CHAPTER V

TRADITION AND MODERNITY – THE MUSLIM RESPONSE

Chapter V commences with a conceptualization of modernity in the Indian context, with reference to its association with tradition. Section two traces the origin of modernity in India and its course during the period of the colonial encounter. The third section discusses the modernizing project of the Indian Muslims, focusing on the major events and prominent persons who contributed to it. Section four attempts an examination of the implementation of modernity in independent India under Nehru. The chapter concludes with an analysis of modernity as experienced in the contemporary situation.

SECTION I: TRADITION - MODERNITY – A TIE-UP

Modernity is an all-permeating experience today; an event that has disseminated into every aspect of life, in every part of the world. Nevertheless, its course has not been without resistance and restraint, as a segregation from the bonds of convention is stressful for the individual. In consequence, modernity that ameliorates the quality of human life also creates certain discontents. As rightly remarked by Marshall Berman, “To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are” (15). It is this conflict that has contributed to the two, diametrically opposite, responses to it: modernity is understood by some as liberating and by others as that from which liberation is sought (P. Berger, B. Berger and Kellner 81-93).

Tradition refers to a practice that is believed to have a long pedigree, is indissoluble in nature, and is handed down from unknown
times. As against this, modernity has a contextual importance, though it is an enormously contested area. In describing the significant traits of modernity, Prabhakar Machwe says, “The idea of modernity is a relative concept, bound by temporal and spatial considerations” (1). Tradition is compelled to counter the ideas and practices heralded by modernity. Thus, the two assume their identity in relation to one another, their interdependence being an important factor. Tradition and modernity are dialectically related.

Modernization replaces old ways and modes in different fields of human activity: social, economic, cultural and political. In the sphere of social interaction, modernization has ushered in new patterns of behavior marked by “an attitude of equality with and respect for all” (Gupta, Introduction 5). Hierarchical and separatist tendencies of tradition that impeded a harmonious social relationship gave way to an empathy with others. Science and technology reinforced man’s capacity to control nature, which in turn has brought about enormous changes in the economic sphere. In the realm of politics, “democratic temper” has replaced dictatorial and autocratic regimes and simultaneously, territorial boundaries have stretched to encompass larger spaces and larger number of citizens. An elevation in the status of the human being, with the shift of emphasis from the group to the individual is, in the words of Dipankar Gupta, “modernity’s great contribution to social relations” (Introduction 5). Elaborating upon this he further adds, “Modernity is an attitude which represents universalistic norms, where the dignity of an individual as a citizen is inviolable and where one’s achievement counts for more than family background and connections” (Introduction 10).

The sum total of all these social processes, which contributed to the efflux of life in which we find ourselves, is modernity. Further, it should be noted that a mere superficial acquisition of these traits does not make one modern. Reflecting on the assimilation of the elements of modernity,
Sushila Jain writes, “Their selection in the logical order and sequence and integration into the cultural pattern in a widely ramifying manner is essential” (36).

All conventional modes of study projected tradition and modernity as two conflicting forces, always in juxtaposition with each other. Gopal and Champakalakshmi make the following observation about this opposition, “Implicit in the binary opposition between tradition and modernity is the assumption of a stagnant past and a dynamic present. It is as if tradition represents continuity and modernity expresses the power of transformation” (1-2). Conventional studies depict the forces that work behind tradition like revelation and reaction to be the opposites of reason and liberalism, the ideals of modernity. Daniel Brown observes, “Such an approach presumes a clear-cut dichotomy between tradition and modernity, a presumption which is deeply rooted in Enlightenment thought, but which deserves re-examination” (2).

Gusfield has pointed out some of the “fallacies” that contributed to the acceptance of the polarity between tradition and modernity. They are: developing societies have been static, traditional culture is a consistent body of norms and values, traditional society is a homogeneous social structure, modernization replaces traditional structure, the two cultures (tradition and modernity) are always in conflict, modernization weakens tradition, and the two are exclusive in nature and character (qtd. in N. K. Jain 25). According to Rudolph and Rudolph the comparative method of analysis widely used by the Western votaries of modernity in confronting their colonized subjects, has largely contributed to their dichotomy. The historically dominant classes, in their anxiety to depict the subjugated groups as their “other”, have overlooked the possibility of a link; a continuity between their practices and those of their adversaries. They go on to add, “The myths and realities of Western experience set limits to the social scientific imagination; and modernity becomes what we imagine
ourselves to be” (7). Ruminating on this imagined dichotomy, the authors further say, “The assumption that modernity and tradition are radically contradictory rests on the misdiagnosis of tradition as it is found in traditional societies, a misunderstanding of modernity as it is found in modern societies and a misapprehension of the relationship between them” (3). It is not surprising that the advocates of tradition have not shown a preference for comparative analysis. Daniel Brown has made an enlightening observation in this regard, “Rather than viewing modernity as a source of light, dispelling the darkness of tradition, we should instead imagine tradition as a beam of light, refracted by the prism of modernity” (3). The current of ideas that originated from the polemics of such thinkers, has not been in favor of unmixed modernism. Therefore, even the rigidly anti-traditional schools of thought have begun to question at least some aspects of modernity, negating the conventional view that tradition is in conflict with modernity.

The established dichotomy between tradition and modernity also has been questioned and challenged by other scholars who argue that such an opposition is merely imagined. Far from being incompatible and at variance with each other, tradition and modernity are for them forces that confront, interact with and influence each other, making a discourse of continuity possible.

The pattern of modernity that is at work in our nation at present itself explicates the interaction and co-existence of tradition and modernity. Political democracy, a distinguishing trait of modernity, has resulted in a multiplication of political groups based on caste and religion, which are associated with convention and regress. Modernization sharpens religio-cultural identities, demonstrating once again that it is not in conflict with tradition. Richard G. Fox has rightly said, “Secularism and communalism arose together inside the institution of modernity” (13).
Tradition and modernity are two co-existing elements in the ceaseless process of history. While many of the traditional structures are giving way to modern ones, in certain categorical values people show a tenacious tendency to remain conservative. So, every society remains traditional in certain respects and modern in certain other respects. Our nation's encounter with the colonial regime presents countless instances of individuals and societies refusing to place themselves at the opposite poles of tradition and modernity, but locating themselves in between the two. For instance, in the political movement initiated by Mahatma Gandhi the core of his ideals rested on his faith in dharma, a traditional Hindu principle, while in his humanism that cut across all social hierarchies, he was a true modernist. As Bikhu Parekh observes, "... though Gandhi valued tradition, he was not a traditionalist ... though he stressed the role of reason, he was not a rationalist" (23).

Prior to Gandhi, during an earlier period in the history of the nation, Saiyid Ahmed Khan, a fervent advocate of Muslim modernity evinced such a tendency to place himself between tradition and modernity. This is evident in Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal's critique of his modernity, "While making some compromises with the British, the Aligarh movement initiated by Saiyid Ahmed still jealously guarded against intrusions into what was termed custom as well as personal law" (113).

SECTION II: ORIGIN OF MODERNITY - THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE

The concept of modernity originated in Europe. In retrospect, it is possible to trace certain rudiments of modernity in the European civilization, even from the fifteenth century. However, in tracing its lineage, the founding moment is located in the eighteenth century, in the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment is an intellectual movement that swept across the European continent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, bringing radical changes in the conception of God, Reason, Nature and Man. Reason stood at the core of the movement. It was also
recognized as the gateway to knowledge and happiness. The amalgamation of the ideas that originated from this awakening had a profound impact upon contemporary cultural, social, economic and political systems.

In the discourses on the Enlightenment, Descartes (1596-1650), a revolutionary thinker of the seventeenth century, is recognized as the one to have initiated the intellectual process that gave rise to modernity. Newton (1642-1727), John Locke (1632-1704), Condillac (1715-'80) and then David Hume (1711-'76) and Adam Smith (1723-'90) are all acknowledged for the pivotal role they played in the founding of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century and in its consolidation in the years that followed.

Voltaire and Diderot led the intellectual movement in France. Voltaire’s chief contribution was that he linked the scientific temperament generated by the movement to social reforms. With this, the revealed religion lost its hold on men and it came to be admitted that a sense of morality could exist independent of religion. Voltaire’s *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764), a work that attacked religious beliefs and prejudices, is a brilliant treatise on European Enlightenment. The publication of the encyclopedia, edited by Diderot and D’Alembert, to which intellectuals from different fields of study had contributed, is recognized as the most significant work of the Enlightenment. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant’s “Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung” (1784) identifies the search for freedom as the most fundamental aspect of the Enlightenment and also points out the rest of the essential characteristics of the Movement (qtd. in Anderson 366).

The Enlightenment with its accent on reason, empiricism, science, progress, secularism and universalism in the nineteenth century became
associated with industrialisation and the social, economic and cultural changes that it ushered in. In the twentieth century it came to be accepted by many non-Western societies, chiefly in the European colonies in the East.

Like every intellectual movement, the Enlightenment too had to face the predicament of censure. The first critique of the movement came from Jean Jacques Rousseau. He found the growth of knowledge at variance with 'the virtues of the good heart' (Anderson 376). His basic opposition to the movement springs from his belief that freedom, the most important ideal of the Enlightenment, could not be left to the self-determination of the individual. Marshall Berman makes the following observation on Rousseau's critique of the Enlightenment, "Rousseau astounded his contemporaries by proclaiming that European society was "at the edge of the abyss", on the verge of the most explosive revolutionary upheavals" (17). The tone of dissent is also heard in the words of Marx (1818-83), himself a modernist, "On the one hand, there have started into life industrial and scientific forces which no epoch of human history had ever suspected. On the other hand, there exist symptoms of decay, far surpassing the horrors of the latter times of the Roman Empire" (qtd. in Berman 19-20).

Marshall Berman points out that Marx found that this life is radically contradictory at its base (19). Many more advocates of European modernity are also heard denouncing modern life determined by the values of the Enlightenment. The ideals of universal emancipation that gave a firm footing to the Enlightenment, suffered a set back even as early as the late eighteenth century, so that by the twentieth century it was replaced by universal oppression. The sanctity of the Enlightenment does not hold good any more, with the Whiteman's interpretation of the world from his own perspective and his agenda of imposing his ideas regarding freedom and reason on the rest of the world, being exposed through the
treatises of Edward Said, Jaquis Derida and other twentieth century intellectuals.

Despite the emergence of many forms of modernity in the twentieth century, the eighteenth century European Enlightenment and the modernizing process that it initiated are looked upon as the originator of all these movements, as is explicit in Eisenstadt's definition of modernization:

Historically, modernization is the process of changing towards those types of social, economic, and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth and have then spread to other European countries and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the South American, Asian and African countries (1).

The type of modernity that a nation acquires largely depends upon the value system of its tradition. The Indian tradition, prior to the colonial encounter had certain distinct traits. Yogendra Singh identifies the principles of Indian tradition as "hierarchy, holism, continuity and transcendence" (191). For a long period of time, from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries, Indian tradition had experienced the invasion of the alien culture of Islam, an invasion that was sporadic and random. Though the spirit of modernity underlies the basic tenets of Islam, in practice, especially in India, it took a traditional pattern. As rightly pointed out by Yogendra Singh, "From the view-point of modernization ... the Islamic contact was more tradition reinforcing than otherwise" (192).

Before examining the impact of the colonial encounter on the Indian traditions and culture, it deems appropriate to take a look at the image of India that the Europeans held in the eighteenth century. The philosophes of the European Enlightenment found the Orient, especially India, incomprehensible, as it appeared to be the antithesis of the values and ideals of their newly acquired modernity. S.N. Mukherjee in his
analytical study of the life and works of William Jones, reflects, "During the Enlightenment the philosophes found it hard to comprehend India that 'appeared disorderly, chaotic and superstitious'" (7). However, the group of intellectuals led by Burke and Rousseau who protested against the incongruities in the European Enlightenment, recognized the Oriental as different but not inferior. So also was their impression of Indian civilization. S. N. Mukherjee sums up this response in the following statement, "In fact India provided an example of the Orient form of state and government; her religion, with innumerable gods, Brahmanic philosophy and the claim of great antiquity, was a weapon for the Deists against the accepted chronology and Christian morality" (7).

The early administrators of British India, when they set out on their mission, were concerned with prospects of economic gains. At the same time, the intellectual developments in contemporary Europe had also made them aware of the ideological issues involved in colonization. William Jones and James Mill were two of the British representatives of this era to present their stances in two entirely different ways.

William Jones, a legal practitioner with an encyclopedic interest reached India in 1783, hoping to work for some years in an atmosphere of freedom and non-interference. It was his interest in a culture and civilization that was alien to him that inspired him to establish the Asiatick society. S. N. Mukherjee points out Jones's objective in founding the society when he says, "By establishing it Jones helped to usher in the age of scientific specialization, for forming a society which would study the Asians at close quarters and draw conclusions about their social, political and economic institutions from the observations of its members" (77). His interest in the study of Indian traditions also led him to two significant discoveries. The first was stated in his theory of the affinity of Sanskrit with the Greco-Roman languages. William Jones was the first to specify the resemblance between Sanskrit and Greek and Latin and the common
origin of all languages. Further, he studied the Hindu Pantheon and compared it with the Western classical ones and came to the conclusion that all pagans worshipped the same gods with different names. To James Mill, another prominent scholar among the British administrators, and others who belonged to his school of thought, the Orient was only to be created as the “Other” of the West. Mill asserted himself as a rationalist and accused William Jones for losing himself in his fascination for the East. He was keen on establishing the rule of colonial difference so that the inherent capacity of the Indians for self-rule was challenged.

But what Mill had missed, while he accused Jones for his affinity for the native culture, was that Jones was only looking for a common idiom to unify the empire. In the words of S.N. Mukherjee, “But, when all this was said about the greatness of the Hindu civilization, its beautiful literature, sublime religion and highly complex metaphysics, Jones did not go so far as to say as James Mill thought he did, that India was better than Europe” (109).

What James Mill and William Jones and the rest of the early British administrators did, was to disguise the programmatic purposes in their effort to assert that colonialism was not a subordination of a nation by physical might, but it had egalitarian aims. They all asserted that reason was the prerogative of the Europeans and hence their right of domination. Edward Said holds all this to be a part of the eighteenth century Orientalism which he defines as, “... the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, ... as a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (3).

Modernity came to India through colonialism. Things would have been different, if the nation did not have to reckon with its subordination
to the power which was also the harbinger of modernity. Partha Chatterjee brings this dilemma to the fore when he says, "... at the bottom the assumption was shared that the force working to alter the very foundations of society was both overwhelming and alien: the source of change itself lay outside and beyond control" (Nation and Its Fragments 135). Corroborating this thought Sudipta Kaviraj says, "The historical situation of the colonial writer was tragic because of the unjustness of the choices facing him. If he chose modernity, he had to choose subjection as its condition, or so it appeared to him. If he chose autonomy, he had modernity as a necessary price" (167). Hence, how to cope with change had been one of the major issues for the Indian intellectuals in the nineteenth century. During the early years of the nation's exposure to Western philosophies and socio-political institutions, there was a free cultural exchange, though not without inhibitions on both sides.

In analyzing the Hindu response to the colonial encounter, Bhikhu Parekh identifies four types of attitudes: "Traditionalism", "Modernism", "Critical Modernism" and "Critical Traditionalism" (42). The traditionalists were confirmed in their faith in the Indian tradition and hence dismissed the British modernity as inconsequential. They disregarded it and believed that it had nothing to do with the progress of the nation. Bhudev Mukhopadhyay was the foremost among the adherents of tradition. His devotion to tradition inspired him to attempt an alternative history of India, negating the popular European idea that all histories are alike. It is this imagined history of India that he hints at, in the title of one of his novels Swapnalabdhā Bharatvarser Itihās. It was Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay who later elaborated the idea of an alternative history of India in his literary works. Partha Chatterjee describes this phase of India's encounter with modernity, in the following observation, "The new politics of nationalism 'glorified India's past and tended to defend everything traditional'; and attempts to change customs and life-styles
began to be seen as the aping of Western manners and were thereby regarded with suspicion” (Nation and Its Fragments 116). The traditionalist response to modernization is explicit in the Bengali literature on women, produced during the nineteenth century. This theme of targeting the westernized woman, has been taken up by writers like Iswarchandra Gupta (1812-59), Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-73), Jyotirindranath Tagore (1849-1925) Upendranath Das (1848-95) and Amritalal Bose (1853-1929). The recurring tone of censure that ridiculed the westernized woman’s fascination for the ways of the memsaheb, was indirectly a reproval of the ways of the modernists.

The traditionalists, while condemning the western civilization, were also aware of the inadequacies of their own civilization. They did not make any effort to identify the shortcomings of native culture and to rectify them. In response to the colonial efforts to denigrate their culture, they asserted the spiritual superiority of India. In this glorification of the indigenous culture the medieval period came to be marked as an era of decline. Javed Alam observes, “With this extended history of domination the “foreigner” now becomes not only the British but also those, like the Muslims, who had made India their home” (104). The decisive role that Hindu revivalist modernists like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay played in projecting the Muslims as aliens is explicit in their literary works. Partha Chatterjee analyses the position taken by Bankim in the following remark, “He recognized in Islam a quest for power and glory, but he saw it as being completely devoid of spiritual or ethical qualities, a complete antithesis to his ideal religion, irrational, bigoted, devious, sensual and immoral” (Nationalist Thought 77). This enthusiasm to support the Hindu culture as the national culture as a part of asserting the spiritual superiority of the East did affect it adversely; for it was at this point in the nation’s history that India lost tolerance which is considered as its essence.
The modernists believed that India’s traditional ways and European modernity could never go together and hence they asserted that tradition should be rejected in order to make way for progress. Taking the cue from post-Renaissance European history, they believed that a clean break with the past was both possible and necessary. The basis of their faith was their belief in the dichotomy of the state and the society. Bhikhu Parekh makes the following comment on the conflict between the principles of the state and the society, “The state stood for modernity, society for tradition. The state signified consciousness, society unconsciousness. The state was a realm of rationality, society of irrational beliefs and practices” (67). They found the regeneration of the Indian society in the creation of a strong, interventionist, democratic, secular and centralized state. A liberal democratic state was what they envisioned for India.

Partha Chatterjee recounts the conflicts that Indian modernity had to face in its early years through an episode from history. ‘The Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge’, devoted to the pursuit of modern knowledge, was established in Calcutta in 1838. As a paper was being read on “The Present State of the East India Company’s Criminal Judicature and Police”, D.L. Richardson interrupted it with the objection that denouncing the Government that ruled the country in such a context amounted to treason. This was challenged by Tarachand Chakrabarthi who presided over the meeting, on the grounds that, the objection countered the very spirit of Enlightenment, that the society stood for (Nationalist Thought 275-276). The resentment among the British on the issue of Ning Durpan and the subsequent passing of the Vernacular Press Act, are instances that substantiates the undemocratic and racial approach of the British. While they equipped the Indians with the instruments of modernity, they negated its very essence in their treatment of them.
Such events throw light on the paradox of Indian modernity, which refused to break away from the core of tradition. Founded on Western rationalism, Indian modernity also asserted native cultural identity. But then one has to admit that modernity came to India as colonial modernity with its trauma, anxiety and bitterness (A. Pathak 31). With all its paradoxes, and contradictions, its Indian advocates had a convincing theory to contribute, as pointed out by Bhikhu Parekh:

It [modernism] was able to point to the European experience to show that its programme had a historical basis. Its ideas were connected with the new economic and political reality unfolding under colonial rule and had an air of realism about them. The prospect of moulding itself in the image of its rulers had a particular appeal for a subject country and since modernism proposed to take India along well-trodden paths, it made few demands on political imagination and creativity (68).

The critical modernists assumed that European and Indian civilizations could be comparatively assessed and synthesized and predicted that such a fusion would create the ideal environment for the nation’s resurgence. They saw the essentials of modernity engrained in Indian tradition, which could be incited to progress by the ideals of Western modernity. The renowned proponents of this stance like Raja Rammohun Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen and Gopal Krishna Ghokhale envisaged a more egalitarian society, castigating all social hierarchies. The innovative approach of Raja Rammohun Roy, the foremost among the critical modernists, towards social reforms would explicate the halfway point taken by them. The strong fortes of his beliefs depended upon his keen interest in the ideals of Enlightenment and his sound foundation in the Eastern scriptures. He took the teachings of the Upanishads as the essence of Hinduism and attempted to rationalize Hindu beliefs according to it. His Brahmo Samaj was founded to further this project of creative synthesis, a merging of the doctrines of the European Enlightenment with the teachings of the Upanishads. Raja Rammohun Roy played a significant
role in directing the course of the nation’s history through his contributions to the social, religious and political movements of his time. In the colonial context he took an anti-West stand, whereas within the national context his attitude was anti-medieval and anti-feudal.

The critical traditionalists, the later Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Vivekananda, Bipen Chandra Pal and Aurobindo, firmly believed that the Western and the Eastern civilizations were so conspicuously different, that a synthesis of the two was impossible. It was an ethical state that they envisaged for the nation. Aurobindo was the main proponent of the critical traditionalism. His views on the elements of Indian culture and its uniqueness would illustrate the position held by the critical traditionalists. He believed that it was the Hindu culture that formed the basis of the Indian culture. He did not deny that the traditional Hindu society with its hierarchies was not without chaos. He found the solution to this problem in a fusion of the progressive and the conservative minds (Parekh 74).

In any discussion of the nation’s alliance with tradition and modernity Gandhi occupies a significant place. He was radically different from all those who preceded him, as Bhikhu Parekh has rightly put it, “Gandhi’s thought both continued and broke with the tradition of discourse developed by his predecessors” (81). Unlike them he was a staunch critic of modern civilization, its materialism and violence. Yet, he was not a traditionalist. This is evident in his attack on the evil practices of Indian culture, untouchability and suppression of women. Rudolph and Rudolph recognize Gandhi as “one of the most conspicuous modernizers of Indian politics” (157) and thereby prove that some elements of tradition can also serve modernity. They further add, “Gandhi’s commitment to non-violence and truth (Satyagraha or truth-force), too suggests how traditional ideas can be transformed for modern purposes” (158).
Gandhi’s involvement with tradition and modernity also made him take a different approach towards colonialism. To him the colonial experience was mainly an encounter between two different civilizations. He concurred with the British in their picturisation of the Indian as the “Other”. He believed that if the West was a materialist civilization, India was truly a spiritual nation. From Rammohan Roy to Gandhi, the nationalistic consciousness was oriented towards the Indian tradition; in this matter there were differences of degrees but not of kind. The national leaders were for modernity, but not at the cost of traditional, cultural identity. Tilak and Gandhi being advocates of a kind of nationalism, which was deeply embedded in the past Hindu tradition, represent extreme forms of this movement.

In India’s political modernization Gandhi played a unique role, his greatest contribution being helping India to acquire national coherence and identity. At the same time his ideologies being grounded in religion, he used religious idioms to communicate with the masses. He did not conceal his intention to introduce religion into politics, as is evident in his writings. Fred Dalmayer and G. N. Devy make the following observation on the ideological conflicts among the Indian social reformers: “By and large, what most of these approaches shared was a certain blending of Indian and Western – life forms and ideas, with dispute raging mainly over the precise dosage of ingredients” (20).

SECTION III: LANDMARKS IN MUSLIM MODERNIZATION IN INDIA

Unlike the eventful history of the Hindu involvement with the European Enlightenment and modernity, the course of Muslim modernity though significant, took a different pattern. During the last years of the Mughal rule, to the common man, Hindu or Muslim, life was much the same. However, the Muslims cherished a sense of pride in their religious affiliation with the ruling class. The British conquest was for them a more traumatic experience, as they held it to be a loss of power. As a result, the
Muslims rejected outright any attempt, on the part of the British, at innovation and lagged behind in modernization and progress. At this stage of history, the Muslims were also acutely conscious of their identity. Smarting under the loss of sovereignty and state power, the Muslims, especially in urban centers, resented the imposition of English and responded with much greater enthusiasm to reformist movements seeking an internal regeneration of Islam (Bose and Jalal 85). The situation worsened with the new administrative policies introduced by the British: Muslim institutions of learning were made inessential with the removal, in 1835, of Persian as the official language and the introduction of English. As the legal system was revised, the Muslim lawyers also became redundant.

The nineteenth century was a period when radical Islamic reform movements mushroomed all over the world. Shah Waliullah (1703-’62) and Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi (1786-1831) were two renowned reformist thinkers who influenced the Islamic reform movements in India in the nineteenth century. The reformist school inspired by Shah Waliullah was critical, yet radical in its protest. Its criticism was “internal” (Veer 59). Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi was one of the early Muslim reformers who was radical in his approach and was prepared to object publicly to the British policies. Hajji Shari at-Allah and his son Dudu Mian were two other reformers of the period who concentrated on their mission of religious purification. These Muslim reformers appealed to the masses to strive for a juster and more god-fearing society. The reform movement led by these Muslim leaders was rigidly traditional. It had a great impact upon the Indian Muslim community as it changed “from an aggregate of believers into a political association with a will for joint action” (Hardy 58). In consequence of this, there appeared a demarcation between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. So also, it dealt a blow to the composite Mughal culture.
For the Muslims of northern India, the Mutiny of 1857 and its suppression by the British was a traumatic experience that marked the formal end of Muslim rule in India. The following observation made by P. Hardy rightly sums up the dramatic change that came over the Muslim attitude towards the British after the Mutiny, "Before 1857, the Muslims in India were more concerned to purify their own religion than to imitate or even to notice a culture in their eyes barely worth the name. Now after 1857 that culture, however distasteful, would have to be considered, not for its worth but for its worldly success" (62).

It was Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan who introduced the idiom of modernity into the Muslim reform movement in India. His efforts were to convince his fellow religionists that India was not dar al-harb and to seek British goodwill towards the Muslims. Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s early writings reveal an ardent religious fervor, a devotion to sunna and an opposition to taqlid, which was characteristic of the Sufi tradition in which he grew up. This faith suffered a set back with the defeat of the Muslims in 1857 and gradually he came to believe that only traditions dealing with spiritual matters were of relevance to contemporary Muslims and traditions dealing with worldly matters were non-binding.

The founding of the "Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College" denotes a landmark in the history of the modernization of Indian Muslims. Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s experiences during his visit to England convinced him that English should be the medium of instruction. The scientific and technological progress achieved by the British had so impressed him that he came to believe that what his community needed for its regeneration and empowerment was a scientific and secular education. The college was founded on the principles of British Public School system and also on the teachings of Islam. It acted as a centre for propagating the belief that the Muslims were entitled to rule, as they had accepted God’s revelations.
The Muslim community being acutely conscious of self-identity did not respond to the challenge of modernization. The efforts of the reformers like Sayyid Ahmad Khan had to counter the forces of Islamization. The distinct feature of the Muslim modernization mission of the late nineteenth century was that its advocates refused to break away with the Qur'anic authority, even while they imitated modernity in everything related to their day-to-day life. Initiated into the modernization programs of the social reformers, they experienced much anxiety and anguish in resolving their conflict between religious traditions and modernity. It was a tussle between pro-West reformers and conservative revivalists. Even the most ardent adherents of modernity did not look for a total segregation from tradition; instead they attempted to adopt the techniques of modernization from within the religion. Reflecting on the responses of the Indians to modernity in the nineteenth century, Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal observe, “Social trends among the Hindus and the Muslims alike were much too nuanced to be captured by the reform-revival, modernity-tradition or indeed our (Indian) modernity – their (Western) modernity dichotomies” (109). At this stage of Muslim modernization many of the reformers believed that religious sensitivity was compatible with a rational mind. This “anti-colonial modernity” advocated by them despite their acceptance of Western modernity, differed from it in many respects.

It was around 1858 that the British appeared to give importance to their politics of differential patronage; the political category of Indian Muslims was constructed for this. The change in the British attitude towards the Muslims from hostility to condescension reaffirmed their faith in their racial superiority. E.M. Forster’s A Passage to India (1924) reflects this conciliatory approach, which the British had towards the Muslims as a part of their administrative diplomacy. The Muslim characters outnumber the Hindus in the novel and also they are projected in a better light.
Commenting on Forster’s portrayal of Muslim characters, William Walsh observes, “Of course most of the Indian characters are Muslims and as we know it was an old British habit to look on the Muslims with greater favor than the Hindus: they are thought of as more reliable, less devious, as martial and straightforward” (171).

This was a society that was rapidly changing, at times in favor of modernity and at other times fanatically defensive about tradition. In this phase of history the Indian Muslims had an ambivalent relationship with modernity; on the one hand they realized the inevitability of accepting the necessity of modernization, on the other hand, in response to the British reprobation of Islamic culture they asserted the glory of the Islamic past. This was not an isolated experience of the Muslims; many of the Hindu thinkers too experienced this conflict. M.K. Naik comments on the impact of such an ambivalence in ideology on literature, “This twofold scrutiny inevitably led to the creation of a prose of thought in which the Indians began to examine their religious ideas and practices, their social customs and traditions, their historical past and antiquities and also their contemporary political situation and its problems” (“The Achievement of Indian Prose in English” 42). It was at this time Lutufullah’s Autobiography appeared. As Prabhakar Machwe has rightly put it:

Modern sensibility in the Indian writer’s mind was the product of this dual pull, the desire to imitate and even compete with the West and also the nostalgic built-in complex of not-leaving-the past. This schizophrenic frame of mind created many kaleidoscopic and multi-coloured designs in prose and poetry (5).

At the time of the publication of Ahmed Ali’s Twilight in Delhi (1940), the theme of the nostalgic longing for the past had already become an outdated one. It is significant that Ahmed Ali has chosen to present a slice of life taken from the post-1857 Delhi, as reflected in the point of view of a staunch traditionalist like Mir Nihal. Ali’s restructuring of
the Mughal past through the nostalgia of his protagonist is an act of retrieving tradition. The pervading mood of the novel is that of disappointment in the wake of the 1857 defeat. The novel recounts every aspect of the traditional way of life. The vividly drawn symbols of a vanished glory, like the resonant voice of Nisar Ahmad calling the morning aazan, (13) the cry of the pigeon-fliers, (17) the serenity of the life in the zenana, (29) the naked fakir with his matted beard, (50) fasting in the month of Ramzan — all suggest a defense of tradition in reply to the British, for brutally suppressing the rebellion. Besides, there is also a rejection of the British, along with their instruments of modernity. A downright rejection of the superficialities of the Western civilization echoes in Mir Nihal’s voice as he reprimands his son for wearing “dirty English boots” (10).

The traditionalist Muslim’s response to the modernizing projects of Sayyid Ahmad Khan is also heard in the novel. Mir Nihal retaliates when Asghar suggests that he would go to Aligarh for higher studies by saying, “It is all the evil doing of the Farangs who want to make Christians and atheists of all of us” (50). The central conflict in the novel is between tradition and modernity, between the East and the West, which in the most obvious plane is projected as a clash between Mir Nihal and Asghar.

Ahmed Ali’s Ocean of Night, placed in Delhi’s twin-city Lucknow, also recapitulates the glory of a past era with a strong sense of repentance for the passing away of a traditional world. The story set in Lucknow is about the Nawabs and the courtesans: their steadfast faith in values like gratitude and integrity contrasted with the Western materialism and self-promotion. In the conversation between the Congressman and the barrister Siddiqi, the author’s defense of tradition is unmistakable. The former upholds the superiority of the ayurvedic system of medicine which,
according to him, is so advanced that surgery was practiced in ancient India before it was done in America and Germany.

Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, in certain respects a sequence to Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* recapitulates the splendor of the traditional life of the Taluqdars of Lucknow. However, she has an altogether different agenda from merely evoking the past. Anita Desai in her introduction to the novel observes, "In India the past never disappears, it does not even become transformed to a ghost. Concrete, physical, palpable, it is present everywhere" (5).

Another significant event that marked this phase of Indian literature was the rise of the regional novels, especially in the Indian languages. In response to the spirit of modernization, which the English education had imparted to them, these regional novelists portrayed the rural regions of India and the life of the rustic folk with great fascination. Humayun Kabir's *Men and Rivers* can be placed in this category. Dhuldi on the bank of the Padma is cut off from modern civilization. It depicts the charm of an ancient world in which men and nature live a life of interdependence. Yet the novel is modern in spirit. It is indicated in the design of the plot itself. Amina who is rejected on the charge of infidelity by Nazu Mia, is accepted by Asghar. While the life that is depicted is conventional, the spirit that emerges out of it is modern.

Mohammad Iqbal, another social reformer and thinker, made a profound impact upon the life of the Indian Muslims caught in the tussle between tradition and modernity. Like Aurobindo and Vivekananda, he could be called a critical traditionalist. He was aware of the existence of the tension between tradition and modernity, and how to resolve it was his chief concern. As Fred Dalmayer and G.N. Devy have put it:
For Iqbal, the challenge which lay ahead was to "rethink the whole system of Islam, without completely breaking with the past", which meant a mediation between tradition and modernity. While tradition was governed mainly by revealed faith, modernity was wedded to critical enquiry and concrete life experience (32).

While admitting this distinction between tradition and modernity, he did not endorse the segregation of faith and reason. This in turn, affected the political stand that he took, especially in the early years of his political career. He believed that religious tradition and secular politics could go hand in hand. The privatization of religion and its exile from public life was what he found unacceptable about the Western thought. It was a negation of religious diversity, and not its rejection that he recommended for the Indian situation. At the conference of the All India Muslim League held in 1930 Iqbal said, "The unity of an Indian nation, therefore, must be sought not in the negation but in the mutual harmony and co-operation of the many" (qtd. in Dallmayer and Devy 32-33).

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's stand regarding Muslim modernization and assimilation into the national mainstream played a key role in the national movement. However, the controversies and contradictions in his own works written during the different periods of his life make an assessment of his ideologies difficult. The first phase of his career could be termed the Al-Hilal phase. Azad's Islam of this period was of the fundamentalist kind and his stance was that of a pan-Islamist anti-colonialist. He wished to be appointed a chief theologian for India by the general consent of the ulema, which hope when shattered, the first phase of his career came to an end. This monumental shift in his ideological stand coincided with the Khilafat days, which also introduced to him the non co-operation movement of Gandhi, so that, when he emerged from prison he plunged into Congress nationalism. But a close reading of his compositions, prove that there was no real shift in his ideologies. The first and the second volumes of Tarjuman were published in 1930 and 1936.
respectively. Disappointed with his unfulfilled religious ambitions, he decided to devote all his time to Congress nationalism and did not return to religious fundamentalism. It is in this phase of his career that he turned his attention to modernization and made an attempt to adapt modernization to suit the terms of his belief – a synthesis of traditional religious belief and modernity. Even here he evinced a lack of conviction in his new faith, in withdrawing into an affirmation of the more traditional, when challenged by other Muslim theologians.

A comparison of Azad and Sayyid Ahmad Khan reveals the similarities and contrasts between them. It was as a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Khan that Azad started his religious career. But during his Al-Hilal days, when he preached pan-Islamism, he attacked the modernization projects of his intellectual mentor. Surprisingly after the Tarjuman, once again his positions came to resemble those of Sir Sayyid.

The political ideologies of Azad, in the later years of his life, bear a resemblance to those of Gandhi. For both, political beliefs were founded in religion. Gandhi had accepted the hierarchical division of the Hindu community, though he declared the lowest as harijan (the children of God). Aijaz Ahmad points out the analogy between Gandhi’s idea of ramlajya and Azad’s notions of raboobiyat and Wahdat-e-Adyan in the following observation:

The lexicons of Islamic theology and Hindu piety are, after all, constitutively different, and the deployment of these lexicons – not as in Kabir, overlappingly, but as in Azad and Gandhi, who speak culturally and religiously differentiated languages – does create differential effects and sensibilities, despite their shared universalist messages, so that the two religious groups thus addressed become, by virtue of their very lexicon, intensely aware of their differential and mutually exclusive cultural locations (152).
Mohammad Ali Jinnah was not a traditionalist Muslim at any stage of his life. His background, upbringing and ideologies favored the modernist approach that he maintained during the major part of his career. When Azad as a staunch religious fundamentalist was speaking of a universal Islamic nation, Jinnah was a secularist with a firm belief in democratic liberalism. But by 1920 there was a reversal of roles. Both were ambitious leaders and their desire to further their political career superseded their affinity to tradition or modernity. As P. Hardy puts it, "Muhammad Ali Jinnah was to say, the game of politics has to be played with the pieces actually on the board. The pieces on the Muslim board were religious feelings ... " (196). During the later stage of the national movement, Jinnah decided to speak in terms of a pan-Indian identity for the Muslims. Aijaz Ahmad reflects on the paradoxes of such politics:

It is one of the greatest paradoxes of modern Indian history that traditions of Islamic piety, from Azad to Deoband ulema, eventually found their way into composite cultural and political nationalism, theories of modernization as taught in the British and pro-British institutions, from Lincoln’s Inn to Aligarh begot, on the other hand, communal separatism (189).

By and large, the colonial encounter was an experience in modernity for India, one that segregated the traditional from whatever was associated with the European Enlightenment. Partha Chatterjee reflects upon this experience, "... (it) terminated centuries of despotism, superstition and vegetative life and ushered in a new era of change – of "destruction" as well as "regeneration," destruction of antiquated traditions and the emergence of modern, secular and national forces"(Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World 23). Out of this experience emerged a modern sensibility, which came to stay with the establishment of the three universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857.
The most profound impact on the Indian writers of the first half of the twentieth century came from Gandhi. As has been already pointed out, in Bhikhu Parekh’s classification of the prominent Indian social reformers into the four categories: Traditionalists, Modernists, Critical Modernists and Critical Traditionalists, Gandhi does not belong to any of these groups. His solution to the Indian crisis lay in delving into its own civilization to discover its own form of modernity. The discourses of Gandhi initiated a current of progressive thoughts to which none could fail to respond. From the elite to the subaltern, they appealed to every section of Indian society.

Aamir Ali’s Conflict reflects the impact of Gandhian ideologies on the author, though he has his reservations about Gandhi. The tradition-modernity, village-city, and East-West encounters figure prominently in it. As the blurb says, “Through him (the protagonist) is revealed the travail of a generation exposed to opposing forces, torn between village and city, old and new, East and West” (Meherally not numbered). The novel has two different locales, the village of Karegaon, cut off from modernity, and Bombay, India’s hub of the early twentieth century transformations. The rustic’s fear for the city and the changes associated with it, echo in the words of Shankar’s mother as she attempts to stop her son from going to the city. A critique of the modernity that is mistaken by many to be a mere imitation of the superficialities of European life, is heard as the narrator says, “Sometimes, the way in which his mother or his father behaved seemed terribly old-fashioned and absurd” (43). In the modernization that was envisioned for the country by the followers of European modernity, mechanization of industries was considered inevitable. When Shankar emphatically states how important mechanization is, in competing with other nations, one of the villagers retorts, “And why should we want to compete? Let them make their own things, let us live our own way” (45).
Gandhi’s intervention in the socio-political events of the twentieth century brought a significant change in the modernization of Indian women. During all the preceding phases of women’s modernization, from the time of Raja Rammohan Roy onwards, the movements invariably worked from within the limits of patriarchy. The ideal of the chaste woman enshrined in Manusmriti, had an abiding influence on the freedom of Indian women, which even the nineteenth century social reformation movements failed to change. It was Gandhi’s influence that made women leave the precincts of patriarchy and recognize and assert their independence for the first time.

Iqbalunnisa Hussain’s Purdah and Polygamy is a product of the liberal thoughts that permeated the atmosphere of the nation in the Gandhian era. The waves of transformation had created some ripples in the Muslim zenana too. The author evinces a strong moral and social purpose in making a bold statement on two of the detrimental practices that suppress women, purdah and polygamy. It is also remarkable that the author’s approach to the issue is unconventional. The practice of polygamy is not, as is usually explained away, the result of the sexual promiscuity of the Muslim male; it is presented as the result of many interrelated domestic issues. Women are also a party to the perpetuation of such practices. It is Maqbool, the author’s spokesperson who voices the views of the New Woman. It is she, Kabir’s third wife, who alone retaliates against him, whereas the rest of the wives are silent sufferers. There are signs of a social change at the end of the novel when Akram, Kabir’s son, comes forward to accept his father’s fourth wife as his stepmother.

Naresh K. Jain says, “Silence — speech dichotomy can be useful in locating women on the tradition — modernity axis” (24). Silence is a sign of subalternity and suppression, and speech an assertion of the self. However, in literature even a depiction of silence could be an act of
protest. Zohra written by Zenuth Futehally, located in the British India of the early twentieth century deals with the question of women’s exemption from the confines of rigid religious restrictions and social taboos. Zohra, the heroine of the novel has acquired the ideals of liberalism and emancipation from the modern education that she has had. The voice of convention, questioning the relevance and validity of modern education is heard when Zohra’s old nurse Unnie asks, “What do you want to do with firangi books?” (2) Zohra’s self-realization was still incomplete when she consented to marry the man of her parents’ choice. On meeting Hamid later, she realizes the significance of the compatibility between husband and wife, which the Muslim socio-cultural practices ignore. She retaliates by acceding to the dictates of her conscience, disregarding the society’s code of conduct and spending some pleasant moments with Hamid. The cherished patriarchal image of the chaste woman is subverted by the author, in her portrayal of Zohra. Her protest, though mild, has the implications of a revolt, especially when one takes into account the fact that it was written in the pre-Independence days. The novel has a conventional conclusion with Zohra withdrawing from her relationship with Hamid and seeking solace in death. However, the protest is registered.

Along with women and the lower castes, the peasants also moved from the periphery of national life to its centre, under the influence of Gandhi. The movement that was initiated by him mainly focused on the masses and the villages. In Aamir Ali’s Conflict the crisis in Shankar, the protagonist, is resolved when he accepts Ghokhale’s advice and returns to the village of Karegaon to rouse the people and to enlighten them about the importance of disobeying all government laws, in the course of which he too learns the essence of all wisdom. At the end of the novel he says, “I will live among my people and learn from them how to live, for that is what they know and what I don’t” (167).
K. A. Abbas has created a large number of women characters who embody the characteristic spirit of the Gandhian era. His *Tomorrow is Ours* narrates the story of Parvathi, against the background of the struggle for nationalism and democracy, to defeat the fascist forces during the Second World War. Her empathy with the peasantry in its struggle against the zamindari creates a discord in her marital life. Her social commitments take precedence over personal happiness and she breaks away from her husband.

Mehr Nigar Masroor’s *Shadows of Time* presents a critique of the Khilafat Movement, Gandhi and the religious idiom that entered Indian politics at this stage of the nation’s struggle for emancipation and progress. Manilal in his conversation with Surinder says, “Well I do think pan-Islamism is a deflection of the main current of the freedom movement, but I do not think it serves the Muslim aims either, Sayed Ahmed tried so hard to establish a Muslim viewpoint which was related to India. This cause is quite irrelevant” (124). Gandhi’s advent on the political scene of India is introduced in the novel as the narrator says, “Then M.K. Gandhi returned to India in 1915, and while speaking to the students of Calcutta he said ‘politics cannot be divorced from religion’” (136). The havoc caused by mixing religion and politics is hinted at when the author points out the unrealistic methods of the leaders, which led to the outbreak of the Moplah rebellion.

Western education and its associated values initiated the Progressive Movement in the early decades of the twentieth century. Many young Indians were inspired by its ideals of equality, liberty and independence. The movement officially introduced the admission of modern cultural and technological innovations into the Indian society and sought to disseminate the spirit of democracy and scientific rationalism by
confronting the traditional and reactionary tendencies in matters related to family and religion.

The publication of Angare, a collection of Urdu short stories, marked the starting point of progressivism in Indian literature. The progressive writers, however assured they were in their faith in the modern ideals, experienced a conflict within themselves when they had to part with tradition. As Prabhkar Machwe has put it:

Almost every Indian thinker and writer had some interesting blind spots: while advocating rationalism and materialism, many a 'Progressive' secretly worshipped some obscurantist faith-healer or was intensely attached to astrology; social reformers talked glibly of 'other people's hells' and indulged in all dowry-ridden customary marriage practices when their own turn came (5).

The resulting tension created a “schizophrenic frame of mind” and affected the ideological stand that the progressive writers projected in their literary compositions. There was much in their works that was in conflict with the modern ideals of liberalism and equality.

Ahmed Ali, as a co-founder of the Progressive Writers’ Movement, held liberal and radical views, but his nostalgic writings evince a strong adoration of the past. The antagonism between the ideal that he preached, and the values that he projected in his literary creations, was vehemently criticized by his readers who accused him of double standards. This conflict, which many other writers also felt, though not in the same degree, is found to be inherent in the very frame work of the manifesto of the Progressive Writers’ Movement. For instance, the manifesto says, “While claiming to be the inheritors of the best tradition of Indian civilization, we shall criticize, in all its aspects, the spirit of reaction in our country” (qtd. in Stilz 73). The conflict between the progressivist, and the traditionalist in Ali, is reflected in his first two novels in English, Twilight in Delhi and Ocean of Night. His evocation of the Mughal past
through a picturesque depiction of its signs and symbols and his use of a poetic language reminiscent of the style of Urdu writers, have been already pointed out. This “regard for the past as the cornerstone of Indian culture” (R.S. Pathak 10) was intended to be a reply to the British who had set out on a mission of transforming the native culture, which to them was retrogressive and absurd.

Today, with the dichotomy between tradition and modernity proved a mere illusion, and with the recognition of a co-existence of the two, it is essential to look at the works of Ahmed Ali in a different perspective. For his contemporaries who lived at a time when there was no mid-way between the two, it was difficult to appreciate the author’s stand. As Gerhard Stilz argues, “We must beware of clichés here, especially in a time when progress is no more a clearly definable aim in terms of scientific, technological and social evolution, nor a straight and universally accepted way from parochial benightedness to cosmopolitan enlightenment’’ (72). Further, on this dilemma in Ahmed Ali, Gerlard Stilz makes an interesting observation, “... twilight falls, ironically on the author’s own artistic intentions, his creative and critical work and his reception” (70). The word “twilight” that appears in two of the titles of Ahmed Ali seems to forebode the ideological twilight that caught him in a current of controversies. Accounting for the blend of tradition and modernity in Indian nationalism, Saroj Sharma writes:

Indian intellectuals initiated a two-way process to answer the charges hurled against Indian culture by Macaulay and others. On the one hand, they exalted India’s past and glorious cultural heritage and on the other, they launched a crusade against existing social and religious evils, so as to restore self-confidence in the nation (17).

Attia Hosain too had associated herself with the Progressive Writers’ Movement. Western educated and grounded in liberal and secular ideals, her purpose is unmistakably stated in Sunlight on a Broken
Column, a novel that heralds an era of social change. If Ahmed Ali's fascination for tradition supersedes his affinity to progressivism, in Attia Hosain the emphasis obviously falls on the creation of a society on a more equitable and democratic basis. The scene of action in Sunlight on a Broken Column is the feudal household of a Taluqdari family, resembling its author's own familial background. Western liberalism also brought along with it individualism in the Indian stream of thoughts, where as traditional Indian culture, Hindu or Muslim, demands an abnegation of individual interests for the interests of the community. As Jaya Baliga puts it, "In Muslim culture role-relations were oriented primarily towards significant others (like family, kinship and duty towards society) rather then towards oneself" (161).

In keeping with the temperament of a period of historic transformation, Attia Hosain's protagonist Laila is kindled with a desire to protest against everything that inhibits individual liberty and happiness. This rebellion against the claustrophobic feudal set up is a rebellion for emancipation at a personal level. The subordination of the individual and individualism are two contradictory values associated with the old and the new respectively. The central issue of the novel is the protagonist's attainment of individualism. Her pursuit of self-hood reaches fulfillment when she marries Ameer against the wishes of her family. In the words of G.S. Amur, "Laila, a rebel has seen through the hollowness of tradition and refuses to submit to the authority of her uncle and aunt" (158). However, she has been able to manage a balance between tradition and modernity; traditional in her reverence for the ancient culture, and modern in asserting herself in matters related to the self.

The novel also presents many other aspects of the nation's transition from tradition to modernity. Baba Jan, the patriarchal head of the family is a man of iron will, with which he rigidly implements the
traditional way of life with its strict hierarchy. His domination of the rest of the household has its other side, a total suppression of the liberty, rights and independence of all the others. Western education and a career in the Indian Civil Service offer uncle Hameed the necessary grounds for the acquisition of modern ideals. But his transformation is superficial, as in the intrinsic values of life he remains a confirmed traditionalist. When he assumes charge of "Ashiana", the change is only in the nature of patriarchy, not in its essence.

The novel also has some characters who have unconsciously imbibed the individualism that was so much a characteristic of the age, even in the absence of Western or any other pattern of education. Aunt Abida has a liberal mind, which is evident in her questioning of Uncle Moshin when he says that it is not necessary for youngsters to be present when decisions are taken about their future. But in her conventional marriage, which puts an end to all her freedom, she becomes "a faithful devotee and also a willing martyr at the altar of tradition" (Hosain 114). Nandi's protest against the atrocities committed by the traditional patriarchal, feudal society on a thrice marginalized individual — as a woman of low caste, placed at the lowest economic stratum of society — is much more vociferous than that of the rest. She openly retaliates against Uncle Moshin's indecent advances, and secretly contrives to humiliate Ghulam Ali, not fearing the consequence in either case.

In the words of K. A. Abbas, yet another progressivist, the early twentieth century was "... one of the most fruitfully creative literary eras in India. There was a ferment in the minds and hearts of men, a yearning for change and reform and revolution" ("Social Realism and Change" 148-149). Many critics of Abbas depreciate his works for wanting literary merit and technical perfection. However, his social commitment and seriousness of purpose cannot be questioned. The principles of progressivism; liberty, justice and equality had so influenced his
philosophy of life that he saw in the imperialistic domination of the British much that was in conflict with its ideals of Enlightenment. His works depict his preference for Communist socialism over democratic liberalism. It is not surprising that at that particular juncture in the history of the world, when individual liberty was threatened by Imperialism and Fascism, he expresses sympathy towards the Communist rebels of China in Tomorrow Is Ours.

Abbas found the ancient structures of dominance and exploitation at work even in the urban society, which had integrated modern science and technology into its pattern of life. The exploitation of the labor class in the prosperous film industry of Bombay is the theme of Boy Meets Girl. Akbar Ali, in Inquilab, is a progressivist with a strong contempt for the idle preoccupations and unrealistic hopes of the declining aristocracy of Delhi. The values that he professes are so engrained in the psyche of his son Anwar that during his first journey by train, the young boy is surprised to find separate classes for the Whites and the Blacks and the rich and the poor. The narrator records, "Anwar was surprised because he had heard that under the English all were equal" (20). The conclusion of the novel seems contrived and contrary to the spirit of literary realism. Anwar, brought up in the traditional set up of Akbar Ali's home, realizes at a later stage in his life that his real parents are Chhamia Bai, a prostitute, and Rameshwar Seth, a Hindu. What emerges out of such a plot is the author's anxiety to put across his message to his readers. For Abbas, his social commitment takes precedence over literary merit.

In evaluating the position that is taken by the novelists under study along the tradition — modernity axis, their use of the image of the purdah plays a significant role. The purdah is a powerful symbol of the Muslim tradition which occupies a prominent place in the works of Indo-Anglian Muslim novelists, therefore its treatment in these works highlights the
concept of modernity upheld by them. Their attitude towards this symbol is a statement on their commitment to social transformation and progress. As a general observation it could be said that coming out of the purdah is an act of protesting against tradition and attempting to establish modernity. In the words of Jasbir Jain, “the movement away from purdah is a movement towards self-identity and freedom, which though highly desirable and worthy aims in themselves, are equally traumatic in their effects on women” (9). In their approval of and adherence to this symbol of convention or in their outright rejection of it, the authors suggest to the readers their vision of the community’s future.

An assessment of the modernity that the Indian Muslim novelists in English envisage for their community and nation, could be attempted on the basis of Jasbir Jain’s description of the world that is within the purdah and that which lies outside it. She observes, ”Purdah often talked about as modesty, 'izzat', 'laaj', 'sharam', is symbolic of conformity, while the concept of independence, freedom and self are all relegated to the world outside it” (9).

Firozkhan Noon’s Scented Dust is more of an extensive study of the realities of the life in India during the colonial days, than an attempt at social transformation. In his description of Gulshan and Chandra, a Muslim and a Hindu respectively, the author depicts the purdah as a symbol of one’s morality and sense of honor. He says, “The latter (Chandra) had covered her head with her saree, but Gulshan had her head covered with Muslim utia (head cover). No woman except a prostitute was ever known in India to uncover her head before any male person, except her husband” (112). Like many of the other early Indian novels, Scented Dust was also written with the Western readers in view. The author projects an image of India, which in many ways endorses the Orientalist’s conception of it.
The novelists who wrote their works a decade later had an altogether different agenda. That was the period when the nation had embarked on its modernizing project, and for the writers too, individual emancipation superseded all other considerations. The act of coming out of the purdah used at the literal and symbolic levels, has a remarkable importance in Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*. Laila's open rebellion against the feudal, patriarchal restrictions that inhibit the freedom and self-realization of women embodies the ideals of Enlightenment and modernization. Contrary to this, Aunt Saira and Zahra demonstrate another aspect of India's experiments with modernity. Many of the women who were exposed to the Western mode of living did not break away from antiquated ideas regarding their subjugation to patriarchy. Laila's change is of a different order and takes her in a different direction.

K. A. Abbas, much ahead of his times as a social thinker, has left his stamp of distinction on the characters that he created. His women are emancipated and independent. H.S. Chandalia observes, "Abbas does not treat women as a separate class, yet he accords due respect to the other fairer half and portrays the ideal enlightened Indian woman as a "comrade" participating in political struggles, struggle for independence and socio-economic justice and for the cause of economic upliftment" (147). Maria, in *Maria* leads a rebellion in the Goan Liberation Movement with astonishing valor and determination. K.A. Abbas's *Inquilab* juxtaposes two women characters on whom modernization had two different impacts: Salmah is directed by a strong impulse for self-promotion, whereas Asha has acquired the more enduring values of the new world, like individual emancipation and the spirit of democracy and socialism.
Writing in the late twentieth century, for a world exposed to the contradictions, paradoxes and disillusionment of modernity, Salman Rushdie takes an ironic stand in his treatment of the question of modernity. His ironic treatment of the symbols of convention is an act of celebrating freedom.

In *Midnight's Children* just after he returned from Germany on a cold morning in Kashmir Adam Aziz hit his nose against the frost-laidened tussock of earth while attempting to pray and “resolved never again to kiss earth for any god or man” (10). Influenced by his rationalist and socialist friends in Germany he rejects his faith in Islam. A little later, the narrator speaks of, “… the whole at the centre of himself caused by his (which is also my) failure to believe or disbelieve in God” (275). He remains a half and halfer. The experience of Adam Aziz stranded in between two worlds, one vanished forever and the other caught in the throes of birth, symbolizes one of the failures in India’s attempts at modernity. Like Jawaharlal Nehru, he holds the liberal humanist worldview, rejecting the traditionalist religious one. A small group of thinkers, modern and secular in spirit, like Hummingbird, the Rani of Cooch Naheen and Nadir Khan raise their voice of protest, which however, gets submerged in the cacophony of irrational religious frenzy.

In his depiction of women, Rushdie asserts the importance of getting out of traditional ways that hamper progress and happiness. When there is a crisis in the family, Adam Aziz’s mother comes out of the *pardah* and ventures into the outside world to run the gemstone business, so that on his return from Germany he found, “… the seemingly immutable order of his family turned upside down, his mother going out to work while his father sat hidden behind the veil which the stroke had dropped over his brain” (12). In an era of great social transformations, the *pardah* appears to Adam Aziz as absurd and preposterous. The farcical episode of his
examining Naseem through the hole in the *purdah*, unmistakably states Rushdie’s approach to convention. On marrying her, Adam Aziz forces her to come out of the *purdah* and this confrontation sets the tone of their married life.

Through his satirical and ironic treatment of meaningless conventions in *Shame*, Rushdie makes yet another attack on the irrational religious fundamentalists. There is the hilarious episode of men stealing to their wives in Bairamma’s dormitory. Rani Humayun protests to Bilquis, “this arrangement which is supposed to be made for decency et cetera is just the excuse for the biggest orgy on earth”(73).

Subverting and inverting the traditional practices is a powerful way to challenge tradition and to instill a desire for change and modernity in society. Sufiya Zinobia, the blushing idiot deprived of parental and marital affection and denigrated and condemned by the society for being born different, symbolizes Pakistan — weighed down by political obscurantism and religious fundamentalism — considered to be the land of the pure. Her retaliation is the author’s prophecy about Pakistan’s future. She turns into a demon of power and lets herself loose upon the society on a murderous rampage. Ultimately she turns towards her father who is so terrorized that he seeks refuge in the fortress of the Shakil Sisters, only to be murdered by them.

Timothy Brennan’s judgment on *Midnight’s Children* “as a plea for the liberal values of human rights and civil freedoms” (qtd. in Kortenaar 42), serves as a statement on *Shame* also. It is Rushdie’s judgment on the fundamentalist, retrogressive and autocratic forces which were let loose in Pakistan.
Independence that was envisioned by a whole people at the dawn of a new era for the reconstruction of the nation on liberal and equalitarian ideologies, turned out to be a nightmare because of the atrocities unleashed during the Partition. The communal frenzy and the violence that accompanied it were contrary to the spirit of modernization that had gradually seeped into society. In fact, it decapitated the very project of modernization, stupefied the whole nation, and disturbed the conscience of all civilized people. K. K. Sharma observes, “The sudden, rude shock of partition unnerved men, destroyed their human attributes, and transformed them into wild, savage beasts, who perpetrated extremely barbaric cruelties against their fellow human beings” (30).

The organized fanaticism that was rampant in the nation from the date of announcement of the Partition, till the demographic division came to an end in some sense, made the world look upon India as a dehumanized society, deprived of all human values and wanting in the ideals that modernity stood for. Alok Bhalla has rightly described this phase of the nation’s history as a, “… period in which we fell out of a human world of languages, customs, rituals and prayers into a bestial world of hatred, rage, self-interest and frenzy” (xxxiii).

Historians generally depict history as linear in movement, a triumphant march of modernity and progress. The violence of the Partition failed to fall into place in this onward movement of civilization. In the histories of India, this event is suppressed and confined to a few pages and its details are excluded. They merely examine the causes of the Partition and then go on to the constitutional establishment of the two nations. The Partition was in conflict with the project of the nationalist historians who wished to project the great movement of the twentieth century as a campaign for the modern ideals of reason, progress, organization and discipline. This version of history that was approved by
the nation builders of Independent India is what Gyanendra Panday has
called the prose of "Otherness".

Indian literature too found itself almost in a state of vacuum when
independence dawned on India. This is even more true in relation to the
Muslim writers who were too shocked to find words to express what they
felt or thought. The decade that followed the Partition did not produce
even a single novel in English on the event. The memory of the Partition is
captured in some of the novels that appeared more than a decade after
the event.

The Partition left the Muslim population of India in a state of stupor,
a psychological numbness. Once they woke up to the realities of the new
nation, the first response was an increased tendency towards the
formation of a more rigid religious identity. As the principles and cultural
practices of Islam were restored, the syncretic elements in Islam in India
were consciously rejected. Yogendra Singh describes this religious
consciousness among the Indian Muslims that came as an outcome of
their Partition experiences, in the following passage:

It confirmed the minority consciousness amongst the
remaining Muslim population in India; the post-partition
communal riots created a traumatic psychological feeling of
insecurity among the Muslims; alienation from the Hindu
cultural life was additionally enhanced, since during post-
partition days Arya Samaj carried systematic campaigns for
conversion of some Muslim communities to Hinduism who
were culturally nearer to the Hindu tradition. This process
involved coercive measures and was resented even by those
Muslims who had agreed to such re-conversions (76).

The Muslims of the post-Partition India form a very self-conscious
community, the Partition having enhanced this awareness. Material
progress is deemed essential for the dissemination of the spirit of
democracy and social equality, which in turn calls for the policy of cultural
liberalism and pragmatism. The Muslim minority in India, sensitive to
anything that affected its distinct identity, could not appreciate the modernizing projects of their new nation. In addition to this general feeling of discontent, the ulama, a rigidly conservative force, protested against such schemes and impelled the community to remain a homogeneous group. Yogendra Singh observes, "Although the phenomenon continues in most of the new states where Islam is the dominant religion, the fact remains that a minority of religious elites have always shown a consciousness to adapt Islamic tradition to the requirements of modernity" (65-66). Aijaz Ahmad, in his analysis of Muslim involvement in India’s modernization, reflects "This refusal to break with scripturalism is a punctual feature of Indian Muslim modernism as formulated by the upper-class, North Indian Muslim intelligentsia" (xi).

The characteristics of Nehruvian modernity have a great relevance in the shaping of modernity in post-Independence India. Nehru found in the economic backwardness of the nation, the source of its lack of progress. Hence his agenda for the new nation focused on industrialization, secularization and progress. With the symptomatic enthusiasm of a nation newly released from colonial bond, the people backed him in their nation-building programs. In the words of Avjit Pathak, "Not just economists and scientists, but even the intellectuals in the cultural domain tend to accept the grand ideal of modernity" (63).

The decades that witnessed the initiation of India into modernity had also recognized its distinctive trait. Avjit Pathak reflects, "From Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi, the message we got was clear enough. It was the message of spiritualized religion, and this message also reflected the necessity of retaining India’s uniqueness: a religious society not totally carried away by secular modernity" (101). Though Nehru postulated a different theory in which secularism superseded everything else, he sensed the dangers of attempting to introduce a militant secularism. Tolerance was given priority over uniformity. In a broadcast to
the nation he said, “We are building a free secular state, where every religion and belief has full freedom and equal honour, where every citizen has equal liberty and equal opportunity” (qtd. in Gopal 207). The builders of modern India recognized the predicament of a multi-religious nation and treated religion as a private matter to be kept out of the civil life.

However, Nehruvian modernity suffered from certain serious inadequacies, which were responsible for the failure of the modernizing programs in the nation. The acceptance of the demand for a separate civil code for Muslims, the insistence on monogamy for Hindu men and the grant of the rights of divorce and inheritance only to Hindu women were serious lapses in his implementation of secular principles. This was a breach of the very spirit of democracy. This modernity moved within the nation’s tradition and did not totally break away from it.

A new spirit of creative writing was expected in Indian literature at the dawn of the much-awaited freedom. But with all the socio-economic and administrative set backs that the nation had to tide over, the event does not seem to have had a deep impact on Indian literature. Among the Indo-Anglian Muslim writers, Abbas was an ardent admirer of Nehru’s socialist ideals and being in the prime of his literary career, he responded to the changing socio-political scenario, highlighting every facet of it. Individual liberation from the clutches of all segregating forces, a recurrent theme in Abbas; projects his faith in post-Independence modernization in India. His portrayal of emancipated and powerful female characters who enjoy social equality, bears testimony to his faith in Nehruvian modernity. Maria, a novel, which deals with a significant event, which occurred during the post-Independence period, the Goan Liberation, corroborates Nehruvian ideology, in breaking away from the Gandhian ideals of passive resistance and non-violence. What adds to the
significance of this rebellion is that it is a woman who leads it and it is she who is instrumental in safeguarding the integrity of the nation.

Even as India declared herself a secular, democratic republic, signs of discord were obvious in the contemporaneous socio-political events that went against these ideals. Salman Rushdie in Midnight's Children throws light on this through his hilarious treatment of the event of the freezing of the savings bonds of prominent Muslims immediately after the Partition. Narlikar in Midnight's Children reflects, "freeze a Muslim's assets, they say, and you make him run to Pakistan" (135).

Despite the conflicting feelings that arose out of the two experiences, the elation on the exit of the British and the remorse on the Partition of the nation, the early days of Independence found India on an optimistic path to progress and modernity. But the gradual rejection of the ideals of modernism and the subsequent fall in the spirit with which the project was undertaken, exposed the fissures in Indian modernity. The democratic ideals of modernity clashed with tradition that refused to recognize universal laws. In consequence of this, many of the contemporary institutions failed to be modern in their ethos. In his analytical study of Indian modernity Dipankar Gupta points out:

There are two ways by which our lack of modernity is explained away. The first is to say that the true genius of India lies in tradition and in primordial communities. This point of view ignores the fact that tradition (whether Hindu, Islamic or Christian) has always been very unkind and inflexible to individuals who want to express themselves. In addition, it is impossible to return to the past given the compulsions of contemporary times .... The other widely expressed way of coming to grips with our lack of true modernity is to say that there are "multiple modernities" and that the Indian variety is just another expression of modernity (10-11).
The mission of modernization, initiated during the colonial days, was given an impetus by Nehru, in his socio-economic policies. But the values of liberalism and equality were not easily accepted and met with resistance when it came to the modernization of the minds of men. The religious, regional and linguistic uprisings that broke out in the 1960s indicated this.

K. A. Abbas in his *Maria*, located in the India of the 1960s, gives a realistic picture of the social scenario of the nation in the years that followed Independence. The linguistic fanaticism of Sharma, the anti-Hindu stance of Anwar, the anti-Punjabi gestures of Joginder — all point towards the cracks in the modernizing mission of the nation. The economic inequality that prevailed in the nation too hampered the progress of modernity. This widening gulf between the haves and the have-nots that was contrary to the socialistic basis of the constitution, is the theme of Abbas’s *Boy Meets Girl*. Through his ironic treatment of socialism, Setji, the film producer minting crores by producing a film on a socialistic theme named *Lai Savera*, and through Setji’s exploitation of the intellectuals and the laborers who worked for him, Abbas drives home his message. An egalitarian society alone can claim itself to be modern in the true sense of the term.

In Jawaharlal Nehru’s blue print for the development of the nation, industries occupied a predominant place. Though this project met with some success, it was not without inadequacies, as is evident from the repercussions it had to face. The reverberations of the discontent are heard in the literary works of the time. Shama Futehally’s *Tora Lane* centers on a factory and the lives of the men associated with it. A critique of industrialization is heard as Tahera the protagonist says, “I hate the factory ... for its incessant clanging, its heaps of iron lying in the scrap-
yard ... the untidy canteen in front. The only pleasant part of the factory was my father's air-conditioned office right on top” (72).

This reflection is indirectly an indictment on the ethic and morality of the world of Mushtaq, Tahera’s father. It questions the validity of his statement that is heard like a refrain in the novel, “There is not a single naya paisa ... which I cannot account for” (143-144). The integrity that he claims for himself does not conceal the ruptures in his values. As Arjya Sircar has rightly put it, “... this effete and elitist world of Mushtaq is in an inescapably essential sense exploitative, parasitic and therefore morally reprehensible” (72).

But the younger generation as represented by Rizwan, seems to be more heedless of the values of modernity in its pursuit of commercial success. The scenario is not entirely bleak, as some solace is to be found in isolated individuals, like Tahera, who embody the true spirit of modernity in standing up to patriarchal domination and in seeing through the sham of the imposters of uprightness.

With industrialization gaining momentum, there was also felt a strong desire to retain the villages in their pristine glory. Sharf Mukaddam’s *When Freedom Came* and Aminuddin Khan’s *A Passage to the Himalayas* respond to the contemporary transformations in the society, in two different ways. The former captures the essential goodness of the life in the village juxtaposed with the life in the cities aggressive in their impetus for self-promotion. *A Passage to the Himalayas* too deals with the problems that confront young men in metropolitan centers where materialism takes precedence over everything else. In the words of Janaki Ram:

Too much pre-occupation with material success or pleasure leads to gradual erosion of inner integrity and perennial values. To a certain extent, Raja's quest in Bombay is also the quest of the modern man and also the author's quest as
the blurb says, "for a perfect, spiritual and humane liberty with fewer prejudices, falsehoods and sins of humanity" (124).

A rejection of the materialism that was erroneously associated with modernity, is suggested through the twist of events in the plot and by the title of the novel itself, for the Himalayas symbolize the insurmountable greatness of India’s spirituality. Raja who reaches Bombay, in the pursuit of a means of livelihood is soon disillusioned by urban life and his pursuit then becomes a quest for the meaning of life.

M. K. Naik puts in a nutshell, the ideological changes that the nation underwent with the institution of self-rule in the place of colonial domination as follows:

The constitution of Independent India took care to remove traditional and social inequalities through the Untouchability Offence Act of 1955. The Hindu Code Bill sought to improve the status of women. But the most disturbing phenomenon on the socio-political scene has been the steady erosion of the idealism of the days of the freedom struggle, the new gods of self-aggrandizement and affluence having rather too easily dethroned those of self-less service and dedication to a cause (A History of Indian English Literature 189).

SECTION V: MODERNITY'S DISINTEGRATION

The disintegration of the ideals of modernity, that had set in within a decade of Independence, intensified by the end of the Nehruvian era. The emergence of Indira Gandhi as a national leader, and her ascendancy to Prime Ministership in this socio-political situation, has a great significance. Dipankar Gupta looks into the factors that favor the emergence of women leaders in Third World democracies where the majority of women live under relentless patriarchal subjugation. The reasons that he attributes to the choice of women leaders disprove the nation’s claims to modernity and advancement. He says, "In Hindu tradition it is argued, shakti, or power, is a feminine principle which
accounts for the rise of leaders like Indira Gandhi. Indeed, in the years when Indira Gandhi was in power, she was often likened to Goddess Durga slaying evil demons" (37). Obviously it is not the progressive attitude towards women that encourages their recognition as leaders, on the contrary, it is the traditional view regarding the role of a woman that favors their leadership in peculiar circumstances.

Yet another plausible observation that Gupta makes is that at the time of the death of a great political leader, "A son loses out to his female relatives as he is judged by the people as a man among other men" (39). He then goes on to add, "A daughter or a wife escapes comparisons of this kind. As a woman, she is not supposed to have any attributes, which are of relevance in the public sphere. Her job description separates her quite radically from the world of men" (39). The powerful sketches of women, drawn by the Indian novelists who located their stories in contemporary India, also correspond with these assumptions of Dipankar Gupta. For instance in Aamir Ali's The Conflict and K. A. Abbas's Inquilab, set in the background of the freedom struggle, there are isolated women characters who are depicted as the 'embodiments of power, though they do not live in a society where women enjoy total emancipation. In The Conflict, Shanti, a village girl leads the revolt against the British in her village, surpassing the men in her courage and determination. Asha, in Inquilab, on the contrary is educated and enlightened. Like Shanti, she too stands in the forefront of the freedom movement. These women are more symbolic of shakti, a traditional feminine principle, rather than representatives of the nation's experiments with modernity.

The culmination of the working of such forces, contrary to the spirit of modernity, was the declaration of the Emergency in 1975. In the words of Viney Kirpal, "The period 1975-77 makes a watershed in the psyche of the Indian who saw it as the return of the repressive 'colonial' rule" (25).
In the authoritarianism of Mrs. Gandhi, the nation feared a retrogression to the colonial ways of domination. It was undemocratic and disproved the linear theory of modernization.

Among the Indo-Anglian writers, Salman Rushdie was one of the earliest to critique the Emergency, in fiction. He opted to revert to historical fiction in attempting a censure of contemporary politics. To suppress and moderate the acrimony of his attack on the state, he uses the style of meta-fiction, subverting historical versions of the nation’s past, which only serve those in power. Makarand Paranjape aptly calls *Midnight’s Children*, “a post-modernist deconstructionist account of recent Indian history” (1052). With the Emergency that struck at the prop of Indian modernity, its all-inclusive principle, the modernizing mission itself, suffered the worst setback. It was this experience that drove Saleem to the periphery, almost to the verge of disappearance that compelled him to record his past, identical with that of the nation. Therefore, *Midnight’s Children* takes stock of the follies and foibles of the nation in the process of reconstructing itself, in line with modernity, and in this historical record, the Emergency figures as the worst blow that the nation’s modernizing project suffered.

If Saleem Sinai was “mysteriously handcuffed to history”, (Rushdie *Midnight’s Children* 9) so was his son. He was born at the precise moment when Emergency was declared. The agony and anguish that the nation experienced on this declaration, is explicit in the child’s description:

He was born with ears that flapped so high and wide that they must have heard the shootings in Bihar and the screams of lathi-charged dock-workers, in Bombay ... a child who had heard too much, and as a result never spoke, rendered dumb by a surfeit of sound, I have never heard him utter a single sound (240).
Reflecting upon the significance of this event, M. K. Naik writes, “The entire episode is evidently symptomatic of the gagging of public opinion during the Emergency and the reaction of the intellectuals to this phenomenon” (“A Life of Fragments” 54).

Recovering from the onslaught of the primitive forces of authoritarianism and tyranny in the mid 1970s, the nation limped back to its project of modernization. The tradition-modernity conflict still prevails, as is evident in the ideological dereliction in the working of the major socio-political institutions. Dipankar Gupta is right in observing that “our past clings tenaciously to our present” (22). He examines the dominance of traditional attitudes in matters regarding marriage, by way of illustrating this. He observes, “What is interesting, and sometimes tragic as well, is the extent to which urban Indians are also governed by the past in this matter” (45-46). He then goes on to add, “In a sense, this should have been anticipated: the more intimate the area of one’s social relations, the more resilient it is to change” (46).

For instance, inequality in marriage is widely prevalent in India, irrespective of classes and communities. This becomes the target of attack in some of the contemporary novels under study. Ameena Meer’s Bombay Talkie is an emphatic statement on the process of modernization that is often equated with the transformations brought about by science and technology, which touch life only on its surface. In the essential qualities of life, there has not been any change; or else how does one explain incidents like bride-burning among the educated elite of the society? The protagonist Sabha’s friend Rani is one such victim of the dowry menace. More frightening than the brutality of the event, is the callous indifference of the society to it. As Sanjay explains to Sabha, “Sabha, this kind of thing happens everyday. Hemant’s father will pay the right people, and everyone will say it was suicide” (214).
The emergence of this theme of the inequalities in marriage and man-woman relationship in the fiction of the nineteen eighties, is an indication of the reinforcement of the traditional attitudes in the contemporary society. Ahmed M. Akhtar’s *They Lived for Love* is an outcry against the outdated and retrogressive practices, which are perpetrated by the irrational attitude of the society. Shashi Kumar’s mother adamantly argues with her son, “Why ever not; it (dowry) is the order of the day. It was so before and it will always be so until life lasts” (12). But his commitment to social reformation ultimately wins over his mother’s obscurantism.

The political institutions of India, structured on the model of Western democracy, however, have failed to embody its essence. Corruption has been rampant in Indian politics and it appears to be on the rise today. This is often looked upon as a sign of the violation of the old values. But Dipankar Gupta holds a contrary opinion as he says, “Looked at closely, the incidence and prevalence of corruption really demonstrate quite the reverse. In a traditional society when, it is expected that the wills and whims of superior communities would hold ultimate sway, the word corruption did not actually have any meaning” (135). Yet, corruption is symptomatic of a pre-modern attitude, which continues to infest the society engaged in its modernizing programs.

Shama Futehally’s *Tara Lane* underscores the conflict between the old world values consciously cultivated during the colonial times and the present day practices that violate them. Despite being an industrialist and therefore a party to the perpetuation of social inequalities, Tahera’s father Mushtaq Saab holds on to certain values. When Rizwan, his son-in-law, takes over the running of the factory, there arises a clash between his practicality and Mushtaq Saab’s idealism. When the factory faces the threat of a lockout, Rizwan who believes that the accepted commercial practices should have precedence over integrity and uprightness, suggests
an easy way out. A few meetings with Goodbole, the Labour Commissioner is all that they needed to settle the dispute. Tahera raises her voice of protest against the ethical waywardness of her husband, though it is not potent enough to effect a change of attitude in him.

If bribery has crept into the Indian way of life, so also have nepotism and favoritism. In the words of Dipankar Gupta, “The suppression of private and familial obligations by a public ethic in the conduct of government remains an unfinished item on the agenda of political modernization in India” (240). The politics of patronage, that violates the very spirit of modernity, is exposed in Rafiq Zakaria’s The Price of Power, a political novel. It reflects the reality of modern India, its politics of corruption, exploitation, violence and brutality. The central theme of the novel is the draining away of values in the political and social fields, which started within a few decades after Independence. Dipankar Gupta reflects on the total negligence of modernity in Indian politics, "To be answerable to the public is translated in this country as being answerable to political bosses. Politics here is not so much about representing people but about extending patronage. It is then not at all surprising that lawbreakers take precedence over law enforcers” (59). Rafiq Zakaria’s realistic depiction of the working of Indian democracy, in the Price of Power corroborates Dipankar Gupta’s verdict on it. When the malpractice committed by Chintu, the son-in-law of Sardar Jai Singh, the Prime Minister is exposed in the Public Eye, a weekly that specializes in investigative journalism, he confronts its editor, “The P.M. can make your life difficult. There are ways and means by which the Government can close down your paper” (41).

Secularization, the diminution in the social significance of religion, was the most crucial as well as the most formidable among the ideals that Independent India set out to pursue, in its quest for modernity. As
Eisenstadt observes, “In the Indian society suffrage came automatically but problems of religious toleration or of so-called secularization of culture were most prominent” (5). Yet, a faith in the nation’s past replete with instances of inter-religious amity and cultural syncretism prompted the national leaders to go ahead. In the words of Javed Alam, “Traditions in India have featured the happy co-existence of many contradictory strands: very often in history many features were absorbed simply for reasons of utility without questions of their coherence ever being asked” (62). In the absence of an ideological support to secularism, the national leaders adopted a rational outlook that relegated religion to the private spheres of human activity.

A feeling of hospitality that the different religio-cultural groups of India fostered towards one another was the basis of the ideology of the Indian National Congress, ever since its inception. This attitude towards religious diversity was retained as the mainstay of Nehruvian nationalism in the post-Independence India too. But Javed Alam points out the inherent inadequacies in Indian nationalism, when he says, “But it (Indian nationalism) never was put through the prism of a grounded critique so as to take care of the linguistic or cultural specificities, regional peculiarities or historical memories ... failure to do so has put enormous strain on the Indian polity to cope with questions of National unity” (76). These fissures in secularism pose a threat to the integrity of the nation from time to time.

There has been an intensification of communalism in the last few decades. Political democracy, instead of mitigating communal sentiment has caused its proliferation; with the result that national unity has failed to overcome parochial loyalties. Modernity, as it is experienced in India, does not assure a liberal and cosmopolitan outlook. In fact, as modernity and secularism made headway, communal conflicts also were on the rise. Zoya Hasan corroborates this thought, when he says, “... modernization
The recent trends in Indian politics support the argument that the democratic consciousness of the nation is on the wane. The failure of the nation to assimilate democratic ideals is attributed to many reasons. The Indian state built on socialist lines, that was intact in the nineteen sixties caused much frustration and disillusionment in the eighties. In addition to the many specific and practical issues that hastened the growth of communalism, modernization too has quickened its proliferation. The result is that the democracy imposed from above has failed to alter the inherent constituents of traditionalism, which threaten to revive at any time.

The most devastating blow to Indian modernity was the emergence of many competing communal identities in the nineteen eighties, which culminated in the growth of an aggressive form of Hindu neo-nationalism. The ruling party under Mrs. Gandhi also allied itself with this upsurge. Ultimately the opening of Babri Masjid for darshan for the Hindus on 1 February 1986 opened the floodgates of communalism, challenging the nation’s alliance with modernity and liberalism that started with the Nationalist movement. The advocates of secularism were equally responsible for the demolition of the Indian state built on socialist lines and the upsurge of religious nationalism. Rajiv Gandhi had concurred with the Muslim leader, Maulana Ali Mian, assuring him an annulment of the Shah Bano verdict, in taking this decision.

Science and technology, the accessories of modernity were instrumental in aggravating such sectarian feelings and disseminating them on a national scale. The serialization of the Ramayana, the twist in the telecast of Tipu Sultan which came only after a lengthy arbitration and
the projection of Chanakya as the hero of Mauryan empire in Doordarshan’s serialized drama – all encouraged fundamental forces to mobilize communalism. Video Cassettes were widely used in aggravating communal sentiments and sparking off violence by religious fanatics. Richard Fox observes, “Communalism, for me, is not a pathology of modernity; it has an inherent infirmity or a constitutional weakness in it, bound to come out sooner or later wherever modernity has disenchanted the world” (237).

The literary responses to the recession in the ideals of modernity, and the emergence of fundamentalism, differed from author to author. Sharf Mukaddam in When Freedom Came, written in the eighties when there was a resurgence of narrow, divisive forces of religious fanaticism, chose to retreat to the colonial and the pre-colonial past of the nation. Though, for the major part of the story the scene of action is Bombay, the centre of interest for the author is Devnagar, untainted by communal disputes. The conversation between Fakir and Nargis demonstrates this, “Fakir says, ‘But in Devnagar, Shanker, our Hindu neighbor, never tries to harm Muslims. In fact, he’s my best friend.’ Nargis replies, ‘My father says Hindus are out to destroy Muslims so that they can have a Hindu raj in India’” (43). The author’s assertion of the multi-raciality of India makes him reject urban modernity.

Ahmed M. Akhtar in his novel They Lived for Love, published in the same decade, has attempted an enquiry into the elements of retrogression and primitivism that worked contrary to the spirit of modernity. Through the consciousness of Sashi Kumar, saintly in his stature, the author upholds his faith that the essence of modernity lies in surpassing the divisive elements, based on gender, race and religion. A sense of humanity, purity of purpose and altruism are the values that he offers to his nation in its struggle with fundamentalist forces.
This phase of national history which records a resurgence of disruptive elements, is the background that inspired the early works of Salman Rushdie. His attack on the reactionary forces that threatened the Indian subcontinent is implicit in Midnight's Children. The nineteen eighties that saw the spurt of religious fanaticism in India, also found religious fundamentalism turning rigid in Pakistan. The fact that the grotesque tale that Rushdie narrates in Shame, his indictment on Pakistan is outdated, is suggestively stated at the beginning of the novel: “All this happened in the fourteenth century, I’m using the Hegiran calendar, naturally: don’t imagine that stories of this type always take place long ago. Time cannot be homogenized as easily as milk, and in those parts, until quite recently, the thirteen-hundreds were still in full swing” (13). The passage is an ironic reflection on the primitive and uncivilized socio-political developments in the late twentieth century Pakistan, that would probably have suited the fourteenth century. The protagonist Omar Khayyam Shakil stands at the periphery of this world, guilty of a passive non-involvement in the brutality and violence around him. He symbolizes the passive public of Pakistan, India and other places in the world, who are guilty in their refusal to act.

Meher Nigar Masroor’s Shadows of Time is an equally indignant, though not so scathing, attack on the post-Independence Pakistan. Islamization by the military regime stifled public opinion and destroyed individual freedom. Mahen sadly reflects on the plight of her nation:

This aged earth has tumbled into the space age, but this subcontinent refuses to yield the ancient tyrannies. The people cannot read and write, intolerance has touched new depths with the help of oil rigs. Crowds are ugly and menacing, the human race seems asexual, the female hidden like leprous sore. Inquiry of the mind is deplored. Only the taste for food is cultivated. Books, music, aesthetics — all have been banished. No vestige of culture remains — tribal-feudal-capitalistic-socialist — all are frowned upon (418).
In the last decade of the twentieth century, modernization, propelled by political and economic strategies, came to be widely recognized as globalization. To a certain extent, say Fred Dalmayer and G. N. Devy, "... globalization can be regarded as a synonym for modernization or westernization that is the dissemination of the standards of Western modernity around the globe" (15). The industrially advanced Western world imposed its scientific and technological skill and expertise upon the non-Western nations. Simultaneously those aspects of the Western culture that merely touch the periphery of life, projected by the media, too came to have an impact on them. However, in the diffusion of a rational view of life and secular approach to social relations, modernization has still a long way to go, especially in nations like India where tradition has a strong hold on the masses. That accounts for the nation's disenchantment with modernity, despite the ever-accelerating pace at which technological innovations are introduced. Bureaucracy and capitalism, two new identities created by modernity, conservative at their very source, also have contributed to this disenchantment.

The consequences of this disillusionment with modernity are demonstrated in the rise of various conflicting and incompatible forces; liberalization, Hindutva and subaltern voice are three such forces that assert themselves with varying intensity, in contemporary India. A cultural schizophrenia is yet another symptom of the disinclination towards the acceptance of total modernization. Along with the acknowledgement of modernity, there is also an assertion of the purity of the native religions. The modern Hindu woman evinces this cultural crisis characteristic of modernization. In the words of Ratan Kapur and Brenda Cossman:

That is why, the new Hindu woman, even when she appears to be strong and strives for work, education, and employment, restores "the glories of an ancient past - a past which, as reconstructed through communal discourses, accords a particular role for women in the family and in the
The basic ideals of modernity, scientific rationality, technological development, secularism and democracy have had a profound impact upon the societies that came into contact with them. The traditional social order hinged on communal and collective assumptions and brushed aside individual predilections. Modernity, on the other hand, subverted the traditional pattern and self-hood, and personal identity suffered a dilemma as the cultural anchorage was under threat. It launched the process of homogenization, cutting across the boundaries of geography, nationality and religion and taking into its fold all mankind. However, as Anthony Elliott puts it, "... it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish" (11). Before long, modernity's enterprise began showing the traces of disruption that lay hidden beneath its universality and homogenization. With the emergence of post-modern perceptions, its confidence in shaping the world was shaken. The western domination, with its neo-colonial tendencies came to be challenged.

A critique of modernity, questioning its validity and authenticity, was put forth by the post-modernists. Impelled by an urge to recognize differences and multiple possibilities, they suspected modernity's ethics, especially its all-inclusiveness. In the words of Avjit Pathak, "A ruthlessly uniform, homogenized world denies the ethics of freedom and self-determination. Neither men nor women can experience freedom in a world in which there is colonization and the hegemony of the dominant culture remains unchallenged" (137). So also, modernity's capitalist tendencies, in which the post-modernists could only see signs of a new and more aggressive kind of colonialism, were rejected. They found in it a susceptibility to destroy its own fundamental principle, the spirit of emancipation. Mechanization of industries, foremost in the agenda of
modernity, brought about transformations in human relationships too. The impersonality associated with technology was transferred to human relationships. A look at the present-day social scenario shows an anonymity in human relations.

Evidences of such disillusionment with modernity are so obvious that today there is a widely pervading tendency to look for a liberation from modernity. Processes of counter-modernization and de-modernization have set in. In a tradition-oriented society like ours, the reaction to modernity has created a crisis in religion. The question that looms large in front of us is, will a critique of modernity lead to reactionary conservatism in a nation like India? The assertion of religious identity by fundamentalists and the aggressive demands of the subaltern classes are all ominous signs that threaten to demolish modernity.

In his scrutiny of the recent trends in Indian writing in English, Prabhakar Machwe observes, "The new Indian writer is no more sectarian or communal, narrow-minded and fanatic — he feels free to express himself and experiment as he likes .... He is a kind of humanist, if at all a label may be used" (83). This reflection of Machwe on the novelists of a preceding era could well be extended to include also the post-modern writers. In fact, they invariably look upon literary works as a necessary functional part of social context and an important element in social change.

Salman Rushdie who calls himself "a modern, modernist, urban-man" (Imaginary Homelands 405) is keenly sensitive to the disenchantment of modernity and the post-modernist dilemma. His novels offer a powerful social and political critique. Midnight's Children deals with the modern history of independent India, just as his subsequent work Shame deals with the modern history of Pakistan. The Satanic Verses,
Rushdie’s response to reactionary conservatism that erupted in several parts of South Asia in the nineteen eighties, seems to have been written for a secular, Western audience. However, all the three works demonstrate that for the author, fiction is not only a representation of social reality, but also a necessary functional part of social context and an important factor in social change.

A disintegration of the elements of modernity, though a world-wide phenomenon in the last decades of the twentieth century, posed a greater danger to India and Pakistan. The resultant outbreak of conflicts between sectarian forces in the two nations stimulated Rushdie to write *Midnight’s Children*, an exposure of the irony of Indian democracy, and *Shame*, a scathing attack on the distortion of theocracy in Pakistan, by its military regime. The native pattern of life has failed to assert the modernizing projects, borrowed from the Western Enlightenment causing much despair and disillusionment. Two powerful metaphors used quite early in these two novels serve as powerful symbols of modernity’s disenchantment. In *Midnight’s Children*, the fragmented body of Naseem, as seen by Dr. Aziz through the perforated sheet, is India – politically and geographically a unified whole, but scattered into fragments by various discriminatory factors. Like Aziz, haunted by the “phantasm of a partitioned woman” (25), India’s people are haunted by their nation’s dilemma. An “inverted world” is a symbol that finds a place quite early in *Shame* and is found to recur at intervals, the total impact of which is the depiction of a nation whose values are all upside down. Describing the birth of Omar Khayyam Shakil, the narrator records, “Our hero, Omar Khayyam, first drew breath in that improbable mansion which was too large for its rooms to be counted; opened his eyes; and saw upside down through an open window, the macabre peaks of the impossible mountains on the horizon” (20). As Viney Kirpal says, “Though singly, each reference or episode is funny or satirical or poignant, the cumulative experience is one of extreme
pessimism about the present and future of the country where everything is upside down” (21).

Rushdie launches an attack on all forces that contradict the unified image of a nation built on democracy and egalitarianism. His voice of resentment against the linguistic division of India is loud and clear as he says, “But the boundaries of these states were not formed by rivers, or mountains, or any natural features of the terrain; they were, instead, walls of words. Language divided us” (Midnight’s Children 189).

In *Shame*, religious fundamentalism is the main target of attack. “Nishapur” (the City of Darkness), the abode of the three Shakil sisters, is an area of darkness that symbolically represents Pakistan where the clashes between fanatical religious sects have driven out democratic ideals. The target of the author’s ironic attack is religion which he holds responsible for the state of affairs in Pakistan. The images like that of “the fateful necklace of shoes hanging around the divine’s accidental neck” (43) and the reference to the Islamic practice of circumcision as “mutilation, barberry or divine approval” (21), leave no ambiguity in the mind of the reader, as to the author’s message.

The *Satanic Verses*, inspired by the annihilation of democratic ideals in South Asia, is a plea for freedom against tyranny. Ironically the ‘Rushdie affair’ that followed it, especially the burning of the book, was a confirmation of the outright rejection of the Enlightenment value of free speech.

If the progress of modernity demolished the values of brotherhood and concern for one’s fellow beings, so also it ruined nature. A thoughtless implementation of technology for economic development resulted in the devastation of environment. As Erich Fromm has put it, “(Man) invents tools and, while thus mastering nature, he separates
himself from it more and more” (49). As man gained more mastery over nature through the advance of science and technology, he was more and more alienated from it. This alienation turned to hostility, which is one of the sources of modernity’s disillusionment. Moreover, the imbalance in sharing the profits of the exploitation and the fear of the havoc that could result from a depletion of natural sources, question the authenticity of modernity itself.

In concurrence with the challenges hurled at the authenticity of modernity, eco-feminism too emerged disputing the modernizing project of Western feminism. To quote Vandana Shiva, “In the Western view femininity is ideologically constructed as everything that is not masculine and must be subjected to domination” (49). Western feminism recognized masculine as the superior and women were expected to assume these masculine values. In challenging this, the eco-feminists came to look upon modernity’s science and development as patriarchal projects” (Shiva, Introduction xvi). The violation of nature came to be linked with the violation of women.

Sohaila Abdulali’s The Madwoman of Jogare, an eco-feminist novel, is a protest against the patriarchal subjugation of women and nature. It questions the Enlightenment mission that turned out to be “the spread of darkness, of the extinction of life and life enhancing processes” (Shiva, Introduction xvi). The encounter between tradition and modernity as depicted in the novel takes place in Russgaon. The harbingers of modernity to this village, the Sheikhpalis and Ifrat and Richard, Shobhana, Ann and the others at the Tribal Upliftment and Cultural Studies Centre have well integrated with the local population, the confrontation having produced no disharmony. But things begin to change with the arrival of the Pruthis, their bulldozers and concrete and their mission of “civilizing” Russgaon. Its tranquility is lost, Ifrat’s world is turned topsy-turvy, she stops painting and the madwoman who announces the arrival of
monsoon with an amazing precision and punctuality, disappears. Latika Padgaonkar considers the work to be a slice of idyllic life, “that holds no doctrine, only states an experience” (25). However, the novel is a pronouncement on modernization that ameliorates the living conditions for a few, but when unhitched, spells disaster for many, reverting to the worst of savagery.

Modernization, from the time of its inception in India, has created different types of tensions. The inter-structural tensions in its initial encounter with traditional ideologies, gave way to the tensions created by its own disillusionment in the post-colonial times. This led to a cultural breakdown. The future of modernity in India depends upon how these tensions are resolved within the specificities of Indian modernity that has always shown a desire to conform yet to differentiate. The solution lies neither in retreating to tradition nor in accepting the contemporary version of modernity as perfect. As Dipankar Gupta has put it, “Tradition is no escape route, nor is it wise to fool ourselves into believing that what we are going through today is yet another version of modernity” (214).

Modernity has contributed enormously to the alleviation of poverty and squalor. Technological innovations have annihilated distance, making cross-cultural exchange between nations feasible. In this context, to speak in terms of a rejection of modernity would be irrational and non-viable. Nonetheless, its discontents: alienation, the eruption of violence resulting from the breakdown in human relationship, environmental catastrophes and consumerism, cannot be ignored. As Avjit Pathak puts it, “… critical modernization should be the essence of the new worldview” (219). What he recommends is an all-accommodative design in which there is sufficient space for multiple voices and propensity for a general consensus.
Dipankar Gupta’s analysis of Indian modernity points out the misconception that results from equating modernity with its artifacts. “Westoxication”, an imitation of Western modernity without imbibing its essence, and a tenacious adherence to tradition are, according to him, the basic defects of modernity as experienced in India. Its discontents are apparent in rigid caste identities, misinterpretation of religion to forge political unity, manipulation of minority rights, snobbery and corruption rampant in the nation. Acknowledging that the spirit of the age lies in modernity, Gupta says, “... we have to resolutely press on with the modernist agenda" (213-214).

The specificities of modernity as experienced by Indian Muslims, however, as observed in the preceding section, are at variance with those of the majority. Alam Khundmiri, in his analysis of Islamic traditionalism, in the context of modernization, admits that Indian modernity largely depends upon the decision of the Hindu majority. The following remark made by him encapsulates the course of action that he recommends to the Muslims in the nation’s modernizing project:

Indian Muslims can accelerate the process of modernization if they accept the suggestion that the values of secular democracy are more in tune with a higher ethical ideal than futile attempts to recapture past politico-legal traditions which are neither in tune with modern times nor can be shared by the contemporaries belonging to different faiths (61-62).

The discourses of the socio-political thinkers on Indian modernity express, directly or indirectly, a fear that the disillusionment that has set in, in the modernizing program would lead to disintegration. Their assessment of the nature and causes of eruption, vary as per the differences in their perspectives. However, there is a striking similarity in their reflections on the course of modernity that they envision for the future of the nation. What emerges from these deliberations is the need to create a new social base where open dialogues are feasible and there is a
readiness to accept common consensus and act accordingly. In the words of Alam Khundmiri, "Indian society can only be modernized on the basis of a value system which can be shared by all its members and such a value system can emanate from the humanistic tradition of the contemporary world alone" (62).
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