

The Bengali renaissance or simply Bengal renaissance was a cultural, social, intellectual and artistic movement in Bengal region in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent during the period of the British Indian Empire, from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century dominated by Bengalis, especially Bengali Hindus.

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772 – 1833) - Founders of the Brahma Sabha, the precursor of the Brahma Samaj, a socio-religious reform movement in the Indian subcontinent. He was known for his efforts to abolish the practices of sati and child marriage. Social reforms - Crusaded against Hindu customs as sati, polygamy, child marriage and the caste system, Demanded property inheritance rights for women.
- Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820 – 1891) - A Bengali polymath from the Indian subcontinent, and a key figure of the Bengal Renaissance. His efforts to simplify and modernize Bengali prose were significant. He also rationalized and simplified the Bengali alphabet and type, which had remained unchanged since Charles Wilkins and Panchanan Karmakar had cut the first (wooden) Bengali type in 1780. He also forced the British to pass the widow remarriage act.
- Akshay Kumar Datta (1820 – 1886) – A Bengali writer from the Indian subcontinent. He was the first editor of the journal and contributed substantially towards the development of prose writing in Bengali. He was the first Bengali writer to seriously work for the propagation of a modern scientific outlook, writing books on Physics and Geography in Bengali. He also wrote profusely on astronomy, mathematics and geology. Akshay Kumar Datta was the first person in the Brahma Samaj to boldly proclaim that the Vedas were not infallible.
- Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824 – 1873) – A popular 19th-century Bengali poet and dramatist. He was a pioneer of Bengali drama. Dutt is widely considered to be one of the greatest poets in Bengali literature and the father of the Bengali sonnet. He was also the pioneer of the first satirical plays in Bengali – Buro Shaliker Ghare Rnow and Ekei ki bole Sabhyota?.
- Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838 – 1894) - an Indian writer, poet and journalist. Chattopadhyay wrote thirteen novels and many serious, serio-comic, satirical, scientific and critical treatises in Bengali. Chattopadhyay started publishing a monthly literary magazine Bangadarshan in April 1872, the first edition of which was filled almost entirely with his own work. The magazine carried serialised novels, stories, humorous sketches, historical and miscellaneous essays, informative articles, religious discourses, literary criticisms and reviews.
- Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941) - a Bengali polymath, poet, musician, and artist from the Indian subcontinent. He reshaped Bengali literature and music, as well as Indian art with Contextual Modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As an exponent of the Bengal Renaissance, he advanced a vast canon that comprised paintings, sketches and doodles, hundreds of texts, and some two thousand songs; his legacy also endures in the institution he founded, Visva-Bharati University.
- Satyajit Ray (1921 – 1992) - an Indian filmmaker, screenwriter, music composer, graphic artist, lyricist and author, widely regarded as one of the greatest filmmakers of the 20th century. Ray directed 36 films, including feature films, documentaries and shorts. He was also a fiction writer, publisher, illustrator, calligrapher, music composer, graphic designer and film critic. He authored several short stories and novels, meant primarily for young children and teenagers. Feluda, the sleuth, and Professor Shonku, the scientist in his science fiction stories, are popular fictional characters created by him. He was awarded an honorary degree by Oxford University.

Freedom of Intellect Movement was a Bengal Renaissance movement advocating rationality against religious and social dogma in Bengali Muslim society.

- Begum Rokeya (1880 – 1932) - Bengali feminist thinker, educator and political activist who is widely regarded as a pioneer of women's liberation in South Asia. Her major works include *Matichur* (A String of Sweet Pearls, 1904 & 1922), collection of essays in two volumes expressing her feminist thoughts; *Sultana's Dream* (1905), a feminist science fiction novella set in Ladyland ruled by women; *Padmarag* ("Essence of the Lotus", 1924) depicting the dreadful picture of married lives of Bengali girls in general; and *Abarodhbasini* (The Confined Women, 1931), a spirited attack on the extreme forms of purdah that endangered women's lives and thoughts.
- Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899 – 1976) - A Bengali poet, writer, musician, and revolutionary from Bengal. Nazrul criticised religious fanaticism, denouncing it as evil and inherently irreligious. He wrote about human equality in his writings. His condemnation of extremism and mistreatment of women provoked condemnation from Muslim and Hindu fundamentalists who opposed his liberal views on religion.
- Kazi Abdul Wadud (1894 - 1970) - Bengali essayist, prominent critic, dramatist and biographer. In 1926, he founded Muslim Sahitto Somaz in Dhaka and he also led the *Buddhir Mukti* (rising up from ignorance) movement with some young writers. His newspaper *Shikha* helped to increase the growth of the movement.
Works - *Mir poribar* (story), 1918, *Nodibokshe*(Novel), unknown date, *Robindro kabbo pattho*(Criticism), Bengali 1334 AD, *Torun* (A collection of story and short dramas) Kolkata, Bengali 1355 A.D., *Poth o bipoth*(Drama) Bengali 1346, *Nazrul prothiva*(Criticism), 1949, *Azad*(Novel), 1948, *Creative Bengal* (a translation of Bengali essays), 1950 , *Pobitro Quraner Prothom part* (torjoma) Bengali 1337 Adt
- Abul Fazal (1903 – 1983) - Bangladeshi writer and academic. He was awarded Bangla Academy Literary Award in 1962 and Independence Day Award in 2012 (posthumously). Novels: *Chouchir* (Splintered, 1934), *Prodip O Patongo* (Torch and Insects, 1940), *Ranga Probhat* (The Crimson Dawn, 1957), *Khuda O Asha* (Hunger and Hope, 1964)
- Muhammad Shahidullah (1885 – 1969) - A Bengali educationist, writer, philologist and linguist. Shahidullah made Professor Emeritus by the University of Dhaka (1967) for his lifetime contribution in research on language and literature. He was also awarded Chevalier De L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government in 1967 for his research on language and literature. In 1980 the Government of Bangladesh Awarded him Independence Award posthumously.
- Qazi Motahar Hossain (1897 – 1981) - Bangladeshi author, scientist, statistician, chess player, and journalist. University of Dhaka appointed him as Professor Emeritus in 1969. He was a founder fellow of Bangladesh Academy of Sciences. In stark contrast to the contemporary literary atmosphere of Bengal, mainly dominated by religious partisan spirit, Muslim Sahitya Samaj and their proceeding *Shikha* upheld rationalist values. Hossain edited two issues of *Shikha*.
- Abdul Quadir (1906 – 1984) - Bangladeshi poet, essayist, and journalist. He was the recipient of Bangla Academy Literary Award in 1963 and Ekushey Padak in 1976. Works: *Dilruba* (1933), *Uttar Basanta* (1967), *Kavi Nazrul* (1970), *Kazi Abdul Wadud* (1976), *Yugakavi Nazrul* (1986), *Chhanda Samiksan* (1979), *Bangla Chhander Itibrta* (1985)