement of the standard of living of individual.

Moreover, one can easily point out the deficiencies of higher education in developing countries. It is often said that

51 Ibid., p.76.
the qualities of higher education are poor in these countries. Although, it has to be acknowledged that, notwithstanding the deficiencies of educational system, universities produce some extraordinary, talented scholars who can contribute to economic growth in a country. But the standard of the majority of the higher educated persons is medium and low. So they cannot become innovative which is one of the negative points of education with regard to economic development.

Edward Shills has referred to some factors which are responsible for the low quality of education. These factors are poorly stocked and crowded libraries, scantily equipped and crowded laboratories, insufficient space and time for personal meetings between teachers and students etc. He holds the poor qualities of teachers responsible for the poor quality of education which the students receive. What Edward Shills says about the qualities of teachers in India may be mentioned here. The Indian teachers of higher educational institutions have little motive or time for improving their knowledge and their manner of teaching. Because most of the teachers in institutions of higher education teach many hours weekly for very small salaries and many of them supplement their professional income by writing notes for students or by scrambling for examinership\(^52\). We may note here that the

poor economic conditions of teachers account for poor quality of education, which, in turn, fails to contribute to proper development of the country.

How can a society break this vicious circle? It may be said that the wider social order's inept handling of education has resulted in poor qualities of students and teachers in developing countries like ours. Hence, we may argue that government has a vital responsibility to break this vicious circle.
The policy makers of education should take adequate care of the material well-being of the teachers for the development of their functions. In this context, it is worth mentioning that it is not uncommon that intellectuals of the developing countries have been able to show their competence in various fields, comparing favourably with their counterparts in the advanced countries. Lack of opportunities for research work, inadequate library and laboratory facilities often compel talented intellectuals of our country to go abroad to promote their skill and intellect. Advanced countries profit by such induced import of talents. Ironically, we have to import skilled personnel from the advanced countries at a relatively high cost. The government should aim at investing resources properly for creating favourable conditions which help a talented person to be innovative in his/her own field. The
government should patronize institutions of research and training in humanities, science and technology so that they can enhance the quality of the manpower. Larger resources should be invested in education and proper utilization of the same be made so as to arrest continuing brain drain from underdeveloped to developed countries. After creating such opportunities, certain rules can be made for checking the ongoing brain drain referred to above. Hence, the nature of the political system may determine the extent of the contribution of education to modernity. To achieve all these objectives and more, what is needed is a comprehensive education policy to be adopted by the political system of a developing country like India, in congruence with the objective circumstances of the country and the practical economic needs of the same. It has to be both productive and employment-oriented.

In order to utilize education properly as an agency of modernity, a developing country must emphasize the spread of industry for properly utilizing the talented national scholars who can contribute to the growth of economy, along with investing resources for the spread of education. We may agree with S.P. Aiyar that national development presupposes close and

continuous co-operation between Government, Industry and Higher Educational Institutions.  

Apart from encouraging and emphasizing higher talents, one cannot dispute the utility of spreading education among masses in developing countries like India, no matter whether the quality of the recipients is high or low. Education should be offered to all citizens of the country according to their talents and aptitudes. Education is necessary to enable citizens to prepare themselves for securing the means of livelihood in an achieving society where jobs are linked with acquisition of skills, training and knowledge, demanding education. As a matter of fact, all the qualities of educated people - high, medium, low - and all kinds of education are needed for a country to succeed in all its development programmes. For example, in order to run a factory or an office which has been created in the wake of industrialization, not only the higher talented persons but also people with moderate education are required. The education of social sciences which apparently seems to be less useful to national development, plays a vital role to carry out the activities of mass media without which the concept of modern society cannot become fully meaningful. Social scientists may particularly contribute to modernity in

a developing country, by finding out the means of modernity which are suitable to the country. They also may suggest the means by which the fruits of whatever limited development is achieved may be dispersed among all sections of society, irrespective of caste, class, religion, sex, etc.

The contribution of education to the shaping of political processes of a country cannot be denied. In a number of countries, including ours, where franchise has been introduced, effective participation in the decision-making process of a country calls for a modicum of education.

No question can be raised concerning the utility of education in the national development, but there is a limit to what education can do for serving this purpose, unless it is strongly supported by other modernizing influences.

In India, education, particularly higher education, has to some extent contributed to economic growth as well as socio-political development. Indian universities have been able to provide some of the skills necessary for our growing society. It has also helped in creating the generalist administrators

for the civil service and the able executives for the country's expanding industry\textsuperscript{56}. But education cannot enable our economy to be self-sufficient. As a result, right to work of the citizens, including the higher educated persons, has not been recognized in our society. At the same time, it cannot be denied that since independence, both education and industrialization have expanded but education has advanced much faster than industries. The slow progress of industrialization has not been able to meet the rising expectations of people, especially the educated job-seekers. Particularly, some disadvantaged sectors of our society are not in a position to enjoy the benefits of economic development. In a society where opportunities for higher education and employment have grown disproportionately, the consequent burden of unemployment has been distributed unevenly among different sections of society. Women in India, rightly regarded as constituting a 'disadvantaged sector' of the society, have fallen a victim to this malady. The sight of highly educated and talented women engaging themselves ungrudgingly to unpaid household work, in the absence of suitable openings for utilization of their talents and abilities is not uncommon. The irony is that the state pays for their education, but, subsequently does nothing

to guarantee a fruitful return from the initial investment.

In this context, it may be noted here that education has a special bearing on modernity of women in India because it is one of the means for the Indian women's getting an entry into the employment market, especially, in the service sector, on a par with men. Employment, as we will show later on, is an important guarantee to our women's becoming modern in the real sense of the term.

The problem is that our society has not emphasized the preconditions whereby education contributes to modernity through performing its functions. That is to say, our economy does not have the capacity to absorb all the educated people.

Above all, the educational system has some limitations which hinder economic development and thereby, the material prospects of individuals. For instance, in India, the scope of vocational training through properly equipped educational institutions is limited. For women, such opportunities are even more restricted.

However, despite several limitations in our educational and economic system, it has to be mentioned that higher education has to some extent made an impact on national development. Our higher educational system has led to some progress
in our economy. Now education is one of the chief gateways to a wide variety of jobs and offices. Hence the need of education for the creation of modernity cannot be disputed.

We may argue that education and economy are interlinked. The development of economy of a country cannot become satisfactory without the spread of education. On the other hand, education cannot modernize the economy without adequate resources necessary for economic improvement. In order to develop the economy, the policy makers should emphasize both aspects - viz., education, and the creation of job opportunities for utilizing education.

Although the development of urbanization and mass communication is not quite satisfactory, it has to be acknowledged that the process of urbanization around industries and educational institutions has started. Needless to mention, our educated people play an important role in proper functioning of mass communication.

In our society, education has a bearing on political participation. In a vast country like India, political democracy

can be meaningful only with a sustained campaign for spread of education among different backward sections of society. Women are no exception in this case. But the number of women who have directly participated in various political power structures is meagre in relation to total educated women, and menfolk in our society.

It may be said that education in our society has only made a partial impact on modernizing the material life of the individual but it cannot contribute much to create the objective condition for modernity of our society.

Change resistant social structures, the nature of wider social order, the deficiency in educational system account for the slow rate of modernity in India.

Now we concentrate on the impact of education on subjective dimension of modernity which is no less important, rather, more important in some particular cases. Social scientists, specially sociologists stress the role of education in bringing about psychic mobility which makes a man/woman modern in the subjective level. As S.P.Aiyar contends, education is now regarded as a factor of economic development. That is why, it is looked upon as an investment relating to the needs of development. But we must not lose sight of the time-honoured
view of education which stressed the cultivation of mind$^{58}$. Education in both arts and science has an impact on the minds of the recipients. It contributes to promote and develop new knowledge—whether it relates to physical and technological subjects or to the human behavioural subjects—which always raises questions about older assumptions on which older practices were based. So education becomes the initiator of change$^{59}$ which is regarded as an important factor of the subjective dimension of modernity. Arnold Anderson has also pointed out the importance of education in causing changes in the attitudes, values and beliefs of individuals which are needed for a developing/modern state. He says that through education, a people learns how to behave so that there can be an effective modern state and society. In an educational system, the recipients develop new conceptions of what kind of persons they are. They adopt new rules for their conduct and acquire loyalties to new ideas and groups$^{60}$.

Let us see what kind of values, ideas and beliefs does education spread which are conducive to modernity. Let us also examine how does education spread such values and ideas among its recipients.

If changes in the system of ideas and values are indicator of modernity as suggested by many, education is beyond doubt the means to that end. Alex Inkeles also recognizes the importance of education as a modernizing influence on attitude. Accordingly, he supports the well-established view that education is perhaps the most important of the influences moving men away from traditionalism toward modernity in developing countries.\(^{61}\)

Education diffuses modern values in diverse ways. Through the teaching of Science, Humanities, Social Sciences and Literature, education makes the girls and boys aware of things hitherto unknown to them. Through education, they become conscious of such values as liberty, equality, rationality etc. - values which are universally regarded as symptoms of modernity. It removes narrowness of vision and imagination, drives out various prejudices and superstitions, instils

confidence in one's capacity to transform his/her environment in the desired direction and arouses a sense of emancipation from various bonds of nature and society. It dispels one's belief in supernatural, mysterious forces or the feeling of passivity and resignation before a divine will. It destroys mental stereotypes relating to religious bigotry. Caste or communal prejudices which are major stumbling blocks to modernity can be eradicated to a large extent through the spread of education. In other words, it produces the qualities of mind which will further the modernization of society at all levels. It is expected that the university must become a powerful enclave generating the ideas of modern culture.\textsuperscript{62}

Imaginationately and purposively employed, following Dube, one may say that education performs several functions which have a bearing on modernity:

(i) Education suggests alternatives to tradition and indicates the paths through which the new goals can be achieved.

(ii) It trains individuals in skills which are essential to expand the horizons of mind - the opening of mind and personality.

(iii) It projects new values and images. Broadened mental horizons permit absorption of new attitudes on a larger scale.

(iv) It projects the desirability and possibility of higher standards of life. It also raises the levels of expectation.
(v) It increases the individuals' self-confidence and also helps the people to think that events in this world are calculable and open to reasonable human control.
(vi) It may also perform the function of a mobility multiplier. It does alter rigid forms of stratification.63

But all the functions performed by education and all the values produced by education leading to modernity as mentioned above depend on how it is used. It has two sides. It can satisfy the objectives of traditionalists just as well as it can satisfy the objectives of modernists.64 Hence the immediate contribution of education to modernity is to a large extent determined by the educationists who frame the content and curricula. The Government or the political system also has a role to play in this connection. In order to ensure that the right type of persons are recruited to positions of educational planners, education ministers, Vice-chancellors, Chairmen and members of various educational boards and communities etc., the recruitment procedures must

64 Ibid., p. 508.
be sufficiently impersonal and objective and the basis of recruitment must be merit and achievement that are relevant to the positions involved. It all depends on whether education itself is modernized. The content of education must have to be liberal and must reflect the new values - equality, rationality, scientific attitude, secularism, achievement orientation and readiness to change, and faith in the ability of effort to effect social change.

No educational system can be considered apart from the society in which it is situated. As education cannot spread modernity in the societies which seek to maintain their traditional cultural heritage, education may have little or no effect in changing individuals' perspectives. In these cases, education may change the values of an individual for a time only but his basic belief and values are determined by his family and community.

Now the question is, can the formal aspect of education alone bring about modernity? It is useful to observe that higher education facilitates change of values through various informal ways. Students and teachers share their experiences with one another, transmit new values in course of intellectual interactions which may take different forms - debates, symposia, cultural programmes, informal gossip etc. Students may participate in various organized movements centering around a whole range of issues which may be economic, political and socio-cultural. Through such participation, students become aware of the ills of society and the remedies to those. They also acquire a spirit of self-confidence, a sense of their possessing certain rights, an impulse of activism. Thus students learn to be modern not only from the prescribed books in their courses or from the lectures delivered in the classroom but also from fellow students and friends and from all those with whom they come in contact, in course of pursuing their activities in and around the educational institutions.

Alex Inkeles has rightly pointed out:

"the school is evidently also an important training ground for inculcating values. It teaches ways of orienting oneself toward others, and of conducting oneself, which could have important bearing on the performance of one's adult roles in the structure of modern society. These effects of the school reside not mainly in its formal, explicit, self-conscious, pedagogic activity, but rather are inherent in the school as an organization. The modernizing effects follow not from the school's curriculum, but rather from its informal, implicit
and often unconscious programme for dealing with its young charges"69.

It will not perhaps be unfair to argue that informal aspect of education has a greater impact on women's modernity. Because, educational institutions are the main centres where they get exposed to the larger society. Their level of modernity is of course determined by the environment where the educational institution is located. It is somewhat more likely that the diffusion of female education to rural areas will lead to substantial increments in the average level of rural modernism and more likely still that migration to urban areas, coupled with greater access to urban educational opportunity, will induce higher levels of modernism. The emancipation of women - the freedom to participate as equals in family interaction and to extend their knowledge beyond the confines of the local community - appears intimately linked with such educational development 70.

The contribution of informal aspect of education to subjective dimension of modernity also to some extent depends on the relationship between the teacher and taught. Unless the

orientation of the teachers is liberal and they help the students to develop a friendly relationship with themselves, the pupils are not capable of fostering certain modern values. The superiority complex of teachers leading to pedagogic relationship with their students may be a hinderance to, rather than a promoter of modernity. In attempting to inculcate modern attitudes among young students, the teachers also need to modernize themselves.

Regarding the impact of formal education upon one's attitude to modernity, reference may be made to the Indian case. As the governing elite of the Indian Society has been determined to modernize its social, political and economic institutions very rapidly through peaceful ways, it desires its educational system to play a modernizing role. It believes that educational system can play a significant role in producing necessary changes. This is reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy, in the governmental efforts to reconstruct the educational system and also in declarations of the government's education policy. At present, the goal of the educational system in India is to develop in the younger generation, new values, attitudes and behaviours in harmony with a rational, equalitarian, secular-achievement and change-oriented and participant society.71

But the orientation of education at the primary/secondary level is sharply at variance with that at the college/university level. The content and form of education at the primary and secondary level are not liberal and rational in nature. For example, the authors of text books at primary and secondary levels of education do often sanction the existence of supernatural powers. Accordingly, the boys/girls are not taught to consider rationalism as a guiding principle of life. Besides, it seems that most of the teachers in primary and secondary schools are unaware of the new ideas, values and beliefs and it is reasonably certain that with a few exceptions, they are not in sympathy with modernity. Naturally, they cannot carry it to others.

On the contrary, it is said that scientific ideas are imparted in the course of college and university levels of education. The content of education at this level is modern and liberal in nature. It stresses contemporary social, political and historical issues. Now, Indian educational system is oriented to the present and future. Various disciplines like History, Political Science, Economics etc. draw the attention of students to social and physical realities and to the world view of contemporaneity.  

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But the fact is that higher education in India has expanded without proper plan and it has not contributed much in respect of the spread of modernity. Government, for the most part, has just responded to the ever-pressing demands of the population for educational opportunities without any concern for the identification and protection of talent, the maintenance of standards and the modernization of educational programmes\textsuperscript{73}. Number of universities in India has gone up to 140 by now. Between 1950-83, the number of pre-degree colleges also rose to 5,246. Enrolments in higher education also have increased in almost all faculties and specializations, as noted in a document, recently prepared by the Ministry of Education, Government of India\textsuperscript{74}. The quantitative educational expansion leads to colleges being located in semi-rural areas. But the well qualified teachers do not want to serve in these colleges with the apprehension that their academic talents will fall into disuse in the absence of a well-equipped student community in such places. The quality of education of these colleges has not been up to the mark for a number of socio-economic and cultural constraints. Their curriculum has not been modernized and teaching methods have remained outmoded\textsuperscript{75}. Courses


which are taught, often reinforce traditional values and beliefs rather than countering those. S.P. Aiyar remarks that despite all the talk of curriculum modernization, what is taught is often unrelated to the needs of our society. Particularly the Arts courses of Indian Universities are practically devoid of liberal content. A pronounced male bias has been noted in the curricula and textbooks on humanities and literature in India. This is a glaring manifestation of the traditionalist orientation in our education which offends the very notion of male-female parity, an ingredient of modernity, of female modernity in particular. As Yogendra Singh observes, whereas modernization has in some forms been welcomed in our educational system, there has also been a conscious effort to preserve the traditional values.

Besides, the prevailing trend of teacher-taught relationship in India is still not adequately conducive to the spread of modern values. The behaviour patterns of teachers and students are so oriented as to give rise to an authoritarian culture in most of the institutes of higher education. Teachers often become intolerant of criticism and intellectual

opposition. Students are taught above everything else to be submissive and obedient to the deliverer of knowledge. This goes against the very basis of modernity.

But it has to be recognized that higher education in India, even in its qualitatively decreased and quantitatively expanded form, and notwithstanding the deficiencies in its informal aspect, has an important role to bring necessary changes, congenial to subjective dimension of modernity. It alone has been responsible for the growth of an enlightened intelligentsia which carried forward a relentless struggle for social and cultural reforms. Its modernizing significance is self-evident. It has contributed to modernity by the growth of new forms of rationally organized structures in the shape of colleges and universities which are modern in ethos, e.g., the teachers are appointed and the students are admitted on the basis of educational qualifications, irrespective of caste. The students develop their friendship beyond the caste barriers. The phenomenon helps a boy/girl to get rid of the caste prejudices.

Above all, modernity in its subjective level, as a change of mind or as psychic mobility can be achieved through education

and not despite it. After all, only those who are exposed to education can challenge its content and the manner of imparting it. The contents of education and the behavioural matrices which education entails are equally susceptible to change, to be effected by those who have passed through the process of learning.

Now the question is, can education fully determine modernity? The answer is that education has some contribution to modernity but it cannot be the sole determinant of modernity in all respects. Especially in the underdeveloped societies, education may at times be deficient in terms of both spreading modern ideas and developing the objective condition of its recipients. These two aspects are related. On the whole it may be said that education, particularly higher education, has an impact upon one's attitude to modernity but to what extent it may shape one's attitude to modernity is dependent as well on the backgrounds of those who participate in higher education, i.e., the objective living conditions of participants in education. The level of modernity of a man/woman is also to some extent determined by those aspects of the educational system which are most important in producing the changes, e.g., formal organization and curriculum.

In fine, we would like to agree with Arnold Anderson concerning the impact of education on modernity. He says that
education will upset traditional life at the same time it helps to lay the foundation for a new way of life. The more effective education is, the more sweeping will be the changes that result."79. But other concomitant changes in a sociopolitical order are required for proper functioning of education as an agency of modernity. "Almost any kind of education would bring at least a few benefits to a modernizing country but the best assurance for a stimulating and constructive educational system is to surround it with a society that has vigorous impulses toward change and initiative."80.

80 Ibid.