

The Dark Side of Modernization in *The Tharu*

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Article History : Submitted : 28th Nov. 2024; Reviewed : 21th Jan. 2025; Revised : 14th Feb. 2025

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.3126/bpjms.v3i01.76240>

Abstract

*This research paper examines and analyzes the impact of modernization on the traditional bonds that define the Tharu community in Ramesh Bahadur Chaudhary's novel, *The Tharu*. Through key themes like the fragmentation of extended families, the declination of communal labour, generational conflict, the commodification of land, and the marginalization of cultural practices, this article explores how modernization disrupts the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the Tharu people. The novel makes a study how modernization erodes the traditional values and communal structures that once sustained the community, leading to a profound loss of identity, cultural displacement, and the weakening of social cohesion. Employing a qualitative approach, the research integrates textual analysis of the novel with scholarly insights on indigenous studies, modernization theory, and cultural displacement to contextualize the novel's representation of modernization's effects. The study underscores how modernization, while offering economic progress and new opportunities, comes at the significant cost of cultural erosion and social fragmentation. Additionally, it sheds light on the intergenerational tensions and conflicts caused by competing worldviews of tradition and modernity. This paper explores the importance of sustainable modernization approaches that preserve indigenous traditions and cultural identities, enabling economic development without sacrificing heritage. Ultimately, the findings emphasize the need for deeper reflection on how indigenous communities like the Tharu can adapt to modernization's forces while retaining their cultural integrity and social resilience.*

Keywords: Cultural erosion, indigenous identity, modernization, Tharu community, traditional bonds.

Introduction

This research delves into the dark side of modernization in Ramesh Bahadur Chaudhary's novel, *The Tharu* (TT). It explores the negative impacts modernization brings into the cultural bonding of the Tharu people. It makes a study of lives of the Tharu, one of Nepal's indigenous communities, offering a vivid portrayal of their traditional way of life. Historically, the Tharu have been known for their deep connection to nature, collective solidarity, and distinct cultural practices that have been preserved over centuries. For generations, they live in harmony with their environment, relying on close-knit communities and the land for their livelihoods. However, with the advent of modernization, the community gradually faces the erosion of its customs, values,

and social structures. As one character in the novel poignantly remarks, “the land that once defined us is slipping through our fingers like water, and with it, our way of life” (45). This shift largely propels by increasing urbanization, globalization, and external socio-economic forces. Thus, it creates a complex dynamic between the old and the new, ultimately threatening the very fabric of the Tharu traditions. In essence, the novel presents a community at a crossroads, grappling with the clash between tradition and the demands of modernity.

Modernization, in this context, refers to the process through which traditional societies adapt, or it forces them to adapt to modern economic, social, and political changes. As *TT* analyzes, modernization manifests through various means, including the spread of education, exposure to urban lifestyles, and the intrusion of capitalist market systems into rural life. The protagonist’s journey in the novel captures these conflicting forces. At one point, reflecting on the changing times, the protagonist observes, “we were taught to honour the earth, but now we are told to sell it. How can we sell what gives us life?” (78). This statement analyzes the deep-rooted conflict between traditional values that emphasize a symbiotic relationship with the land and modern economic demands that prioritize profit over sustainability.

Moreover, *TT* makes a study of new ideologies and cultural practices that deem foreign to the Tharu people. As the younger generation becomes exposing to urban influences, the elders notice a growing disconnection from their roots. One elder asserts, “Our children now speak of cities and machines, but are there respects for the fields that have fed us for centuries?” (95). This generational divide illustrates a key theme in *TT*—the gradual loss of cultural continuity as younger Tharu individuals become absorb by the allure of modernity. The novel reveals the emotional and psychological toll this process takes on both the old and young, showing how the once-tight-knit community begins to unravel under the weight of modern pressures.

Additionally, *TT* examines the impact of modern education on traditional ways of life. Education as a gateway to opportunity, introduces the Tharu youth to new ways of thinking, but also creates a rift between them and their heritage. As one young character notes, “They teach us of the world beyond our village, but in doing so, they make us forget the stories of our ancestors” (104). Thus, while education brings progress, it also alienates the younger generation from their cultural roots, leading to an identity crisis for those caught between tradition and the future.

Furthermore, the novel delves into the economic pressures that come with modernization. The Tharu community, once self-sufficient through agriculture and communal living, now faces the intrusion of capitalist systems. Large-scale agricultural industries push them out of their ancestral lands. A character bitterly reflects on this

loss: “the fields that were once ours are now plowed by machines, and we are left to watch from the sidelines, as strangers in our own land” (120). This passage emphasizes the displacement and disenfranchisement that modernization can bring to indigenous communities, as they lose not only their land but also their sense of belonging.

TT explores the challenges posed by modernization to the Tharu’s traditional bonds. It portrays the disintegration of their communal values, the weakening of family structures, and the shift in generational perspectives. For instance, one elder character laments the growing distance between the youth and their roots: “the young ones no longer listen; they dream of cities, while we dream of the fields” (112). Thus, by analyzing these dynamics, the article sheds light on the larger question of whether indigenous communities like the Tharu can find a balance between maintaining their cultural identity and embracing the inevitabilities of modern life. Ultimately, as Chaudhary’s narrative suggests, the impact of modernization on Tharu people not only reflects the socio-economic change but also an emotional and psychological struggle for survival in an increasingly globalized world.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid spread of modernization impacts the indigenous communities worldwide. Similarly, it impacts the lives of Tharu people of Nepal. Traditionally known for their close-knit family structures, deep connection to the land, and strong communal ties, they long preserve their cultural identity through rituals, customs, and a harmonious relationship with nature. However, in recent years, forces such as urbanization, globalization, and the intrusion of capitalist economies begin to erode these foundational bonds. As modernization introduces new values, lifestyles, and economic demands, the younger generation of Tharu, in particular finds itself caught between two worlds—one rooted in tradition and another driven by modern aspirations. *TT* examines this very tension, presenting a vivid portrayal of a community in transition. The novel reflects the struggles of Tharu characters that grapple with the disintegration of their traditional ways of life under the pressures of modernization. Despite the critical importance of this theme, there has been limited scholarly attention focused on how *TT* addresses the specific effects of modernization on the Tharu community’s social, cultural, and familial bonds. As a result, this research aims to fill this gap by analyzing how modernization, as depicted in the novel, challenges the Tharu's identity, disrupts their generational continuity, and reshapes their relationship with the land.

Review of Literature

Myriad research scholars explore the impact of modernization on indigenous

communities, particularly in terms of the erosion of traditional cultural practices, social structures, and family bonds. The Tharu community of Nepal, one of the indigenous groups, roots in collective social practices, close kinship ties, and a symbiotic relationship with the land. However, as modernization penetrates rural areas, these long-standing aspects of Tharu life face unprecedented challenges. This review examines the broader academic discussion on modernization's effects on indigenous communities, including the specific case of the Tharu people, and identifies gaps that remain unexplored, particularly in relation to emotional and psychological impacts.

The technological advancement and economic development invite numerous threats to indigenous cultures around the globe. They arouse tensions in indigenous societies, like the Tharu people in Nepal. In this regard, Mazrui postulates, "modernization inevitably leads to a clash between the preservation of traditional values and the adoption of modern practices" (23). This tension exists in indigenous societies where communal living, rituals, and cultural identity, intertwines deeply with the environment. Consequently, Nyamnjoh finds indigenous people often finding themselves "caught between the need to modernize for economic survival and the desire to preserve their cultural heritage" (81). This tension, terms by some as cultural dissonance, becomes common across various indigenous groups, globally. Guneratne makes a study of the process of modernization in Tharu communities that leads to the gradual erosion of communal bonds, particularly with the "adoption of individualistic values brought about by modern economic structures" (48). Traditionally, Tharu society builds upon cooperation, collective land ownership, and shared labour. However, these communal practices now increases giving way to individualism, mirroring trends seen in other indigenous communities worldwide. For instance, Aiken concurs, "the imposition of capitalist economic structures often leads to the breakdown of traditional, cooperative labour systems, thus, threatening the social fabric that holds indigenous communities together" (55). This shift reflects the broader effects of modernization on communal living and collective identity.

Ahearn makes a study on migration in rural Nepal. It provides insights into how modernity affects family structures. She finds migration to urban centers due to for their education and employment. She asserts "it accelerates the disintegration of traditional family structures and weakens the sense of collective identity" (100). These evidences match particularly in the Tharu context, where younger generations, exposed to modern values, often find themselves distanced from the communal values of their elders, thus creating significant tensions. Similarly, Gellner finds generation gaps amongst Tharu in Nepal, as he postulates, "the spread of modern education among indigenous youth often results in a cultural gap, where younger individuals

become disconnected from their heritage while striving to fit into the larger, modern society” (65). It arouses consciousness amongst the indigenous communities in Nepal. Bista explores this generational disconnect as an “identity crisis among young Tharu individuals. Caught between their traditional cultural roles and modern aspirations, they struggle to reconcile their heritage with the pressures of modern life” (136). Young Tharu individuals question the relevance of their traditional roles, reflecting the growing cultural gap.

The economic transformation, as modernization brings, compounds challenges to Tharu community in Nepal. Gellner finds how the commodification of land “alienates indigenous groups from their traditional economic systems, resulting in the breakdown of communal practices that have sustained these communities for generations” (70). The shift from subsistence-based agriculture to market-driven land use represents a significant departure from the Tharu’s deep-rooted connection to their land, a theme echoes in broader literature. This economic transformation becomes possible only at the cost of the erosion of social bonds, as individual success becomes prioritized over collective well-being. Furthermore, Aiken explores the alienating effect of capitalism on indigenous communities, and asserts, “market economies introduce competition and individualism, undermining the cooperative labour systems that have traditionally defined indigenous life” (58). In *TT*, these themes reflect the growing sense of isolation and disconnection experienced by the characters, as they grapple with these changes.

Modernization creates generational conflict as one of the significant social consequences. Sharma’s study of Nepali youth finds how modernization “introduces an identity crisis among young people, torn between their traditional values and the demands of modernity” (104). This crisis, in turn, threatens the continuity of cultural practices as younger generations become less incline to uphold traditional rituals and values. As younger Tharu individuals become increasingly expose to modern education and urban lifestyles, they often become alienate from the values and traditions of their elders. This forms a recurring theme in Chaudhary’s *TT* where older characters express frustration over the changing attitudes of the youth. For instance, one elder laments, “They no longer understand our stories; their minds are filled with the noise of the city” (142). This conflict stands unique to the Tharu.

The above analyses help in understanding the cultural and economic effects of modernization on indigenous communities. Hence, there remains a significant gap in exploring the emotional and psychological impacts of this process, particularly within the Tharu context. Chaudhary’s *TT* provides a literary lens through which the researcher explores these internal struggles by highlighting the need for further research in this area.

Significance

This research makes a study of the impact of modernization on the Tharu community, the indigenous people of Nepal. It delves into the cultural, emotional, and psychological dimensions of modernization; an area often overlooked in existing literature, and highlights its effect on identity and traditional values, particularly among the younger generation. By analyzing these transformations, the study sheds light on the tensions between traditional and modern aspirations. Furthermore, its findings provide practical implications for policymakers, educators, and social workers, advocating for culturally sensitive development programs that preserve Tharu heritage. Beyond its immediate scope, this research lays a foundation for future studies on the interplay between modernization and indigenous cultures, extending its relevance to global contexts.

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach to research, to examine the effects of modernization on the traditional bonds of the Tharu community. It employs an indigenous theory of research as a theoretical tool to meet its objectives. This theory emphasizes the perspectives, values, and epistemologies of indigenous communities. Linda Tuhiwai Smith develops it through her seminal work *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999), to challenge Western-centric approaches to research. It foregrounds the importance of understanding cultural, historical, and social contexts from an insider perspective, respecting indigenous knowledge systems.

TT makes a study on an indigenous Nepalese group, and this framework allows an in-depth analysis of how modernization affects their traditions, communal bonds, and worldview. *TT* forms the primary source of study for this research. It offers a vivid portrayal of the Tharu community's struggle, with the forces of modernization. It serves as a lens through which it explores the emotional, cultural, and psychological impacts of modernization on traditional Tharu bonds. Eagleton asserts, literary works often reflect "the social and historical forces at play in the society from which they emerge" (47). In this context, *TT* provides a fictionalized, yet insightful account of the ways in which modernization threatens to dismantle the communal bonds, kinship ties, and collective identity of the Tharu people.

Limitation of the Study

The literary analysis component of this research limits to *TT*. It employs an indigenous theory as outlined by Linda Tuhiwai Smith. This theory helps in exploring the cultural perspectives of indigenous communities, providing a lens to examine

the disruption of kinship ties, communal labor, cultural identity, and land ownership caused by modernization. With a qualitative approach, this study makes a textual analysis. Other Tharu literary works or ethnographic accounts might offer additional perspectives that could enrich the analysis. Furthermore, the analyses derive from the text limits to a particular point of time. It may not account for future developments in technology, economic practices, or cultural shifts. As modernization introduces new economic, social, and cultural forces, these traditional bonds subject to increase the strain, threaten the survival of Tharu cultural practices and communal solidarity. Through the foregoing discussions, the researcher attempts to analyse the dark side of modernization in *TT*.

Fragmentation of the Extended Families

The fragmentation of extended family structures in the Tharu society reflects one of the noticeable impacts of modernization. The traditional Tharu household exposes themselves as multigenerational, with elders, parents, and children living together under one roof and contributing collectively to the family's well-being. However, modernization promotes the rise of individualism, encourages younger members of the family to leave their ancestral homes in pursuit of education, and employment in urban areas. Harka, the protagonist of *TT*, laments the dissolution of his family's unity: "We once sat together around the same hearth, my sons and I, sharing stories of the land and our ancestors. Now, they have all scattered; their dreams of the city tearing them away from the roots we nurtured" (78). This remark poignantly captures the emotional loss that accompanies the physical separation of family members due to modernization. The hearth, a symbol of unity and warmth in traditional Tharu households, converts to cold and empty, reflecting the disintegration of familial bonds.

The transformation from extended to nuclear families showcases a common consequence of modernization in indigenous societies. Harris adduces, "Modernization tends to isolate individuals from their traditional kinship networks, as economic pressures and urban migration redefine family relationships" (101). In *TT*, this shift constitutes not only a structural change but also a cultural one, as the younger generation loses touch with the collective values and wisdom of their elders.

Decline of Communal Living and Shared Labour

The traditional Tharu society considers communal living and shared labour as essential aspects of both economic survival and social cohesion. These practices, such as cooperative farming and collective participation in festivals and rituals, reinforce the sense of community and interdependence among Tharu families. However,

as modernization brings new economic opportunities through wage labour, these traditional systems of shared work begin to decline.

The *TT* portrays this shift through scenes of deserted fields and abandoned communal spaces. Harka postulates, “In the past, the village came alive during harvest. We sang as we reaped the fields together. Now, each man toils for his own gains and the fields echo with silence” (115). These remarks illustrate how modernization introduces individual economic pursuits at the expense of communal labor practices, leading to the breakdown of the very social rituals that once united the community.

Numerous scholars observe similar patterns in other indigenous communities. Holm finds, “the shift from subsistence farming to wage labour, prompted by modernization, erodes not only economic self-sufficiency but also the social bonds formed through collective work” (88). In *TT*, the silence of the fields symbolizes this erosion, a stark contrast to the lively and cooperative past. The loss of these shared labour practices leads to a weakening of the communal identity, a central to the Tharu culture.

Generational Conflict and Cultural Displacement

The generational divide as one of the central conflicts in *TT*, emerges as a result of modernization. While the elder generation clings to traditional values, customs, and practices, the younger generation increasingly draws to the allure of modern life, with its promises of economic prosperity, education, and social mobility. The generational conflicts arouse tensions between Harka and his sons, who no longer see the relevance of their traditional way of life. In a heated exchange, one of Harka’s sons declares, “The city offers a future-money, success, a life free from the backwardness of the village. I will not stay here to rot in the past” (128). It reflects the younger generation’s disillusionment with traditional Tharu culture, which they perceive as outdated and incompatible with the modern world. The desire to escape the backwardness of village life mirrors the broader narrative of modernization, where traditional values often marginalize in favour of progress and development.

Likewise, Hall adduces, “modernization frequently leads to an identity crisis among younger generations in indigenous communities, as they struggle to balance the demands of modernity with the pull of tradition” (54). This crisis acute in *TT* as the younger characters reject their cultural heritage in favour of modern values, leading to alienation from both their community and their own identity. This sense of cultural displacement becomes a recurring theme throughout the novel, as modernization forces the younger Tharu to navigate a path between tradition and modernity, often at the cost of their cultural roots.

Commodification of Land and the Loss of Ancestral Heritage

TT explores the commodification of land as another critical aspect of modernization. For the Tharu, land represents not merely an economic asset but a symbol of heritage, identity, and continuity with their ancestors. However, as modernization introduces market-driven land ownership practices, the Tharu increasingly view land as a commodity to be bought, sold, or developed, leading to the displacement of Tharu families from their ancestral territories. *TT* vividly depicts how capitalists practice the commodification of land, and undermine the traditional Tharu's economic systems. In one striking passage, a character laments, "The earth that once fed us now belongs to men who do not know its stories" (124). The novel captures the impact of land commodification when Harka examines, "Our land, once sacred and eternal, is now divided by borders and deeds. Strangers come with money and papers, and we are left with nothing but memories of what once was" (140). This passage analyzes the profound sense of loss experienced by the Tharu, as their traditional relationship with the land severe. The land, once a source of collective identity and belonging, now reduces to a commodity subject to market forces.

Scott's research on land commodification in indigenous communities supports this depiction. He adduces, "The conversion of communal land into private property under modern economic systems disrupts the social and cultural functions that land traditionally served in indigenous societies" (87). In *TT*, this disruption relates not merely to economic but also spiritual, as the Tharu people lose not only their land but also the cultural and ancestral ties that define their identity.

Marginalization of Tharu Cultural Practices

TT makes a study how modernization leads to the marginalization of Tharu cultural practices, including their rituals, festivals, and oral traditions. As younger Tharus become increasingly integrated into modern society, they begin to distance themselves from the cultural practices that have long defined their identity. For instance, the novel portrays the declining participation in traditional festivals and rituals, as modern forms of entertainment and celebration replace them, gradually. Chaudhary examines the reflection of Harka on this decline, adducing, "the festivals that once brought us together are now seen as old-fashioned, irrelevant. The young no longer cares for stories and songs that carry the wisdoms of our ancestors" (166). It captures the erosion of cultural continuity as modernization diminishes the importance of traditional Tharu practices in the lives of the younger generation.

Modernization uproots the cultural practices. Geertz postulates, "Modernization often results in the marginalization of indigenous cultural practices, as they are seen as

incompatible with the demands of modern life” (23). In *TT*, this marginalization signals the loss of the cultural knowledge, values, and traditions that have been passed down through generations. The younger generation’s disinterest in these practices marks a significant cultural rupture, as the very practices that once sustained Tharu identity have been pushed to the periphery of modern life.

Economic Dependency and Loss of Self-Sufficiency

Modernization disrupts the traditional self-sufficient economies of indigenous communities, leading to an over-reliance on external, market-driven systems. This transition evidences in *TT* as families forsake subsistence farming—a cornerstone of their autonomy—for wage labor in urban areas. This shift not only transforms their economic practices but also erodes their cultural identity tied to the land. Harka, reflecting on this change, laments, “We no longer grow what we eat; we buy from those who exploit our need” (132). This shift creates the dependence to monetize economies. For the Tharu, this dependence means exposure to volatile market dynamics, where rising prices and exploitative practices disproportionately affect those without economic stability. The loss of agricultural traditions undermines community cohesion, as people abandon collective farming practices for individual wage pursuits, once a source of solidarity for them.

Modernization's economic transformations extend beyond the financial realm; they affect cultural and spiritual ties to the land. The commodification of resources prioritizes profit over sustainability, leaving communities like the Tharu unable to reclaim their independence. Ultimately, this dependency reflects a broader narrative of marginalization, where traditional societies are subsumed into systems that prioritize external interests over local resilience.

Erosion of Oral Traditions

Oral traditions constitute the cornerstone of Tharu culture, serving as a vital mechanism for preserving history, values, and collective identity. These traditions, encompassing storytelling, songs, and proverbs, transmit ancestral wisdom and maintain the community’s connection to its past. However, modernization poses a grave threat to these practices, as digital and written media increasingly replace oral storytelling. In *TT*, Harka reflects on this loss: “Our stories fade like songs no one sings anymore” (170). This poignant remark captures the disappearance of a cultural heritage that once thrived in communal spaces. However, Campbell asserts, “the shift from oral to written traditions sidelines cultures dependent on storytelling” (54). In the context of the Tharu, this displacement not only diminishes their oral histories but also weakens

the social bonds formed through the shared act of storytelling. The younger generation, engrossed in modern education and technology, finds little time to engage with these narratives, creating a generational gap that further accelerates their decline.

The erosion of oral traditions symbolizes a broader cultural rupture the modernization brings about. As oral practices fade, they leave behind a void in the community's cultural fabric, severing the links that connect the Tharu people to their ancestors. This cultural displacement underscores the urgency of preserving indigenous knowledge systems amidst rapid societal change.

Displacement and Forced Migration

Modernization, particularly through development projects and urbanization, forces numerous indigenous communities, including the Tharu, to abandon their ancestral lands and traditional ways of life. In *TT*, the protagonist captures this forced displacement with a heartbreaking analogy: "Our roots are torn, and we are cast into the winds like seeds without soil" (188). This imagery emphasizes the emotional and cultural upheaval caused by migration, where it uproots individuals from their familiar environment, and their connection to ancestral lands fades. The experience of displacement leads to profound economic hardship, as traditional livelihoods, such as subsistence farming, no longer support the displaced Tharu in urban settings. Gellner postulates "development projects displace indigenous communities, undermining their autonomy and culture" (65). These projects, often framed as progress, fail to recognize the cultural significance of the land and its role in sustaining the community's identity. In *TT*, this displacement results not just in the loss of physical land, but also in the erosion of cultural identity. The tragedy of their displacement lies in the irreversible loss of their self-sufficient, communal existence and the alienation from their own heritage.

The forced migration of the Tharu serves as a tragic reflection of how modernization's drive for development often disregards the autonomy, heritage, and values of indigenous people. It highlights the dire need for more inclusive development policies that consider the preservation of cultural identity alongside economic growth.

Environmental Exploitation and Ecological Decline

Modernization's impact on the environment, particularly through resource exploitation, leads to significant ecological degradation. It affects communities like the Tharu who intrinsically link to the land. In *TT*, the protagonist reflects on the loss of natural resources: "The trees that shielded us are gone, leaving us exposed to the sun and loss" (144). This vivid image underscores the vulnerability of the Tharu people as they witness the destruction of their protective natural environment, particularly

forests, to make way for development projects. Guha adduces, “modernization imposes ecological costs that disproportionately burden indigenous communities” (38). For the Tharu, this exploitation forms not only a physical loss of resources but also a spiritual one. The natural world connects to their cultural and religious practices, with trees, rivers, and land embodying ancestral spirits. The rapid environmental degradation, driven by market-driven development, undermines the Tharu’s relationship with their surroundings, diminishing their cultural and spiritual heritage. This situation illustrates a profound rupture between the Tharu’s traditional ecological knowledge and the modern world’s tendency to prioritize economic growth over ecological sustainability.

As modernization continues to reshape the environment, it not only threatens the Tharu’s livelihoods but also disrupts their cultural identity, which has been closely intertwined with the land and its resources for generations.

Cultural Alienation and the Loss of Indigenous Identity

Modernization often causes indigenous individuals to feel alienated from their cultural roots, particularly when they expose themselves to the values of urban or Western societies. In *TT*, the younger generation’s growing affinity for modern ideals represents a rift with their ancestral traditions. Harka examines, “our children seek progress but fail to see the wisdom of our traditions” (92), which portrays the emotional distance between generations. Modernization influences the younger Tharu, and it leads them to dismiss the cultural practices that were once vital to their identity. It leads them to lose their individual identity. Smith concurs “modern education often erases indigenous knowledge systems, replacing them with globalized ideals” (45). This shift occurs as modern education systems and media promote Western ideals that disregard or undermine indigenous worldviews, leading to a loss of cultural continuity. As younger Tharu gravitate toward city life and modern values, their connections to traditional customs weaken, causing a sense of dislocation and confusion about their cultural identity. Spivak underscores this idea by expressing, “modernization replaces local traditions with hegemonic narratives, sidelining subaltern voices” (72). This assertion demonstrates how the broader forces of modernization marginalize indigenous cultures, often replacing them with dominant global narratives. In *TT*, this process unfolds as the characters navigate their changing world, revealing how cultural alienation manifests in the erosion of indigenous values and identity.

Conclusion

TT portrays a vivid and poignant picture of modernization that disrupts the traditional bonds of the long sustained Tharu community. Through the lens of

familial fragmentation, the study explores the disintegration of communal labour systems, generational conflict, land commodification, and the marginalization of cultural practices. Chaudhary illustrates the deep and often painful consequences of modernization on indigenous societies. The breakdown of extended family structures, once the core of Tharu society, underscores the ways in which modernization, with its emphasis on individualism and economic mobility, weakens the communal values that hold these families together. Similarly, under the pressures of modernization the shared labour practices decline, a crucial part of the Tharu way of life. It reflects the broader erosion of social cohesion and collective identity. Moreover, *TT* portrays the generational conflict that arises when younger Tharus, seduced by the promise of urban life, reject their traditional values and customs, in favour of the modernity. The commodification of land exacerbates the generational divide, which not only displaces Tharu families from their ancestral territories but also severs their spiritual and cultural connection to the land. As land becomes a commodity, the Tharu people lose not only their economic stability but also a vital part of their identity. The marginalization of Tharu cultural practices—rituals, festivals, and oral traditions—further emphasizes the cultural disintegration, the modernization brings. As the younger generation distances itself from these traditions, the community experiences a rupture in the transmission of cultural knowledge, leading to a profound sense of loss and alienation.

In essence, *TT* serves as a microcosm for the broader impact of modernization on indigenous communities worldwide. Through the exploration of these themes, Chaudhary offers a critical reflection on the price of progress and development, reminding readers that modernization often comes at the cost of cultural dislocation, social fragmentation, and the erosion of communal bonds. While modernization offers material prosperity and new opportunities, it also brings with it the risk of cultural extinction and the loss of identity, a dilemma that the Tharu people, like many other indigenous communities, must grapple with in their journey toward modernity. The research points to the need for a deeper understanding of how indigenous cultures can adapt to the forces of modernization without losing their essence. It calls for policies and practices that promote sustainable development while preserving the rich cultural heritage of communities like the Tharu, ensuring that progress does not come at the cost of their identity and way of life. The future researchers, through longitudinal studies, may explore how the effects of modernization unfold over time and how the Tharu community continues to adapt or resist these changes. They can further explore the regional variations in the Tharu communities going closer to urban centers. They can incorporate multiple literary texts or oral histories that can reflect different aspects of Tharu life.

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