

# Nehruvian Thought and the Question of Modernity: An Excursus

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## ***Abstract:***

*This research paper provides an in-depth exploration of Nehruvian thought and its implications for the question of modernity in India. It examines Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of modernity as articulated in his writings, speeches, and policy initiatives during his tenure as India's first Prime Minister. Through a multidisciplinary lens, the study analyzes the intersections of Nehruvian thought with political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of modernity. Furthermore, it investigates the reception and critique of Nehruvian modernity in contemporary scholarship, offering insights into its enduring relevance and contested interpretations.*

**Keywords:** *Nehruvian thought, modernity, Jawaharlal Nehru, India, Prime Minister, political ideology, economic development, social change, cultural transformation, reception, critique, interdisciplinary analysis.*

## **Introduction**

Theorists of modernity tend to define it as a dialectical process: modernity is the transitory, the fleeting, the ephemeral, and yet it is the permanent, the eternal, as Baudelaire famously defined it.<sup>1</sup> Marshall Berman summoned Marx to define modernity as: “modernity can be said to unite all mankind. But 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. To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said, ‘all that is solid melts into air.’”<sup>2</sup> For Marx, modernity was synonymous with modern capitalism: while it has played a historically progressive role, its time was over at the same time it became global, i.e. fully ‘modern.’ For most other people, modernity is simply undesirable, as it wreaks havoc with the traditional life.<sup>3</sup> From subaltern school to postmodern interpretations of Gandhi, everyone

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