CHAPTER 2

ECONOMY, SOCIETY, POLITY OF EASTERN UP: BENARES, BALLIA, GHAZIPUR AND AZAMGARH

Eastern Uttar Pradesh structurally forms part of the Indo-Gangetic plain which lies between the northern peninsular India and the recently built Himalayan chain. The plain is 250 miles wide in its broadest part and about 1500 miles long. The geological evolution of the plain remains a matter of discussion.

Eduard Suess, the Austrian geologist, suggests that the plain constituted a ‘foredeep’ in front of the high crust waves of the Himalayas as in their southward advance they were checked by the inflexible solid land mass of the peninsula. The rivers rising from the Himalayas brought an immense amount of detritus and deposited it in this depression. The deposition of the alluvium continued through the Pleistocene period up to the present and led to the formation of the plain. On the basis of geological data, S.G. Burrad, considers that the plain occupies a deep rift valley with parallel faults on its two sides with a maximum down throw of twenty miles.

A third and more recent view regards this region as a sag in the crust formed between the northward drifting Indian continent in the south and the comparatively soft sediments accumulated in the Lethyan as well as in the connected basins on the north. The crumpling of the sediments resulted in the formation of a mountain system.

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1 Uttar Pradesh was known in British India after 1902 as ‘the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh’ and familiarly, as ‘UP’. In the 19th century the name given to the British possessions in the region which came to comprise UP varied from time to time. The Benares region was acquired in 1775 and Ceded and conquered provinces’ were renamed the ‘Upper Provinces’ in 1809. Benares and Upper Provinces, together with later additions in Garhwal and Bundelkhand became in 1836, the North-Western Provinces under the control of a Lieutenant-Governor (although the Government did consider making it the ‘Agra Presidency’). After the annexation of Oudh (more correctly ‘Avadh’) in 1856, Oudh was separately administered by a Chief Commissioner until 1877 when the North-Western Provinces and Oudh were joined together under a single Lieutenant Governor. In 1902, following the formation of the new province called the ‘North-West Frontier Province’, the NWP and Oudh was renamed the ‘United Provinces of Agra and Oudh’. Later, in 1937, this was made simply the ‘United Provinces’. Uttar Pradesh, which joined the British Indian province and the former princely states of Benares, Rampur and Tehri-Garhwal, came into being on 26 Jan. 1950 with the inauguration of the Indian Union; see M. Zaheer and J. Gupta, The organization of the Government of Uttar Pradesh (Delhi, 1970), pp. 4-5.


4 M.S. Krishnan, Geology of India and Burma (Madras, 1956), p. 529.
Eastern Uttar Pradesh stretches between the parallels of 25° 10’ and 26° 27” North and the meridians of 82° 10’ and 84° 40’ East. It is almost triangular in shape. According the Imperial Gazetteer of India,\(^5\) this region excluding Azamgarh\(^6\) was called Benares Division. The division contains five districts as shown in the following table.\(^7\)

Table 2.1: Five Districts of Benares Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Area in square miles</th>
<th>Population 1901</th>
<th>Hand revenue and cesses, 1903-4, in thousands of rupees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benares</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>882,084</td>
<td>10,45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirzapur</td>
<td>5,238</td>
<td>1,082,430</td>
<td>9,93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaunpur</td>
<td>1,551</td>
<td>1,202,920</td>
<td>14,60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghazipur</td>
<td>1,389</td>
<td>913,818</td>
<td>12,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballia</td>
<td>1,245</td>
<td>987,768</td>
<td>8,43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,431</td>
<td>5,069,020</td>
<td>55,51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1931 census, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, were divided into eight natural divisions.\(^8\) The area under my research was termed as ‘Indo-Gangetic plain, east’.\(^9\) The physical landscape of the area is simple. It is in an alluvial plain sloping gently from north-west to south-east, following the direction of the rivers. The principal rivers are the Ghaghra, the Gumti, the Sone, and the Ganga with a number of tributaries like the Sarju, the Gangi, the Mangai and the Karamnasa.\(^10\) Besides these rivers, Bama and Nand are small streams of this area. In princely state of Benares, besides Ganga and Karmnasa, two more rivers i.e. Chandraprabha & Garai have been also reported.\(^11\) All these rivers run more or less parallel to one another with narrow strips of land between them. These strips at their maximum height are only 20 feet above the level of high water in the rivers. On account of the gentle slope, the rivers meander conspicuously in the plain and are gradually silting up their beds. There are

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\(^6\) Azamgarh district is the southern district of the Gorakhpur Division, The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. VI, Argoson to Bardwan, Oxford, 1908, p. 154.

\(^7\) The Imperial Gazetteer of India, op. cit., Vol. VII.


\(^9\) A.C.Turner, op. cit., Chapter I.

\(^10\) Ibid. p. xxi.

numerous other depressions of various shapes and sizes in which water collects during rains. The bodies of stagnant water are locally known as jhils. The Surha, Pakri-Pewa, Kotail, Jamwawan, Salona, Ratoi and Naraja are some examples of these jhils. (Lakes) most of them are so shallow that they dry up in the hot weather, but during the rainy season they attain a considerable size and sometimes uniting with each other or with the neighbouring rivers bring about floods in the adjoining lands. The climate of Eastern Uttar Pradesh is characterized by a rhythm of seasons which is produced by the south-west and north-east monsoons.

**ECONOMY**

Benares, Ghazipur, Ballia and Azamgarh regions of eastern UP are also known as Bhojpuri-speaking areas. There are three features of Bhojpuri-speaking society. First, it stood out, even in an over whelming agricultural country, for its extreme dependence on pasture and agriculture. Second, it was marked by the clear dominance of a few landowning communities. Finally, it experienced in the colonial period, in common with most of the subcontinent, a severe dislocation of existing social and economic relation.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, over 80% of the Bhojpuri work forces in these regions were engaged in agriculture and its allied works. A mere 5% workforce was involved in manufacturing. In Benares Division, Benares city was most ‘industrialized’ and even though 70% of the workforce was engaged in agricultural works.

After 1775 the Province came under British influence. The Province came to have at least three district tenurial arrangements. In Benares region permanent settlement of the Bengal type was made with individual landowners called zamindars. In the Agra province, acquired mainly between 1801 and 1817, the mahal (estate) rather than any individual was taken as the unit of settlement. Theoretically the settlement was with village communities who undertook cultivation themselves, and some of the

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12 Ibid, p. 11.
14 Gyanendra Pandey, “Rallying round the cow”, in Ranajit Guha (ed) *Subaltern Studies II*, (Delhi, 1983) p. 65.
15 J. Krishnamurthy, *Changes in the Occupational Structure of the Union*, 1901-61.

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zamindars who had established their dominance over large areas in the confused period leading up to British annexation were displaced. After 1857 uprising, the British settled with taluqdar equivalent of the zamindars in the Awadh. These taluqdars gained an extremely privileged position. They were granted sannads or bills of rights. The government encouraged the formation of Taluqdar’s Association, modeled on the British Indian Association of Calcutta and named after it, and came ultimately to collect the subscription for this body along with the land revenue.16 There were subordinate layers of holders of rights in land, paying rents to their immediate superior for the land they held and often cultivated, as tenants, sub-tenants or worse. In addition to these groups, there were the landless or near-landless labourers and various marginal groups whose rights were not at all clear – such as the intriguing categories described in the Khatauni (village accountants register of rights in land) as ‘occupiers of land without title’ or ‘occupiers without proper consent’.17

The subordinate tenant layers did not exist in all villages. Sometimes the village co-sharers (pattidars) or brotherhood (bhaiyachara), who paid the revenue, themselves cultivated the land. But even in the Mahalwari settlement area, possibly because of defects in the original settlement and because the richer and stronger landowners tended in any case to buy up or otherwise acquired the rights of weaker communities and individuals, the non-cultivating, rent-collecting landowner soon became a common figure. The status and wealth of landowners, whether taluqdars, Zamindars or pattidars varied enormously. The impression that any part of UP had monopoly of the great landlords is incorrect. Awadh did have a heavy concentration of huge estates but in Azamgarh and Benares region it was less than 5 acres.18

Benares region was the only area in UP where the revenue was settled. There were 13,654 villages and only 38 towns in the area. There were few places of commercial importance, the chief being Benares, Mirzapur, Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Shahganj and Ahanra. Ghazipur like Sassaram in Shahabad had developed around trade, handicrafts

16 P.D. Reeves’s seminar paper (Australian National University, April 1960) on tenurial conditions in UP and Punjab; also B.R. Misra, Land Revenue Policy in the United Provinces under British Rule (Banaras 1942).
18 Ibid., p. 15; Census of India, 1931, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Part I, - Report, p. 45.
and pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{19} There was a handful of other sizeable urban and semi-urban concentration such as the weaving town of Tanda (in Faizabad district) and Mau and Mubarakpur (in Azamgarh) with populations of 19,378, 16,751 and 12,562 respectively in 1911: places once noted for industry, commerce and imperial favour, now were in bad shape.\textsuperscript{20} Most 'urban' complexes in the region, however, were very much smaller centres of artisanal industry and trade, rural market towns (qasbas), or large villages classified as towns for reasons of administrative convenience. Even district headquarters like Ballia and Azamgarh retained the appearance of clusters of villages distinguishable from surrounding 'rural' habitation chiefly by the presence of civil courts and officials and the range of services that came in their wake. A number of the older towns still bore the mark of their special circumstances in the past, with their large communities of weavers and other artisans, long established houses of traders and money-lenders and service groups of various kinds: clerks, agents, priests and preachers. Many of them also had significant concentration of Muslims, traditionally prominent in the literate service section as well as in crafts such as weaving.

In the course of the latter half of the nineteenth century more and more people crowded into some of these old towns and the newer trading and administrative centres, as long-distance trade grew, the general monetization of economy developed further, pressure upon the land increased,\textsuperscript{21} and western education and the colonial administration penetrated deeper. Among them were merchants and moneylenders, men in search of casual labour or other employment, and most noticeable of all, a whole new breed of petty bureaucrats, teachers, lawyers and other 'representatives' ready to take up a variety of causes and act as intermediaries between the people and the colonial power. It bears emphasizing, however, that these men retained strong links with the land.

The bulk of the population consists of agriculturists.\textsuperscript{22} So land remained in any event the primary economic resource, and the struggle for various rights in the produce of

\textsuperscript{19} Present day Bhojpur, Buxar, Rohtas and Bhabhua (Kaimur) districts of Bihar constitute Shahabad area of pre-independence period. \textit{Shahabad District Gazetteer}, V.B, Statistics 1900-1901 to 1910-1911, (Patna, 1918), p. 2.
\textsuperscript{20} Gyanendra Pandey, \textit{Subaltern Studies –II}, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Report of the United Provinces Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee}, 1929-30.
the soil forms the backdrop to much of the history of the region. Economically and socially, here, over a period of centuries, communities of Rajputs, Bhumihars (cultivating Brahmans, also called Bhumihar Brahmans or Babhans), and Brahmans had established a clear dominance. They were dominant castes not in numerical strength, but they owned most of the agricultural land and had higher status in the social hierarchy. This, Kurmis and Koeris were the lower status castes and economically, they were tenants, tenants at will or poor peasants. They didn’t have occupancy rights over the land. Chamars and other untouchable castes, who were agricultural labourers, menial workers were known as out castes in the varna social hierarchy.

In more recent times Rajputs, Bhumihars and Brahmans had to vie for control over particular villages and estates with various Muslim groups, local converts as well as newcomers from outside, who from time to time sought the intervention of different Muslim rulers in their favour. Muslim zamindars still had a hold on isolated tracts, especially in the vicinity of the old centres of Muslim administration such as Azamgarh, Ghazipur and Jaunpur. In Ghazipur and Ballia cowhered caste of Ahirs or gwalas controlled a fair number of villages, especially those of smaller than average size. Even so, as late as 1951, by which time landowners from several lower groups like the Ahirs, Kurmis and Koeris had emerged in some strength in the regions, the three ‘traditional’ upper caste zamindari communities still accounted for 80% of all landowners in the state. Crawford commented on the economy of Azamgarh in 1908 in the following words:

The district is essentially one of large communities of peasant proprietors. Apart from those definitely recorded as so held, many of the mahals owned by single large proprietors or their descendants were acquired at sales for arrears of revenue in the early days of British rule, and in these the old peasant proprietors will be found in possession of the bulk of the land as occupancy tenants.

His observation neglects the appeal of zamindari (or rather, rentier) status for the upper castes, the importance of never soiling their hands with the messy business of cultivation. But it does point to a factor of significance for the region as a whole that

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differentiation within these communities was not especially marked, and rajput, Brahman, Bhumihar Zamindars or occupancy tenants (including actual peasant proprietors) were not easily distinguished in term of income or style of life.\textsuperscript{25} While the very insistence of on ‘gentry’ status inhibited the emergence of what has been called ‘true bhaichara’ the low level of differentiation (and possibly a sense of allegiance to the great landlords of their stock, dumraon Benares and others) seems to have lent a degree of cohesiveness that was evident in this region in 1857.\textsuperscript{26}

The extension of cash-cropping and trade, and the registration of the rights of various classes on the land, provided favourable conditions of advancement for many individuals and groups. A century of forced commercialization of agriculture, violent fluctuations in the conditions of trade, and the general trend of de-industrialization in the region combined with the closing of other important sources of subsidiary income such as service in the native armies and courts and the growth of population greatly increased the pressure on large section of the agricultural community.\textsuperscript{27} The Zamindari communities of the Bhojpuri region were among the first to feel the effects; and many of their number, unable to relinquish old ways and customs, became the victims of an age that required personal supervision (if not cultivation) smaller and smaller shares in the land. The main agricultural problems in the regions were numerous small holdings, fragmentation of holdings, and the resultant uneconomic holdings. All these were mere expressions of the increasing pressure on land. The average holding according to Congress Agrarian Enquiry Committee Report, 1936 was 1 acre for person.

Table 2.2: Landholdings and number of persons per family in natural divisions based on Census 1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Divisions</th>
<th>Average holding in acres</th>
<th>Average number of persons per family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Provinces</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Himalaya, West</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indo-Gangetic Plain, West</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indo-Gangetic Plain, central</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central India Plateau</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{25} Gyanendra Pandey, op.cit., p. 70.
In spite above distress Eastern UP was famous for sugarcane cultivation. In early 1800s, Ghazipur and Benares supplied the major portion of its demand for sugar, by the 1820s the honours were being shard equally with Azamgarh. The most important industries of Azamgarh district were sugar-refining and the weaving of cotton cloth, which were carried on in all parts. The cloth-weaving industry had suffered from the competition of European piece – goods and also of the mills of India. The coarse varieties were still made for local use and finer qualities from imported yarn for export. The district was the most important centre of cotton–weaving as a hand industry in the United Provinces, and about 13000 looms were at work. Silk and satin are also largely produced. Mubarakpur, Mau and Kopaganj were the chief centres of the weaving industry. The manufacture of indigo was formerly important, but was fast declining under the completion of artificial indigo. Pottery of poor style was produced at Nizamabad. The chief imports were grain, European piece –goods and yarn, cotton, silk, tobacco, salt, metals, and hardware, and drugs; and the exports were sugar, opium, cloth, oilseeds, indigo and saltpeter. Grain is largely imported from the country north of the Gogra. The trade routes had been considerably altered by railway extensions after 1853. Traffic continued on the Gogra, where sohrighat was the chief emporium, and there was some trade during the rains on the chhoti sarju. Shahganj in Jaunpur attracts a good deal of the produce of the west of the district. The weavers of Azamgarh produced fine quality turban for export to the Maratha rulers among whom the cocked turban was becoming a distinguishing mark of high nobility. The district regions were connected through rail and road to Benares, Gorakhpur, Jaunpur, Shahganj, Mau and Ghazipur. From the commencement of British rule till almost the close of the nineteenth century, no droughts which could be called famine was known in the District. Hailstorms, frost, floods, and drought had occasionally caused scarcity in various parts.

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28 Shahid Amin, Sugarcane and Sugar in Gorakhpur, (Delhi, 1984) p. 16.
29 The Imperial Gazetteer of India, op.cit. p. 159.
30 Ibid., pp. 159-160.
The most considerable industry in Ballia was sugar-refining through indigenous methods. The raw material was sometimes imported from Shahabad. Course cotton cloth was woven in many villages, chiefly for local use. A little indigo was made, but this industry was fast disappearing. The principal article of trade was sugar, which was exported largely to Bengal, and also to Rajputana and Bombay. Oilseeds, gram, wheat, saltpeter, carbonate of soda, and a little coarse cloth were exported, chiefly to Bengal; and the imports were rice, spices, piece-goods, salt, and metals. River traffic had survived in the district, especially on the Gogra and choti Saryu, but it seemed probable that the railway expansion would have facilitated the trade. Ballia, Majhuwa, Maniar, Belthara, and a village near Rasra were the chief ports. A great deal of trade, especially in cattle and ponies, was carried on at the annual fair held at Ballia, and many small towns and villages played an important part in the trade of the district. The district was connected through rail from Mau, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Phefna, Benares & Gorakhpur. Ballia had suffered very little from scarcities. The south and east of the district were able to produce excellent spring crops after being flooded by the Ganges, and water could always be obtained from temporary wells.

In Benares district, there were few manufactures, and these were confined to the preparation of a few classes of articles for local use, the weaving of coarse cotton cloth being the most important. The city was, however, celebrated for gold and silver jewellery, ornamental brass – work, embroidery, and silk-weaving. It had some ice factories, several printing presses, some chemical works, and brick-making concerns. There was little surplus agricultural produce in the district, and oil-seeds were perhaps the most important export. The manufactures of the city were, however, largely prepared for outsides markets. The imports included piece goods, salt and metals. Benares city was the only trade centre, and absorbed a large part of the produce of the district, while it was the chief place for the distribution of imported goods. The district was exceptionally well served by railways and roads.

Benares region appeared to have provided a framework for the expansion of an integrated regional economy. Stable and rich clan areas were linked by longer-

31 The Imperial Gazetteers of India, Vol. VI, pp. 254-55.
32 The Imperial Gazetteer of India, op.cit., p. 184.
33 C.A. Bayly, op. cit. p. 103.
distance trade and revenue demands. The parganas of Bhadohi and Kuchesar were personal domain of Raja of Benares. Bhadohi was famous for carpet industry.\textsuperscript{34} The Blawant Namaha recorded that it was Balwant Singh who decided to encourage the growth of town of Mirzapur as a typical river ghat market.\textsuperscript{35} Balwant Singh and his successor, Cheyt Singh, encouraged the development of one of the most celebrated horse markets in north India, Dadri Fair,\textsuperscript{36} held on the banks of the Ganges in Ballia district, which also became a celebrated Vaishnovite festival. Stone works in Chunar areas helped in economic prosperity in the region. Benares became the subcontinents inland commercial capital after the decline of Murhsidabad and the collapse of the Jagat seths in Bengal in 1757. It received immigrant merchant capital from the whole of north India and stood astride the growing trade route from Bengal to the Maratha territories. This was also a city which benefited from the sustained agricultural performance of the rich and stable tract which surrounded it. In this growth, it was less the urban merchants who counted than a shadowy group of substantial rural men of capital which provided a link between the village economy and the towns. Duncan in his Benares records gave information about nineteen families or groups of men who had a combination of interests strung over a number of villages and town. They acted as rural capitalists. Their descendant appeared in Cohn’s analysis of property mutation in the same region in the 1820s and 1830s.\textsuperscript{37} Based on large towns, these men lent money to cultivators and provided them with capital and seed. The growth of Benares and other cities gave them the opportunity to market their grain, sugar and oil, from distances of up to fifty or sixty miles. In fact, these merchants continued to bring in grain from the interior districts despite the punitive tolls which zamindars levied on them until these were abolished by Jonathan Duncan in 1787.

Benares had sustained commercialization, local agricultural and artisan specialization and growth of urban population since the late seventeenth century. Pilgrims helped in banking business in the area. Indigenous banking was also reported by the Banking enquiry committee.\textsuperscript{38} J.N. Sarkar and B.S. Cohn have both pointed to the commercial

\textsuperscript{34} Aaj, 7 July 1945.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{36} Note on Sadri Fair, BCJ, 19 July 1804, 129/7/104, cf. Bayly.
\textsuperscript{37} Bernard Cohn, 'structural change', in Frykenberg, Land Control, pp. 73-5.
advantages of the ascetic sects. The ascetic sects seemed to have been the dominant money lending and property-owning group in Allahabad, Benares and Mirzapur. Nagpuri Math of Dasnami Naga ascetics at Benares had a control over silk trade of the area. By 1780s the Benares region had become the financial and commercial crossroads for the whole subcontinent. Financial primacy had moved from Murshidabad to Benares after the decline of the Jagat Seth, while Benares, Mirzapur and Ghazioor now controlled the crossing of the south-west and north-east routes which had converged on Delhi and Agra in earlier years. The great press of merchant people in these cities suggests how durable all-India commercial connections as networks of skills and information were. In Benares traders from the Punjab, working the shawl routes remained in evidence. There were evidence of merchants of Lahore and Multan in the area.

Many Gujarati merchants were placed in Benares. The trade route which was best documented was from Bengal via Benares and Mirzapur to Jabalpur and the Deccan. The British were interested in it because of the raw cotton trade which developed after 1783, and also because they had a close eye on the income of the Raja of Benares from transit duties. The Benares magnates sustained the powerful combination of entrepreneurial skill and entrée into the land revenue system which had spelled success during the previous century. Benares merchants established foothold in Kanpur and Delhi also. As a logistical exercise, in fact, British expansion into upper India after 1800 was very much the sub-imperialism of Benares – the culmination of that process of maximizing revenue and town building which had been initiated by Mansa Ram in the 1740s.

In Benares as in other north Indian towns, prosperous members of the lower castes played an important part in business. The court cases seemed to indicate, however, that the volume of transaction between them and the Khattri and Agarwal commercial elite was limited. Kalwars, Telis and Barhais were found adjudicating each others disputes and lending to each other, but not with merchants of the higher castes. Over two or three generations, there were, of course, some conspicuous examples to the

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40 C.A. Bayly, loc. Cit, p. 155.
41 "Report on the several roads in the District of Mirzapore", 6 July 1837, Mirzapur Judiciald, 84, UPR.
42 Ibid. p. 211.
contrary. In Benares, several barhais (betel-leaf growers and sellers) were incorporated into the 'moral community of the creditable merchants'; they were allowed to cash hundis freely in the bazaar and could call on interest – free loans and arbitration from the prestigious Naupatti Mahajans of Benares.

The Europeans made heavy use of Benares commercial facilities. The city was the natural entrepot because some of the greatest buyers were the Maratha Chieftains who came to Benares for pilgrimage, and the sellers were often north Indians or Central Asians. The trade appears to have been dominated by Lala Kashmiri Mull of a Khattri family which had strong north-western connection and by Khub Chand, a Jain who had emerged as one of the city's major property owners.

In Ghazipur district there were few manufactures. Sugar was refined, and coarse cotton cloth was woven in small quantities for local use. Ghazipur town, however, contained two important industries – the preparation of opium for exports, and the distillation of Otto of roses and other perfumes. The districts exported sugar, oilseeds, hides, perfumes, opium, and occasionally grain; and imported piece – goods, yarn, cotton, salt, spices and metals. Ghazipur town was once the chief trading centre in the eastern portion of the Ganges–Gogra doab, and also traded with the districts north of the Gogra and with Nepal. The opening of the Bengal and North–western Railway through Gorakhpur deprived it of the trans Gogra trade, and the Doab traffic had been largely diverted by other branches. River traffic has now decreased considerably, and only bulky goods, such as grain and Mirzapur stone, are carried by boat. Saidpur, Zamania, and Ghazipur were the chief trading centres; but the railway extensions were changing the direction of commerce. Area was connected by rail and road to Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Benares and Ballia. The district had suffered from no serious famine since the commencement of British rule.

Situation started changing after the First World War. There was a fairly rapid advance in industry in 1920s and 1930s. The number of factories registered under the Factory Act of UP rose from 220 in 1916 to 332 in 1927. The average number of daily workers employed in them increased concurrently from 68, 172 to 88,319. But in the

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43 The Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol. XII, op. cit, p. 227.
holistic perspective, the forms of commercial life in North India changed only slowly between the days of Jonathan Duncan and the world depression of the 1930s when many of the old firms finally went out of business. The joint stock company made even slower progress in the Ganges valley than in Bombay or Bengal, so that the family business of the Vaishya traders remained predominant.

SOCIETY

Most modern observers have experienced life in societies structured largely in classes, where a person’s place in society is largely determined by occupation and particularly by the individual’s relation to the means of production; where relations between people are based on contract rather than time-honoured conventions. Moreover in contemporary industrial societies there is considerable mobility between classes, and individuals can change and achieve status by their own efforts. In India, in general and Eastern U.P in particular we see a society where until the twentieth century class was a concept and a force of little significance. Most people’s place in the social order depended on ascribed rather than achieved status, and was determined by the accident of birth.

Society of Eastern UP was an agricultural one in which caste lies at the heart of people’s religious and social experience. The caste structure of the region is not rigid and exclusivist as were its counterparts in the southern parts of India. Continuous hierarchies’ rather sharp division and differences, characterize the caste structure of these regions. The polarizing caste contrasts found elsewhere are moderated by the presence of a significant number of upper castes, as well as the existence of intermediate castes such as Kayasthas.

Historically, the Brahmanical caste hierarchy approximately the four tiered Varna system is most fully articulated in this region. The four upper castes are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishays and Kayasthas. Altogether the upper castes account for nearly 20% of the population of UP. Indeed, the most interesting feature of the caste structure in the large number of Brahmins. According to 1931 census, Brahmins formed over 9% of the population in UP representing 40% of the entire Brahmin
concentration. This type of well-differentiated caste configuration in which the upper castes have a wide geographical spread, established a specific pattern of caste-class in UP. The caste system was prevailing among Muslims also. Shaikh, Pathan, Sayyad, Ashraf, Ansari and Julaha were important Muslim castes.

Apart from the rigorously observed distinctions between a whole variety of castes and subcastes (Muslim as well as Hindu), the basic social division in the region as perceived at least by the locally dominant elements, was that between the sharif (or ashraf, i.e. the respectable classes) and the razil (or labouring people). The former comprised the Brahmanas, Rajputs, Bhumihars, together with ‘true’ Syed and Sheikhs, Pathan converts from the Rajput community, and some smaller Hindu castes like Kayasthas. All the rest—from the Ahirs and Kurmis, and their opposite numbers among the Muslims such as the Zamindars (or Rautaras) of Azamgarh, to the ‘unclean’ labouring and artisanal castes, Koeris, Chamars, Julahas and the like were classified as razil.

In Azamgarh district nearly 86% of the populations were Hindus and 14% Muslims. The most numerous Hindu castes are: Chamars (leather workers and labourers), Ahirs (graziers and cultivators), Brahmans, Rajputs or Chhattris, Bhars (labourers), Koeris (cultivators), Bhuinhar (agriculturists), Lunias (saltpetre workers and labourers) and Banias. Muslims were mainly divided into Julahas (weavers), Shaikhs and Pathans. The Muslim concentration was greater than anywhere else in the Bhojpuri region. They formed the majority in the towns of Mau, Mubarakpur and Muhammadabad and a substantial minority in Kopaganj, Chitrakot, Azamgarh and several other places. In 1901 the District contained 104 native Christians, of whom 48 belonged to the Anglican Communion.

Ballia which became a separate entity in 1879 had 93% as Hindu population and 7% Muslimism. The most numerous Hindu castes were Rajputs, Brahmans, Ahirs, Chamars, Koeris, Bhars, Banias and Bhuinhar. The Bhars were an aboriginal race chiefly found in this area. The Dusadhs were noteworthy as supplying large numbers of

45 Zoya Hasan, , Quest for Power, Delhi, 1998, p. 9.
48 Ibid.
village policemen and also of professional criminals. There were no missions in the district up to 1903, and only four native Christians were enumerated in 1901.49

In Benares district Hindus formed more than 89% of the total and Muslim more than 10%. The most numerous Hindu castes were Brahmans, Chamars, Kurmis, Ahirs, Rajputs, Koeris, Bhuinhars, Bhars, Lunias and Gonds (corresponding to Kahars elsewhere). The Muslims were represented by Julahas, Shaikhs and Pathans. There were 669 native Christians in 1901 of whom 380 belonged to the Anglican communion. The Church missionary society commenced work in 1818, and the London missionary society two years later. The Baptist and Wesleyan societies also had branches.50

In Ghazipur district about 90% of the populations were Hindu and nearly 10% Muslims. The district was very thickly populated in all parts. The most numerous Hindu castes were the Ahirs, Chamars, Rajputs, Koeris, Brahmans, Bhars, Bhuinhars and Binds. (Fishermen and Cultivators) Binds were akin to the Kahars. Out of 329 native Christians in 1901, the Anglican Communion claimed 111, the Lutherans 63, and Presbyterians 42. The Lutheran Mission has been established at Ghazipur town since 1855, and the Zanana Mission since 1890.51 Caste system of this region, i.e. Benares region may be analyze on the basis of census 1931 in terms of land holding, occupations and their relationship in term of economy and social.

For example: the upper caste Hindus were holding most of the level and the OBC and Dalit castes poor peasants and agricultural labourers. Few upper caste muslims families were of course zamindars. 1931 census and Rahi Masoom Raza’s Neem Ka Ped and Aadha Gaon shows that Benares region the upper caste Hindus were holding most of the land. The Other Backward Caste (OBC) and Dalit caste were poor peasants and agricultural labourers. Few upper caste Muslim families were off course Zamindars.52

49 Ibid. pp. 252-253.
51 The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XII, 1908, pp. 225-226.
52 Rahi Masoom Raza, Neem Ka Ped (New Delhi, 2007); ---, Aadha Gaon (New Delhi, 2009)
The society was caught in a vicious web created by religious superstitions and social obscurantism. According to Max Weber, Hinduism had become a compound of magic, animism and superstitions. Abominable rites like animal sacrifice and physical torture had replaced the worship of god. The priests exercised an overwhelming and unhealthy influence on the minds of the people. Idolatry and polytheism helped to reinforce the position of priest. The position of women was very depressing. The birth of a girl was unwelcome, her marriage a burden and her widowhood inauspicious. Attempts to kill girl infants at birth were not unusual. Those who escaped this initial brutality were subjected to the violence of marriage at a tender age. When their husbands died they were expected to commit Sati which Raja Rammohan Roy described as ‘murder according to every shastra’. If they succeeded in overcoming this social coercion, they were condemned, as widows, to life-long misery, neglect and humiliation. The human sacrifice among khonds, slavery, self immolation, Thaggi and other superstitions had degraded the Indian social traditions. All these had shadow on the eastern UP. The literary writings of Premchand (eg. Godan, Sava Ser Genhu, Muktimarg, Pus Ki Raat) and Rahi Masoom Raza (eg. Adha Gaon and Neem ka Ped) have also shown the spectrum of society in eastern U.P.

POLITY

The British territory of United Provinces of Agra and Oudh was divided into 48 districts which were grouped into 10 revenue divisions. They were Meerut, Agra, Rohilkhand, Allahabad, Jhansi, Gorakhpur, Kumaun, Lucknow, Fyzabad and Benares. By 1975 full British administration was extended to the Benares province when Jonathan Duncan’s five and ten-year revenue settlement made on behalf of the raja was declared permanent. Land revenue was permanently fixed in Benares Division, part of Azamgarh and certain areas in Gonda and Bahraich. The rest of the state was temporarily settled. Thus the British created a market in land by making land revenue settlement permanent in 1795; by giving title to land to those whom the British considered Zamindars; by using land sales to realize delinquent tax payments;

56 Bernard Colin, op. cit. p. 329.
and by failing to settlement land rights within lineages which were recognized as zamindars (Land lords).

The landlords were central to the revenue and political system of British ruled UP. The British placed great emphasis on the idea of landlord political power. The colonial government of the province expected landlords – those who controlled access to large areas of the provinces land and had the local machinery with which to make their presence felt-to provide active support in sustaining imperial rule. In return, the imperial government was prepared to accord landlords privileges, honours and titles, the opportunity to acquire wealth and to maintain a leisured style of life. The role which was defined for landlords in the political system of the province was one which many landlords understood and prepared to fill.58

An English collector and several European assistants were appointed for all of the Benares province (Ballia, Benares, Ghazipur, Jaunpur and Mitrzapur). Civil and criminal judges with European registers were appointed in Benares city, Jaunpur, Ghazipur and Mitrapur. A provincial court of appeal with three European judges and a European register was established for the four inferior courts in Benares city. In 1818 the districts of Ghazipur (then including Ballia) and Jaunpur were formed, and in 1830 Benares was still further reduced by the formation of Mitrapur District.59 In 1801, Azamgarh was included in the large district of Gorakhpur then formed. In 1820 part of it was transferred to Jaunpur and part to Ghazipur. Three years later a sub-collectorate of Azamgarh was formed out of Jaunpur parganas; and in 1832 a separate district of Azamgarh was constituted, to which for many years part of the present Ballia district was also attached.60 Ballia became a separate district in 1879.61

Even after the British took over the direct administration of the Benares province, tax collection at the local level was left in the hands of the old amils, who were now called Tahsildars. It was the duty of the tahsildars to collect the taxes from the revenue payers and to pass it on to the collectors’ treasury. In 1833, through the establishment of the post of deputy collector, the upgrading of the sadr amins and

58 Peter Reeves, Landlords and Governments in Uttar Pradesh: (A study of their relation until Zamindari abolition), (Bombay 1991), p. 28.
60 The Imperial Gazetteer of India (vol. VI), op.cit, p. 160.
61 The Imperial Gazetteer of India (Vol. XII), op.cit, p. 228.
amins (judges), and the establishment of what later became the uncovenanted civil service, it was hoped that Indians of high training and integrity would be attracted to the service.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, after fifty years of British rule and seventy years of British influence in the Benares region, the political, administrative, and economic structure of the region had undergone marked changes. The three political systems which had existed side by side in the middle of the eighteenth century had been reduced to two. The main and all powerful one, the British government, had replaced the Mughal and regional government with a salaried civil administration controlled from the provincial capital in Agra, the Governor-Generals staff in Calcutta, the secretary of state for India, and parliaments in London. This political structure was rapidly destroying the third or local system. In many talukas, through the workings of the revenue and legal systems, the old landholders had been replaced by new groups who became landholders. In those talukas where the old lineages still remained, or where descendants of rajas or jagirdars held some power, their actions were completely circumscribed by the regulation of the administration, who did not formerly recognize them as political entities. The old local system survived in spite of new administrative system but it survived only so long as it did not come open conflict with the new system and so long as the old local powers could maintain their positions in relation to their tenants or followers. Cohn has argued, one reason for British success was their close attention to Indian court ritual and diplomatic usage. Their foreign religion and white faces did not exclude them from a system which was designed to incorporate outside adventures. They used the name of the emperor, supported his family, and used his charters, seals, durbar halls, in a manner which placated the urban populace. They established the relationship between the emperor and his liegemen, and regarded the diplomatic system with themselves in high position. Muin-ud-din Hasan says,

However the English may regard themselves, they are regarded by the natives as trespasser, and this feeling was intensified on the annexation of the province of Oudh in 1856.

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62 Bernard S. Cohn, op. cit. pp. 337-338.
63 C.A. Bayly, op. cit., p. 199.
64 Charles Theophilus Metcalf, "Two native Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi", 1898, p. 31.
All the colonial institutions were seen as a source of exploitation. It was believed that state power held by Britain in India was to safeguard and develop the British interests only. The establishment of British power in India was a prolonged process of piecemeal conquest and consolidation and the colonization of the economy and society. This process produced discontent, resentment and resistance at every stage.

Eastern U.P. became politically vibrant after the execution of Mangal Pandey on April 8, 1857 at Barrackpur. He belonged to Ballia and this event sparked off the first war of independence. Babu Kunwar Singh one of the great hero of 1857 was also connected to this part of U.P. In this region, the commercial aristocracy, the Naupatti bankers of Benares, gave rise to a succession of active congressmen after 1885, who, though educated and sophisticated beyond their background, continued to adhere too many of the social preconceptions and to work within the community bodies of the Agarwal tradesmen. Chief among them were Bhagwan Das, Rai Krishnaji, Shiva Prasad Gutpa and Sri Prakash.

The Congress

Seventy two political workers founded Indian National Congress in December 1885. It was the first organized expression of Indian nationalism on an all-India scale. Till 1920 the congress had no other alternative but to follow a policy of prayers and petitions, threat and agitation to and against the government. This method of ‘Political Mendicancy’ was inherently defective. This was inherently defective. This was the time when Gandhi entered the congress. Before the advent of Mahatma into the field of Indian politics, there were three methods which attracted the attention of Indians of various schools of thought for obtaining freedom. The first method was that of open war against the enemy; second that of guerilla warfare and terroristic activities; and the third of winning concessions from the rulers by flattery on the one hand and threat of agitation on the other. Bipan Chandra has called it S-T-S model of

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66 Bipan Chandra, ed., op.cit, p. 41.
68 Agarval Jati ka Itihasa (Agarwal History office, Bhanpura Indore State, 1938) II, 376-8, Bhagwan Das, member of the shah family, father of Sri Prakash. They were theosophists and nationalists.
70 Maharaja of Natore, Who had been chairman of the reception committee of the Congress at Calcutta in 1901, was the first person to characterize constitutional agitation as “political mendicancy”. C.Y. Chintamani, Indian Politics Since the Meeting, p. 54.
Indian nationalism. At this point of time Gandhi tried to connect the congress with the Indian masses.

The year 1920 was crucial in the development of a broad based and more or less permanent congress organization. A new constitution was adopted at the Nagpur congress in 1920 and 'Swarajya' was declared as the goal of the congress. A congress working committee (CWC) was created, making the national congress an active and functioning body throughout the year. The introduction of linguistic provinces, a many-tiered organization from village level upwards and an open membership with a fee of four annas per annum, which ensured a regular income and enabled a minimum of congress work, all helped in the establishment of a popular base.71

The most significant headway in the UP congress organization in 1920 was the establishment of congress committees at various levels. In principle every village with a minimum of five congress members was to set up a village congress committee. There were provisions for mandal (circle), tahsil and district congress committees (DCCs). Independently, each town with a population of 50,000 was to have a town congress committee (TCC), and there were to be town circle committee below these. Several of these tiers – PCCs, DCCs, Tahsil committees and TCCs – were involved in the election of delegates to the annual and special sessions of the congress. The PCC itself represented chiefly the 45 DCCs, which elected 114 of its 150 members. 15 members were elected by the executive committees of the Allahabad, Agra, Banaras, Kanpur, Lucknow and Bareilly TCCs, two by Kashi Vidyapith (Banaras) and the Muslim university (Aligarh) and 19 by the other elected members of the PCC. A PCC executive council was set up to meet more regularly than the PCC and to transact urgent business.72 In July 1921 UP reported 328,966 congress members. The congress remained active in eastern UP with its programme of non-cooperation movement (1920-22) and the civil disobedience movement (1930-34).

A powerful volunteer organization also arose parallel to the congress organization. The earliest volunteer organizations to come to prominence were the seva samities which were established in several places in UP in 1917-19. In Banaras there was a

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72 These Information's are based on constitutions and rules of the United Provinces congress committee (UPPCC, Allahabad 1921). Cf. Gyanendra Pandey, op.cit., p. 28.
move to open a branch seva samiti under a mukhia (headman) in each ward of the city. Parallel to this development there began to appear, by this time, a number of other nationalist volunteer associations. In Allahabad and Banaras separate volunteer corps independent of samitis was also opened. There was massive spread of Muslim volunteer movement. In Azamgarh figures were as high as 1423. It was very difficult to have a clear distinction between local khilafat and congress organisation. By 1922, there were at least 90,000 volunteers under the control of the 46 district organizations of the UP congress. By this time Gandhiji was not only seen as a mass leader but the Mahatma with miraculous working power. During non-cooperation movements and later Gandhi gave emphases on constructive programmes such as:-

- The nationalization of education;
- The formation of indigenous goods;
- The popularization of charka and Khadi
- And the enrolment of a volunteer corps.

Later on promotion of Khadi (hand-spun cloth) and acchutodhar became integral part of Gandhian and congress movement. In 1925, All-India Spinner Association came into existence. The association was designed primarily to implement the constructive programme which forms the essential part of congress political plans. It covers a wide field and acts as an important link between congress and the villages; it was an instrument of congress for extending its influence with a view to political exploitation at the proper time. Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad, Patel and Kripalani were executive council members of the Association and were recognized congress leaders. The main function of the association is to provide regular work to spinners, weavers and other village artisans. Intelligence Bureau reported to the government that the work of the A.I.S.A is a catalogue of efforts successfully made to coordinate business principles with astute political propaganda directed towards the strengthening of the Gandhian hold on the masses. By 1939 the association had served over 13,000 villages. There were as many as 660 production centres, employing 265,253 spinners,
17545 weavers and 6,417 other artisans. It was claimed that about 25% of these workmen were Muslims.\textsuperscript{78}

In 1920s Hindustani Seva Dal (volunteer) was also represented by UP PCC. There was distinct spurt in organizational activity. By early September 1929 the districts of Gorakhpur, Banaras, Allahabad, Kanpur, Etawah, Lucknow, Bareilly, Almora and Agra were said to have enrolled the quota of members laid down for them by the PCC. In mid September the general secretary of the UP PCC reported the enrolment of 65,000 members out of 35 districts only.\textsuperscript{79} Soon after the Gandhi-Irwin pact of March 1931, Jawaharlal Nehru as general secretary of the AICC, asked the congressmen with the help of a circular to go and strengthen its position in the villages.\textsuperscript{80} By 1934 the districts of the province were divided into a number of groups, with each division in the charge of a member of the PCC council. By June 1934, regular congress offices were functioning in 37 districts, and 17 districts reported the enrolment of between 100 and 500 new members each. By the middle of July the number was said to be as high as 1000 and 1100 in Banaras and Ghazipur respectively. By September 1935 the PCC reported a total of 62,112 congress members in UP, 38,396 from the rural areas and 23,716 from the urban. By December 1938, the reported figures were up to 1,472,456 of which 1,345,781 were members from rural areas, and 126,675 from the urban.\textsuperscript{81}

After 1937 election, congress formed its first ministry in UP under Govindballav Pant. Congress won 711 out of 1585 provincial assembly seats, with absolute majority in five provinces out of eleven (Madras, Bihar, Orissa, CP and UP) and a near – majority in Bombay (86 out of 175).\textsuperscript{82} The congress showed remarkable organizational energy to ensure that the latent support built by the party over the years was now translated into votes.\textsuperscript{83} Sir Harry Haig, the Governor of UP reported that the Congress campaign was very effective and had a considerable impression on the electorate.\textsuperscript{84} The

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{78} Ibid., p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{79} The Leader, (22 June, 4 and 14 September 1929).
\item \textsuperscript{80} Gyanendra Pandey, op. cit, p. 33.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Sumit Sarkar, Modern India (1885-1947), Delhi, 1983, p. 349.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Gyanesh Kudaisya, Region, Nation, "Heartland": Uttar Pradesh in Indian Body Politic, (New Delhi, 2006), p. 212.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Haig to Linlithgow L/PO/6/(i) in Chopra, ed., ToFE doucment 46.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
congress ministers tried to give economic relief to the peasants and the workers as quickly as possible. In UP a tenancy act was passed in October 1939 which gave all statutory tenants both in Agra and Oudh full hereditary rights in their holdings while taking away the landlords right to prevent the growth of occupancy. The rents of hereditary tenants could be changed only after ten years, while restrictions were placed on the right of landlords to enhance rents even after this period. A tenant could no longer be arrested or imprisoned for non-payment of rent. All illegal exactions such as nazrana (forced gifts) and beggar (forced unpaid labour) were abolished. Industrial labour had obtained a minimum wage and recognition for its trade unions, especially the Mazdoor Sabha in Kanpur.

The congress could not attempt a complete revamp of the agrarian structure by completely discarding the Zamindari system due to two reasons. According to the constitutional provision of the 1935 Act, the provincial government did not have enough powers to do so. They also suffered from an extreme lack of financial resources, for the lion’s share of India’s revenues was appropriated by the government of India. The congress ministries could also not touch the existing administrative structure whose sanctity was guarded by the Viceroy’s and governor’s powers. In spite of above limitation the formation of the Ministries by the congress changed the entire psychological atmosphere of the country in general and U.P in particular. People felt as if they were breathing the very air of victory and people’s power. By 1939 the congress organization in UP was politically more active than in any other provinces and more responsive to the mood of the masses. M.R. Masani wrote in the editorial of ‘Congress Socialist’ on March 5, 1939 that the congress represents the bulk of the Indian people, consisting as it does of various classes, communities and interests. These different classes and interests are reflected by different political tendencies and groups, each with its own outlook and its own theories and at least five such organized groups in the congress today catch the eye: Gandhian, congress

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85 Bipan Chandra, op.cit, p. 330.
socialist, liberals, communists and Royists. Each group has an ideology distinctly its
own and each shares many things with one or more of the others.\textsuperscript{88}

\textbf{Mass Activism: Kisan Sabha and Congress socialist party}

In the beginning of 20\textsuperscript{th} century it was felt that the real problem is not merely to make
contacts with the masses, but to organize and lead the masses under following head:\textsuperscript{89}

\begin{itemize}
    \item[a)] Industrial workers
    \item[b)] Peasants
    \item[c)] Lower Middle Class
    \item[d)] The Students
    \item[e)] Women
\end{itemize}

Here first attention has been given to the peasants. In the nineteenth century peasant
discontent against the authority was a familiar feature. This gave rise to peasant
movements in the twentieth century. The UP Kisan Sabha was set up in February
1918 through the efforts of Gauri Shankar Misra and Indra Narain Dwivedi. They
were supported by Madan Mohan Malaviya of Eastern U.P. by June 1919 there were
450 branches in 173 tehsils of the province. The sign of grass-roots peasant activity
was evident in the nai-dhobi band (a form of social boycott) active under the
leadership of Baba Ramachandra in Pratapgarh district. Jhinguri Singh and Durgapal
Singh were associated with frequent Ksian meetings in the Avadh area. The tenants
from Jaunpur and Pratapgarh districts were led to Allahabad by Praba Ramachandra
in June 1920. There he met Gauri Shankar Misra and Jawaharlal Nehru and asked
them to visit the villages to see the plight of the peasants. Jawaharlal Nehru made
several visits to the rural areas and developed close contacts with the Kisan Sabha
movement. The districts of Hardoi, Bahraich and Sitapur became the centre of Eka
movement under the leadership of Madari Pasi and other low-caste leaders.

The Kisan movement of the United Provinces played a very prominent part in the
furtherance of the Independence movement of India. Babu Purushottamdas Tandon
was the most revered leader of this organisation. Even Jawaharlal used to be guided
by his advice so far as the organisation of the Kisan movement in the U.P. was
concerned.\textsuperscript{90} Jawaharlal used to visit Pratapgarh, Rai Bareilly, Faizabad, Sitapur and

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid. p. 1521.
\textsuperscript{89} NMML, J.P. Narayan Papers, I & II Instalment, sub F. No. -116, p. 169.
\textsuperscript{90} NMML, Keshavadeva Malaviya, Oral history transcript, Acc No. 439, p. 69.
some other districts also, and the movement spread very quickly throughout the province. The seat of organisation and the central office was located at Allahabad and Purshottamdas Tandon was the chief. Lal Bahadur Shastri was one of the secretaries along with Mohan Lal Gautam and K.D. Malaviya. Dr. Z.A. Ahmed played quite an important part in the spread of the Kisan movement in the U.P.\(^9^1\) The economic depression of 1929-31 had adversely affected the peasantry of the U.P. It was very difficult for the peasants to pay their dues to the Zamindars. In fact the birth of the abolition of Zamindari could easily be traced to the no-rent campaign that was organized under the auspices of the kisan sabhas. Both the congress and the Kisan Sabha worked hand in glove, but there was some sort of vague division of work between the two. The civil disobedience movement, which had taken roots in the whole of the country, was the political activity of the congress, where as no—rent campaign or the mass resistance of the peasantry of the U.P. in various activities was the job of the Kisan Sabha under Purshottamdas Tandon. National leader like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel also took interest in UP Kisan Sabha. Pandit Motlial Nehru, Swarup Rani (mother of Jawaharlal Nehru), Kamal Nehru, Pandit Sunder Lal, Yusuf, Keshu Lal, Vijaya Lakhmi Pandit, Mansur Ali Sukhta, Alla Baksh, Radhe Syam Pathak, Salig Ram Jaiswal, Rupnarain Tripathi, Anandi Kumar Dutt and Brijpal Singh took active part in Kisan Sabha movement in UP. Feroze Gandhi, the grand father of Rahul Gandhi was the captain of Kisan Sabha volunteer corps.\(^9^2\) Besides them Baba Kedarnath was active in Faizabad. Shivmurti Singh and Pandit Tikaram Tripathi had their influenced in Allahabad. Tikaram Tripathi was called grand old man Allahabad. Nehru and Tandan had great regards for him. Pandit Venkateswar Tiwari was active in Handia and Soraon areas of Allahabad. Munshi (communist), Sitla Sahai and Satyanarain Srivastava were Kisan Sabha leaders of Rai Bareilly. Bakuliha village became an important centre of Kisan Sabha activities.\(^9^3\)

There were two important items of Kisan activities in UP. One was to take possession of the government estates in rural areas and throw them open to the peasantry to cultivate. The other was to organize conferences of Kisans at important centres in the

\(^9^1\) Ibid., p. 70
\(^9^2\) He was from Ghazipur but he led the Kisan movement in Bihar.
\(^9^3\) S. Srivastava, Uttar Pradesh ki Bardoli, Bakuliha, Zila Rae BareliKa Itihas, (Rae Bareli, 1967) p. 28. also Rae Bareli Collectorate, Civil disobedience cases 1931, P.S. Sareni, case no. 84-5, Date 5 February 1931 cf Gyan Pandey, p. 34.
province and to exalt them not to pay taxes from a specific date. Both these measures had their due effect on the government and it got extremely nervous. UP leaders wanted to project the Kisan movement as a vanguard of the congress struggle for political freedom. Swami Sahajanand thought, it was the peasantry rising which would ultimately bring down the British government in the country.  

As the economic crisis deepened, the Kisan movement began to assume a mass character, including demands for reduction of tenancy rents and rural indebtedness, and a political dimension which flamed British imperialism and its zamindar allies for the prevailing economic distress. Despite the conservatism of official congress agrarian policy, in May 1930, the congress working committee authorized a no-tax campaign against the government in ryotwari areas, while avoiding a no-rent campaign which would affect Indian landlords. Radical Congress Kisan workers unofficially extended this campaign to include rent demands in Zamindari areas. Thus in UP, Narmada Prasad Singh, Mohanlal Gautam (both future founders of the UP CSP) and other congressmen were reported to be waging an active no-rent campaign in February 1931.

In U.P. where the agrarian crisis was at its worst, congress-Kisan organizers like Mohanlal Gautam and B.D. Tripathi (later founder of the UP CSP) formed a separate Kisan Sangh (hereafter UPKS) in May 1931, on the ground that the congress was not paying enough attention to the Kisan problems. Among its district organizers were prominent UP Congressmen like SKD. Paliwal, Damodar Swarup Seth (a future leader the UP CSP), Algurai Shastri (also to be a member of the UP CSP, Narmada Prasad Singh and Sitla Sahai.

A series of district conferences were organized by the UPKS, at which tenants were advised to pay only half of their rents. By November 1931, the UP PCC found itself under considerable pressure from some of its districts units to authorize an official no-rent campaign on behalf of the congress. Owing largely to Jawaharlal Nehru’s

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94 Ibid. p. 76.
96 Patabhi Sitaramayya, op.cit, pp. 397-8.
97 U.P. Police Abstract (hereafter UPPA), Lucknow, Feb. 1931.
98 UPPA, 16 May 1931.
99 UPPA, 13 June 1931 and 27 June 1931.
influence, the UP PCC agreed in December 1931 to permit an open no-rent campaign in certain districts.\footnote{UP Fortnightly Report, 15 December 1931.}

The radical nationalism which began in late 1920s culminated in the formation of congress socialist party (CSP) in 1934. Its distinguishing features were a firm commitment to complete independence as against dominion status. The drafting committee of the party included Shri Narendra Dev of Eastern UP as president and Jayaprakash Narayan as secretary. Other members were Professor Abdul Bari, Purushottamdas Tricumdas, M.R. Masani, Sampurnanand, Dr. C.C. Banerji, Mr. F.H. Ansari, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Dr. Abdul Alim and Professor N.G. Ranga.\footnote{NMML, Jayaprakash Papers, \textit{\textit{1st Inst}}, 1934-39, File No. 2, pp. 12-16.} The plan of action of the party was to work within the Indian National Congress. It tried to work for every section of the society, particularly peasants and the labourers. The socialist party commanded great influence in the United Provinces.\footnote{NMML, J.P. Papers, \textit{II Instalments}, File No. 30, p. 1.}

Organisational set up of congress socialist party was slightly different from the congress. Congress had president and working committee. At all India level congress socialist party had a general secretary. It was like Russian system. Congress socialist party started making united front with the communists. Men like Masani, Achyut Patawardhan and Sampurnanand \footnote{NMML, \textit{J.P. Papers}, \textit{II Instalments}, File No. 30, p. 1.} were opposed to such an alliance. Communist' paper from Russia referred Sampurnanand as Vedantic socialist. Jayaprakash supported communist alliance not due to strategical point but it was his conviction that the alliance will help the congress socialist party to grow stronger.\footnote{Dr. Sampurnanand was from Banaras and member of AICC since 1922. He was secretary of UPPCC thrice and president of first All India Congress Socialist Conference (Bombay 1934). He took part in Quit Indian Movement.} In the provincial congress organization, the earliest CSP strong-holds were Lucknow, Allahabad and Benares. The Benares congress socialist group had organized active student branches in the Banaras Hindu University and the Kashi Vidyapith.\footnote{NMML, \textit{Dr. Sampurnanand}, Oral History Transcript, p. 4.}

At this period of time Shiv Prasad Gupta, Babu Bhagwan Das and Babu Sri Prakasa was most important person active in Benares politics. They were first rank (social class). Shiv Vinayak Mishra, Dr. Abdul Karim, Babu Bayanath Singh and Professor

\footnote{UPPA, 15 Sept. 1934.}
Ram Das Gaur were famous among worker's rank. New local units of CSP were launched in Allahabad (president: Narmada Prasad Singh, and secretary: Feroz Gandhi) at the end of May and in Kanpur in June 1934. On 13 June a meeting of leading U.P. socialist attended by Narendra Dev, Sri Prakash and Sibnath Banerjee (secretary of the AITUC and a former meerut prisoner), appointed the following district organizers to prepare the ground for UP CSP: Damodar Swarup Seth, Sampurnanand, CB Gupta, Narmada Prasad Singh, K.D. Malaviya, B.D. Tripathi and V.N. Tiwari. At a meeting of district delegates at Kanpur in September, the UP CSP was formally launched with Narendra Dev as President, C.B. Gupta as secretary and Sri Prakasa as treasurer. The executive members were as follows: K.D. Malaviya, Govinda Sahai, Bishwanath Mukherji, Dr. Atal, R.S. Pandit, H.N. Shastri, Sampurnanand, Balkrishna Sharma, H.S. Vidyarthi, C.B. Kantak, S.L. Saxena, T.P. Saxena, Narbada Singh, S.C. Shastri, Badan Singh, Ganga Sahai Chaube, Damodar Swarup Seth, B.D. Tripathi and N.K.D. Vashista. Name of the approved members of the C.S.P. in the districts of Eastern U.P. are given in the following tables:

Table 2.3: Approved Members of Ghazipur C.S.P.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Comrade Dharm Raj</td>
<td>Active in congress + Secretary in Zila Kisan Sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comrade Pabbar Ram</td>
<td>Active in Congress + Kisan Sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Comrade Dal Shringar Dube</td>
<td>Active in Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comrade Ram Ashrey Singh</td>
<td>Active in congress + president of zila kisan sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Comrade Lok Nath Singh</td>
<td>Active in congress + kisan sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Comrade Shiv Murti Singh</td>
<td>Active in congress + kisan sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Comrade Ram Narayan Chaube</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Comrade Beni Madho roy</td>
<td>Active in congress + kisan sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Comrade Rajbansi Lal</td>
<td>Active in congress + secretary congress committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Comrade Gaja Nand</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Comrade Lakshmir Devi</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: NMML, J.P. Papers, 1st Instalment, File No. 35, p.I

Table 2.4: Approved members of the Benares C.S.P.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Comrade Chandrika Sharma</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comrade Buddhuram</td>
<td>Active in Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Comrade Baldev Singh</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comrade Raj pati Sharan</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

106 Sampurnanand, op.cit., p. 22.
107 Zareer Masani, op.cit., p. 68.
108 Ibid. 15 Sept, 1934.
5. Comrade Harihar Sharma Active in congress
6. Comrade Dev Murti Sharma Active in congress + Kisan Sangh
7. Comrade Jagat Narain Sharma Active in congress + Kisan Sangh
8. Comrade Ram Rup singh Active in congress
9. Comrade Dev Nanda Dikshit Active in congress
10. Comrade Uma Shankar Active congress + Kisan Sangh
11. Comrade Tara Nath Lahiri Active in party works
12. Comrade Durga Nath Bhattacharya Has resigned from party + active in congress
13. Comrade Kamalapati Tripathi Active in congress
14. Comrade Mahanbir Singh Active in congress
15. Comrade Tara Pad Bhattacharya Active in congress
16. Comrade Ramgat Ganguli Active in congress
17. Comrade Khitam Nath Bhattacharyaya Not active in party
18. Comrade Miss Tailang -

Sources: NMML, J.P. Papers, 1st Instalment, File No. 35, p.1

Table 2.5: Approved Members of Azamgarh C.S.P.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Comrade Uma Shanker Misra</td>
<td>Active in congress + Kisan Sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comrade Ramendranath Verma</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Comrade Hari Prasad Misra</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comrade Virendra Nath Verma</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Comrade Kuber Rai</td>
<td>Not active, joined service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Comrade Bhola Singh</td>
<td>Active in congress + Kisan Sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Comrade Dashrath Rai Sharma</td>
<td>Active in congress + Kisan Sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Comrade Satya Dev Rai</td>
<td>Active in congress + Kisan Sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Comrade Bhagavati Rai Sharma</td>
<td>Active in congress + Kisan Sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Comrade Kamal Narain Singh</td>
<td>Active in congress + Kisan Sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Comrade Baba Garib Das</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Comrade Maryad Singh</td>
<td>Kisan Sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Comrade Jharkhandi Rai</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Comrade Gorakh Nath Shukhla</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Comrade Jhulan Behari Singh</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Comrade Akshaybvar Lal</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Comrade Raghubar Dayal Singh</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Comrade Shambhu Narain Singh</td>
<td>Active in congress + Kisan Sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Comrade Bishram Rai</td>
<td>Secretary, congress committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Comrade Gajadhar Prasad, MLA</td>
<td>Active in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Comrade Braj Bhushan Rai</td>
<td>Active in congress &amp; Kisan Sangh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: NMML, J.P. Papers, 1st Instalment, File No. 35, p.4

In Ballia district Sri Prakasa's followers were active as CSP members. Socialist members had been able to gather wide support from prominent provincial congress men, including close followers of Nehru. There were overlapping name in congress district organisation and in CSP. According to government intelligence, the new congress organizers were really working under cover to organize the CSP. By 1937,

109 Zareer Masani, op.cit., p. 68.
110 UPPA, 134, P. 368, n.d.
the district-level leadership of the UPCSP consisted of well-established and widely respected congressmen. Algu Rai Shastri of Azamgarh, Vishwanath Chaube of Ballia, Dalsingar Dube of Ghazipur, Sri Prakasa, Sampurnanand, Kamalapati Tripathi, Sheopujan Tripathi and K.D. Malaviya of Benares were famous in Eastern U.P. Jalipa Devi was a famous congress socialist in Benares city. Narendra Dev who was active in eastern UP politics argued that the nationalist movement could only be intensified by broadening its mass base, espousing the economic demand of the masses. The entire great national struggle conducted by the congress has been preceded by strikes and other forms of industrial unrest. It is only when the two struggles have synchronized with each other that the national struggle has reached its highest water-mark. The main task of CSP should be the harnessing of labour and peasant militancy to the political wheel of congress.

The communist party got reorganized under P.C Joshi. Faced with the threat of fascism the seventh congress of communist international, meeting at Moscow in August 1935, radically changed its earlier positions and advocated the formation of a united front with socialists and other anti-fascists in the capitalist countries and with bourgeois-led nationalist movements in colonial countries. Now the Indian communists were to participate in the activities of the mainstream of the national movement led by the National congress. The theoretical and political basis for this change was led by Dutt-Bradley thesis. This thesis argued that the National Congress could play ‘a great part and a foremost part in the work of realizing the anti-imperialist people’s front.

After this the UP CSP became a gathering ground for diverse left groups. The CPI, The CSP and Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Bose and other left groups and leaders shared a common political programme which enabled them, despite ideological and organizational differences, to work together and make socialism a strong current in Indian politics. By 1939 UPCSP had admitted large numbers of communists to its fold. At this point of time the dominant section of the CSP leadership had maintained

112 Acharya Narendra Dev was born in 1889 at Sitapur and practiced law in Fyzabad until 1921. He was important leader of CSP in UP.
113 Zareer Masani, op.cit., p. 80.
114 Guideline of the History of Communist party of India, issued by Central Party Education Department, (New Delhi, 1974), p. 46.
close personal relation with Gandhi and was opposed to aggressively anti-Gandhi tactics.115

**Mobilization: Mass Mobilization and Educational Institution**

The genesis of modern institution in Eastern UP could be traced back with the establishment of the Sanskrit college at Benares in 1792. The orientalists versus Anglicists between 1782 and 1835 was significant.116 The controversy ended in favour of anglicists who were in favour of English education. The years that followed 1854 found the establishment of the Department of Public instruction in all provinces, universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and steady increase in the number of schools and colleges all over India. Allahabad, Benares and Lucknow developed as an educational centre in Eastern UP. The foundation-stone of Banaras Hindu University was led on February 4, 1916 by Charles Baron Hardinge of Penshurst who was Viceroy and Governor-General of India.117 This historical event took place in presence of Sir James Meston, Lieutenant Governor of UP and the office bearers of Hindu University Society. Many great people gave lecture on this occasion. Gandhi spoke on anarchical methods and repressive administrative measures adopted by British ruler. The audience appreciated his lecture very much.118 Mrs. Annie Besant, Mr. J. Krishnamurti, Dr. Bhagwan Das and Madan Mohan Malaviya were instrumental for Banares Hindu University. Earlier they had worked together to build up the Central Hindu College. Mrs. Besants dictum was, “touch not the king’s penny, for it is always very dangerous to do so,” and she refused to take any financial assistance from the government for her school and college although Lt. Governor after Lt Governor asked to accept government assistance.119 Mrs. Besants purpose in founding this school and college was to instill in the minds of the youth of the land, pride in their past, love for their religion and to rouse their self-respect, so that they may be a free people.120 In 1916 Central Hindu College was transferred to the Banaras Hindu University.

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115 Zareer Masani, op.cit., p. 177.
116 V. Sankaran Nair, Role of Students in Freedom Movement, (Delhi, 1990), p. 1.
118 Ibid. p. 6.
119 Sumit Sarkar, Modern India (1885-1947), (Delhi, 1983), p. 179.
120 Ibid. p. 6.
This was the time when Mahatma Gandhi with South African experience (1893-1914) was trying to make a place for himself in the Indian politics. He was acting as a greatest risk manager of the 20th century with his tools eg. Non-violence or ahimsa and satyagraha. It was personally constituted, deeply-felt and worked-out philosophy owing something to Emerson, Thoreau and Tolstoy.¹²¹ In 1916 Central Hindu Colelge was transferred to the Banaras Hindu University.

Indian politicians before Gandhi had tended to oscillate between moderate ‘mendicancy’ and individual terrorism basically because of their social inhibitions about uncontrolled mass movements.¹²² Gandhiji was evolving such as a model so that it could be acceptable to all including business groups as well as to the locally dominant sections of the peasantry. The doctrine of ahimsa lay at the heart of the essentially unifying, ‘umbrella-type’ role assumed by Gandhi and the Gandhian congress, mediating internal social conflicts, contributing greatly to joint national struggle against foreign rule. He wrote ‘Hind Swaraj’ in 1909 and had propagated his views that the real enemy was not British political domination but the whole of modern industrial civilization. Thus he became favourite for all of them who were affected by the growth of capitalism.

Rowlatt Satyagraha, Khilafat and non-cooperation movement gave opportunity to Mahatma Gandhi to become father – figure overnight. According to Manmath Nath Gupta, he was very astute, clever and knew his job very well. He had a very good knowledge of popular psychology.¹²³ In 1920 he visited Benares quite a few times. A meeting of thirty thousand people took place in Town Hall. The audience included doctors, teachers, girls, women and other Hindus and Muslims.¹²⁴ They were from petty bourgeois and proletariat classes. Rich men like Shiv Prasad Gupta, the owner of Aaj and the famous writer Babu Bhagwan Das were presents in the meeting. Gandhiji asked students to leave government schools and colleges to take part in non-cooperation movement. He asked every one not to cooperate with the government. Later Maulana Mohammad Ali, Shaukat Ali, Swami Satyadev, Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru also visited Benares and encouraged the people to take part in the

¹²¹ Sumit Sarkar, Modern India (1885-1947), (Delhi 1983), p. 179.
¹²⁴ Ibid. pp. 10-11.
freedom movement. In leadership of Acharya Kripalani first batch of 40-50 students left B.H.U. and started Gandhi Ashrama to propagate the freedom movement in Eastern U.P. Taking inspiration from Gandhiji, Shiv Prasad Gupta and Dr. Bhagwan Das started Kashi Vidyaapith on 10th Feb 1921. The main aim of this institution was to train the students for political freedom of India. To produce good literature Shiv Prasad Gupta started the Jnana Mandal which issues the daily Hindi paper Aaj from Benares. This paper helped in propagating the freedom movement among the masses. Later Birbal Singh left B.H.U. with 70-80 students to join the Kashi Vidhiyapith. National schools on the pattern of Vidyaapith were also started in Ahemdabad, Bihar, Pune, Calcutta and Lahore. National schools were started in each districts of U.P. Kashi Vidyaapith in Benares became the fulcrum of freedom movement in Eastern U.P. Shiva Prasad Gupta, Dr. Bhagwan Das, Sri Prakasa, Acharya kripalini, Shri Birbal Singh, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Tribhwan Narain Singh, Kamalapathi Tripathi, B.V. Keskar, Acharya Narendradeva, Dr. Sampurnanand, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Yagya Narayan Upadhyaya, Shiv Vinayak Mishra, Krishna Chandra Sharma, Yogeshwar Bhattacharya, Rajaram Shastri, Algu Rai Shastri, Chandrashekhar Pandey, Ramnath Lal Suman, Vishwanath Sharma, Bajrangbali Gupta, and Vichitra Narain Sharma were prominent leaders, teachers and students of Kashi Vidyaapith movement in Eastern U.P. They frequently visited the villages and tried to up rise the masses about the congress programme under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

Although students had started taking part in national politics since 1905 but Ghandi’s non-cooperation movement in 1920-21 re-inspired them on large scale. Thus the student – movement received a new lease of life. For an important section of the students there was no going back to the old life of stagnation. Political struggle, they realized was a whole time occupations. This period, therefore saw the birth of many students’ organisation in different parts of the country. In the Punjab, Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha was established by Bhagat Singh and his friends, in Bengal there grew up two organizations: The All Bengal Students’ Association (ABSA)
pioneered by the Anushilan party and Bengal Provincial Students Association (BPSA) set up by the Jugantar party.\textsuperscript{129}

Years rolled away with increasing number of students for attaching themselves to one party or the other in all provinces. All India congress of students was organized to coincide with Lahore Congress of December 1929.\textsuperscript{130} After that close contacts developed between congress – sponsored youth leagues and non-congress groups eg. Naujawan Bharath Sabha (hereafter NBS) or Young India Party. The NBS was founded in 1926 as a revolutionary nationalist youth organisation by Bhagat Singh, leader of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (hereafter HSRA), and Munshi Ahmed Din, future leader of Punjab CSP.\textsuperscript{131}

Starting in 1928, recruitment to the new-formed congress volunteer corps or Hindustani Seva Dal (hereafter HSD) resulted in the entry of large numbers of radical youth cadres into the congress. Later the HSD was organized on a national scale under the supervision of Bose and J. Nehru, then general secretary of the AICC.\textsuperscript{132} Its purpose was to provide the congress with a disciplined mass cadre in anticipation of an anti-government agitation such as the congress left desired. Its composition reflected both the radicalization of congress youth and the growing politicisation of the educated lower middle classes. Swami Sampurnanand, who had a background of close contact with prominent communist and radicalist, acted simultaneously as the chief provincial organizer of the U.P. youth league, NBS and HSD, and was later a founder-leader of the UP CSP.\textsuperscript{133}

The civil disobedience movement of 1930s made another call on the service and sacrifice of the students.\textsuperscript{134} They gave a good account of themselves in this struggle also. This period marked an important stage in the history of the student movement. So long the students depended solely on the political leaders for advice and guidance. When the leaders were clapped behind prison bars, the students found themselves in

\textsuperscript{131} Zareer Masani, op.cit., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{134} J.P. Papers (1\textsuperscript{st} Instalment), op.cit., p. 184.
the wilderness. This underlined the importance of an all India body for the students. Accordingly All India Students Federation was set up in 1936 and its first conference was held at Lucknow under the presidency of Mr. Jinnah, Pandit Nehru inaugurated the conference.135 It is interesting to note that it was at this conference that besides political activities, a programme for the welfare of the students was chalked out. The different provincial students’ organisations were directed by the AISF to set up college and school unions for the first time. Problems like mass literacy, reduction of fees etc. also received attention. All these activities helped in enhancing the political consciousness among the masses.

WOMEN AND POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The feminine incursion into politics started with inception of Indian National Congress in 1885. In its annual meeting women spoke, voted and served as delegates.136 The entry of Mrs. Besant into Indian politics in 1914 accelerated the process of women’s association with the freedom struggle. Owing to the Home Rule agitation between 1914 and 1917, women began to wake up to a realization of their exclusion from political movement.137 Mrs. Besant’s attitude to the emancipation of women was quite unequivocal. She maintained that the progress of India depended on their emancipation. She held that the time had come not only for women to understand in an intelligent manner what the men were fighting for, but also to participate in it. She was the first president of the Indian women’s Association founded in 1917 and was largely responsible for putting forward the demand for political rights for women. She was very active in eastern U.P. Her internment in June 1917 stimulated political consciousness amongst women in various parts of the country in general and UP in particular. Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru, wife of Jawaharlal Nehru’s cousin Brijlal Nehru organized at this time a women’s meeting at Allahabad to protest against the indentured labour in South Africa. Later on she started a “Kumari Sabha” encourage girls to talk and debate and take part in public discussion. On December 18, 1917, the first women deputation comprising 14 members led by Sarojini Naidu met Mr. Edwin Montagu (secretary of state) and Lord Chelmsford

135 Ibid. p. 184.
(Viceroy). They were asking for women franchise and education for girls. Later Sarojini Naidu and her male colleagues spoke with one voice before the parliamentary committee on reforms in London. By a pleasant coincidence a woman Dr. Annie Besant was to preside for the first time at the annual congress session of the year 1917.

With the coming of Gandhi the freedom movement got a new direction, strength and inspiration. He drew women in large numbers into the freedom movements. In South Africa his Satyagraha “army” had women in it. He compared British rule to “Ravana-Rajya and said that as Sita did not cooperate with the Ravana, so the Indian people must not co-operate with the Rakshasi-Sarkar. When Gandhi gave a call for non-cooperation in 1920s then Renuka Ray, Vijaya Laskhmi Pandit, Basanti Devi, Urmila Devi, Suniti Devi, Kasturba Gandhi, Hemprabha Majumdar and others were influenced by his call for mass movement. Dalit women from Pasi and Bhar caste also took part in the movement in eastern U.P. Mrs. Bhanti Devi Sister of Khadan Lal became the first female congress worker of Kashi. This was the time when Gandhi gave the slogan: “back to villages”. Workers were supposed to go to the villages and interact with them. Bee Amman, mother of Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali, threw off her veil, and addressed meetings all over India, advocating the use of Khadi and Hindu-Muslim unity. Mrs. Abdul Qadir was active in Lucknow. The All India women’s conference (AIWC), formed in 1927 also helped in gender consciousness. In 1930s women communist like Hajra Begum helped rural women to take part in political process in Allahabad regions of Eastern U.P. The poetess Mahadevi Varma, usually spent her weekends in rural areas in Eastern UP, educating village girls. Many other also did the same in Benares regions.

By educating themselves in Allahabad University, B.H.U. Lucknow University and Kashi Vidyapith women folk got enlightened and started taking part in national movement. Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth of Babu Sangam Lal Agarwal, Kanya

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139 Aparna Basu, op. cit., p. 20.
140 Navajjvan, 28 November 1920.
141 NMML, T.N. Singh, Oral History Transcript, acc No. 803, p. 96.
142 T.N. Singh., op.cit., p. 97.
144 NMML, Rajendra Kumari Bajpai and Sarla Sharma, Oral History transcript.
Pathshala set up by Agarwal Samaj in Benares, Arya Mahila School in Benares and Karamat Hasain’s Muslim girls school in Lucknow were exclusively for female education. The result was that in 1930s there were 13000 more girls in schools and 35 more recognized institutions. By this time the universities were “being successfully invaded by the women”.145 Books such as Pandit Sunderlal’s Bharat Mein Angrezi Raj, a 3-volume work or Sachindra Nath Sanyal’s Bandi Jiwan, translations of the Das Capital, John Reed’s Ten Days that Shook the World, Bernard Shaw’s The Intelligent Women’s Guide To Socialism, Maxim Gorky’s Mother, John Stracheys’ Theory and Practice of Socialism etc were popular among the educated folk. Political articles published in Leader, Independent, Pratap, Aaj, Bangvasi, Bharat Mitra and Abhyudaya were very popular among the masses in eastern U.P. Aman Sabha’s paper Surya from Benares was supposed to be loyalist and was called Khairkhwah.146 In 1930s Hans of Benares published a number of political articles such as Rising Nation (15-12-1932), Mother of a Revolutionary (02-08-1933), the Limit of Repression (11-04-1932) etc. 147 These articles aroused the national feeling among the masses and they took part in civil disobedience movements.148 Three women, Mrs. Subbaroyan, Begum Shah Nawaz and Sarojini Naidu, attended the Round Table conference during 1930-32. Women political consciousness reached a new height when in the 1937 elections, 8 women were elected from “general” constituencies and 42 from the “reserved” constituencies. Six women became ministers when the provincial cabinets were formed. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit became minister for local self government in U.P.149 Later on Ansuyabai Kale, and J.T. Sipahimalani was appointed Deputy Speakers in Madhya Pradesh and Sind respectively. Hansa Mehta and Begum Shah Nawaz took office as parliamentary secretaries in Bombay and Punjab respectively.

Most of the women joined the political struggle because like the men, they were inspired by patriotism and wanted to see the end of foreign rule from their motherland. Women from families of Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Jamnalal Bajaj, Lajpat

146 T.N. Singh., op.cit.,
147 Hans, A Hindi monthly was started in 1930. It was chiefly devoted to short stories, many of which were political. Most popular Hindi novelist, Frem Chand, was its editor. It was published and printed by Pravasial Verma, Malaviya at the Saraswati Press, Benares. File No. 1205/1932, Police Department U.P State archives, Lucknow, pp. 17-23.
148 Aparna Basu, op.cit., p. 35.
149 Ibid. p. 35.
Rai and others took active part in the national movement. Personalities like Dhiresh Mazumdar, Surya Sen, Subhas Bose, Vallabhai Patel, Rammanohar Lohia, Jawaharlal Nehru and others had great influence on the women. But Gandhi was the greatest influential force which was drawing women into the political arena. According to Sucheta Kripalini, Gandhi's personality inspired confidence not only in women, but in their guardians – husbands, fathers, brothers who did not object to their women – folk coming out of their sheltered homes to march in the streets. If Gandhi’s leadership had not been there, such a large number of women might not have come out. As women took to political activity many of the taboos and restrictions which had been placed on them were either lifted or overlooked. Political upheavals helped in bringing about social change in the position of Indian women. By their participation in political movement, Indian women helped their own struggle for liberation.