



## Fashion Vs Style : Women's Struggle

by Azfar Hussain

MARGINALISED, and even pushed to the extremes of silences and absences, women suffer at the levels of both class and gender. First, the fact of a woman's *être* — the fact that a woman is a woman — is the source of her sufferings, reflexively perpetuated by patriarchy which I describe as one of the most violent and barbaric forms of social and cultural institution that human civilisation ever confronts as its own paradox — its own area of darkness within. Then, women's sufferings certainly vary in degree and intensity, in shape and shade, from class to class. Indeed, one can unequivocally maintain that it is the women belonging to the rural proletariat and peasant classes who constitute the most acutely suffering section of our society. True, the lower the class, the more one's suffering.

Women's position, viewed thus, has so far drawn mostly rhetorical attention from various groups, institutions, and governments. Of course, here, I do not mean to say that no effort has been made at all to improve the status of women in this part of the world. Certainly, one can identify a number of programmatic interventions made at the cultural, political and developmental levels, which, taken together, form a history of a pro-women struggle that can be traced back to Raja Ram Mohan and Vidyasagar through Rokeya and Nazrul. But, given women's position and status remaining almost unchanged today, one can infer safely that this cultural struggle, largely sponsored by the middle class, could not sustain its required intensity and continuity, primarily owing to the emergence and expansion of a politics insistently swinging back to the spell of colonialism, feudalism and capitalism, which, being woven together into a mutually reinforcing and intricate *intertext of plays*, infinitely accommodates space for the forces of fundamentalism and patriarchy. In other words, a cultural struggle aiming at women's liberation has not yet assumed its needed movement and momentum even within the middle class itself, let alone other lower classes.