Judith Brown makes a notable impression by stating that three themes-institutions, ideas and nature of the society—are essential in understanding the origins and viability of any political system. That forces for change were already working in the Indian society long before the Western influence and the imposition of British rule. That most of the European governments had no wish to involve themselves in massive landed empire in Asia, which would be hard to control and might become a financial and political liability. Apart from this liability, British officials claimed loud and long of the corruption and low quality of their Indian subordinates. Judith Brown points out that the existing studies too confirm that such complaints were often justified.

Judith in the beginning concentrates on the condition of Indian peasantry. She discovers that a vital factor in the complicated inter-action of Indian society and the new regime was the high pitch of the British land revenue demand. Although the British denied this and

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73Ibid., p.22.

74Ibid., p.37.

75Ibid., p.57.

76Ibid., p.73.
attributed cultivators’ distress and high levels of land transfer to national disasters and supposed traits of laziness in the Indian character, administrators were under pressure from their superiors to remit as much revenue from their districts as possible. Judith feels that lack of rivers, wells and the unpredictability of the monsoon might make it impossible for the Indian farmers to feed themselves. For without capital or credit, farmers could not take advantage of new supplies of water or risk in investing commercial crops. In such a situation, Judith argues that the poor peasants could not break out of the vicious circle of poverty and indebtedness and were forced to rely on their social and economic superiors in the villages. It was often these groups with established positions of rural dominance, who did the best from the new opportunities in rural lives. Recent research suggests the complexity of the causes and character of 1857 disturbances. According to Judith Brown, specific grievances actually precipitated the sepoy mutiny. In 1857, the British were challenged by armed revolt which they mastered with bayonets and guns, sixty years later they faced political pressure in a recognizably Western style and with careful political calculation. That is why the last half of the Nineteenth century is sometimes referred to as the high noon of Britain’s Indian empire. Judith makes it a point that the rebellion of 1857

77 Brown, Judith :op. cit., p.111.
78 Ibid., p.114.
79 Ibid., p.115.
80 Ibid., p.83.
81 Ibid., p.91.
was essentially elitist-not initiated or supported by the really poor or the landless, but by some of the dominant castes and notables in the countryside.\textsuperscript{82}

Turning on the Indian economic situation for the second time, Judith Brown states that the expansion of internal and overseas trade in this framework significantly altered the distribution of power, wealth and status in the Indian society. Much of the profits from the overseas went into the British pockets: while those Indians who did this business were almost certainly the middle-class men who handled the commercial crops as they passed between the regions or from the fields to the ports as well as the small groups of dominant cultivators\textsuperscript{83}. Alliance with substantial landed men did not ensure rural peace and prosperity. Because as the prices and population rose land-lords and money-lenders pressed their clients, debtors and under-tenants harder and harder both legally and with the subtle economic and social forces common in small scale communities\textsuperscript{84}. Judith further states that most of the Indians did not have much public and professional contacts with the British people and therefore caste conventions as much as British aloofness meant that social contact was minimum\textsuperscript{85}. A far wider problem which deeply concerned many more Indians was their perceptions of their own identities under British rule, particularly in relation to their foreign ruler. Major pressures were generated by new experiences, forced them to consider such questions as who were they?, 'Are we a nation'? 'Are we just diverse

\textsuperscript{82} Brown, Judith :op. cit., p.84.

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p.116.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., p.136.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., p.129.
regions, castes and religious groups'? Most significantly, in forcing these questions into conscious articulation was the very presence of this Raj and the unifying forces resulting from it. Racial incidents occurred not infrequently, often as assaults on the Indians by the European soldiers or planters who then were acquitted by the European judges and juries, although Indians were found guilty of assaulting Britons were severely punished. It is interesting to note that the dilemmas of Indians' status and identity in relation to their rulers inevitably raised further dilemmas of Indians' relations with each other. The nature and significance of the group identities within the sub-continent became live issues late in the Nineteenth century because it was only then that the British dominion began to stir up Indian society at any depth. Consequently, in certain provinces the distribution of communities and castes and their relative access to the new sources of influence produced distinctive political patterns reflective of particular provincial streams. The non-Brahmans' movements of Madras and Bombay presidencies were reaction to high caste, to education and its fruits, sharpening long standing strains in provincial society. Likewise, communal rather than caste tensions were pre-dominant in other provinces, i.e. Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. Thus the broad range of activity indicates that there was no clear division between the traditional and modern politics.

Focusing on the crucial issue, Judith Brown observes that the educated Indians' political perceptions and sense of

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86 Brown, Judith; op. cit., p. 147.
87 Ibid., p. 130.
88 Ibid., p. 151.
89 Ibid., p. 151.
90 Ibid., p. 172.
identity began to change\textsuperscript{91}. They fostered traditional values with new skills, long established leadership was willing to use new methods and make new allies in the changing context. For example, problems experienced by the provincial politicians in creating a broad front for political action were magnified at all-India level\textsuperscript{92}. Judith's opinion on Congress is that it was not a political party in modern sense or like political parties in late Nineteenth century Britain. That it was only a loose federation of local men interested in the distribution, use and abuse of public power, who found it mutually profitable to meet at Christmas time to air their fear and aspirations and possibly to make demands of government and to plan joint action\textsuperscript{93}. On occasions Congress did take a stand on divisive issues as is reflective in its opposition to government attempts to stop the alienation of land to non-agriculturists in Punjab at the turn of the century\textsuperscript{94}.

It seems that Judith is allergic to Congress. Her assessment of the Congress undoubtedly, is an epitome of negative approach. For example, she says that by 1914, the Congress was an embryonic structure and a powerful name inverted with national prestige which politicians were increasingly reluctant to ignore\textsuperscript{95}. That by the end of 1916, the British were faced with a united front, in Congress and between Congress and League\textsuperscript{96}. A combination of wider and deeper political agitation and a joint Congress-league demand at all-India level.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., p. 174.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., p. 175.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p. 179.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., p. 182.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., p. 191.
persuaded the British to swiftly design a new framework for their relations with their subject. There emerged from the corridors of powers in Delhi and London a carefully balanced combination of reform and repression. Moreover, due to India’s exposure to World War First, the Raj began to re-think its relationship with its subject and adopt its consultative and administrative framework accordingly; in a short term to win the war and mobilise India’s resources, in the longer, to stabilize India in the economic and political aftermath of the War. Thus Judith rightly states that during World War First, India became a vital source of supply to the allied cause. Its resources of men, material and money were poured into the War effort.

According to Judith Brown, it is crystal clear that by the end of the Nineteenth century, the influence of the West was modifying Indian life most profoundly. One of its most important effects was the creation of Western educated groups which varied in strength and size from area to area. It was by 1915, that these Western educated, particularly from the presidencies were the political nation in relation to the new style of intellectual politics. But within their ranks, there was an infinite variety of groupings. That in the circumstances of Indian society if politicians were to mobilize support from outside their own elite group, they needed powerful network of linkage with wider social groups. The


98 Ibid., p.188.

99 Ibid., p.199.


101 Ibid., P.28
Indian government on their part too made their bid for a new order in the form of Montague-Chelmsford reforms.

Investigating Gandhi’s role in Freedom Struggle, Judith states that his South African experience enriched him in ways which were to give him potential, very different from that of men already established in the all-India political arena. The primacy of non-violence in relationship had wide implications in Gandhi’s social and political consensus. It drove him in his later African years to total disillusion with the Western society as basically materialistic, indoctrinating false ideas of merit and wealth. Gandhi’s entry into the Indian politics occurred almost fortuitously in 1917 and 1918 when he became involved in three local disputes at Champaran, kheda and Ahmedabad. Judith says that it was Gandhi who for the first time displayed the magnetic personality which was to draw multitudes to him and to earn him the title of Mahatma. It was his ability to make ordinary people feel that he appreciated and cared about their particular problems, however, local and insignificant these might have seemed in the rarefied atmosphere of Congress debates. That Gandhi’s main concern at kheda was not to help the farmers financially, but to give them moral support in refusing to pay revenue and to take away their cringing fear of government authority.


103 Ibid., p.205.


105 Ibid., p.68.

Judith stresses the point that like any other leader, Gandhi had to gain access to the local networks of power and loyalty to create such networks for himself, or to manage combination of the two\textsuperscript{107}. That by mid 1918, Gandhi was walking on the verges of institutional policies, still isolated from the politicians though widely known as a powerful and original leader of men\textsuperscript{108}. Judith further opines that it was the World War First which acted directly as an agent of change by its economic impact on the sub-continent. It forced up prices, caused economic dislocation and precipitated government controls and trade and prices, thereby creating a situation where people outside the political nation felt the pitch of hardships\textsuperscript{109}. Giving a serious thought, Judith points out that wartime threats to British security in India and the policy of balance between conciliation and repression which the Raj involved in response, were of fundamental importance to the development of Indian politics and the course of Gandhi’s career\textsuperscript{110}. Judith rightly analyses that the Home Rule League began in halting fashion what Gandhi was to lead later on boldly and with far greater success. They \{Home Rule Leagues\} formulated techniques which were very shortly picked up by Gandhi and consequently, began to till the ground in areas where he was to reap a great harvest of support. Their activities were a link that there might soon be an end to politics studied limitations. Some of the politicians realised

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\textsuperscript{107}Brown, Judith \textit{op. cit.}, p.121. \\
\textsuperscript{108}Ibid., p.122. \\
\textsuperscript{109}Ibid., p.123. \\
\textsuperscript{110}Ibid., p.140.
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that they would have to expand their range of support, and in order to do so they would have to evolve a new political style.

According to Judith, the occasion for Gandhi’s transition from peripheral to committed participation in politics from local to continental leadership was Satyagraha against the Rowlatt report\textsuperscript{111}. That the Rowlatt Satyagraha radically altered Gandhi’s standing with the government. It also provoked a strong reaction from the Indian public. That whichever way the Mahatma moved to resume or suspend Civil-disobedience Movement, sections of public criticized him\textsuperscript{112}. That Gandhi accepted the threefold Khilafat claim partly because it involved religious belief for Muslims but mainly on the ground of secular justice in fulfilment of pledges, publicly given\textsuperscript{113}. That the tension between Gandhi’s ideals of Satyagraha and the Khilafat leaders’ adoption of it as a political technique remained a constant feature of the Khilafat Movement as long as the Muslims needed Gandhi as a guarantee of Hindu support\textsuperscript{114}.

Judith Brown shows her class as a brilliant scholar when she opines that in India, Gandhi was an heir to the political traditions of both, the Moderates as well as the Extremists. That he attempted a synthesis of the two strands of thought and injected new concept and modes of activities to attain Swaraj. For example, like Moderates he championed civil rights and made the appeal of Rowlatt Acts an issue in the Non-cooperation Movement. Again like the Moderates, he entered into prolonged negotiations with the government.

\textsuperscript{111} Brown, Judith \textit{op. cit.}, p.160.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., p.180.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p.199.

for the redressal of Indian grievances. On the other hand the Extremists’ impact is seen in Gandhi with espousing political radicalism and establishment of inter-relation between religion and politics. Like Extremists again, Gandhi emphasised the need for getting Swaraj and was prepared to organise passive resistance to unjust Acts of the government.

Expressing her views on Non-cooperation Movement, the writer says that eventual Congress support for this Movement seems to have been the outcome of the calculations by a range of groups of its advantages often in terms of local and provincial politics. Giving a vital reason for the success of Gandhi’s challenge to existing Congress policy was the absence of any major all-India political leader or group who could organise opposition to him or provide a dynamic alternative. That the actual programme of Satyagraha enabled changes in inter-action between different type of politics. Moreover, as a new and infinitely flexible mode of expressing grievances and pressuring opponents, it gave new political opportunities to people whose political vision and capacities hitherto been restricted. That as Non-cooperation generated new linkages in the political arenas, regional differences became marked. That there was growing hostility of men from some areas to India-wise-strategies which appeared to conflict with their local interests of political style. Giving explanation to this kind of situation, Judith highlights that because the political elite was so fragmented that no group

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116 Ibid., p.216.
117 Ibid., p.220.
118 Ibid., p.222.
could stand alone and retain its local power, its all-India influence, political tradition and practice prevented the groups from uniting to oppose Gandhi. Thus Gandhi appeared to be most powerful of possible allies and also most dangerous of opponents to those who were determined to retain local leadership, consequently they acknowledged him as leader because he was the only mediator between their old style of limited politics and the new forces ranged behind him which promised to be threatening unless they could be canalized and controlled.

Caught in a downward spiral of violence and recrimination, Gandhi lost the leverage he possessed in politics at the end of 1920. But he, however, Judith states, remained true to his Satyagraha creed. Rather then leading a violent revolution or becoming the figurehead for the outbreaks of local disorder, he called off Civil-disobedience, gambling his position of political leadership. Judith rightly remarked that Gandhi had always maintained that he participated in politics to attain certain specific ends and not for the sake of political power itself and when the Non-cooperation Movement jeopardized those ends he withdrew, unwilling to hang the idealist within him by the noose of the professional politician. Thus the Mahatma in his initial years back in his native land had shown himself to be a superb mobilizer of men, a skilled mediator between different layers of political activity. Algernon Rumbold echoes same kind of expression by stating that Gandhi's Swaraj was not a question of who ruled, but a turning away from Western imperialism. He sought a regeneration of Indian life on the basis of communal amity, respect for untouchables and non-violence. His experience in South Africa equipped him to organise Muslims, traders and low caste people beyond

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119 Brown, Judith; op. cit., p.303.
120 Ibid., p.229.
the range of the regular politicians. His technique for Satyagraha was one in which unsophisticated men could participate and with which it was difficult for authority to deal, so long as it remained non-violent\textsuperscript{121}. But in the last resort Judith opined that Gandhi could not understand or satisfy the demands for power and influence which he had helped to let loose and which were the stuff of politics.

In her rare ability to understand the crux of the problem, Judith says that the mechanism by which Gandhi had gathered widespread Muslim support was also a political boomerang. Because his religious appeals of a permissive kind carried the risk of triggering a violent-reaction\textsuperscript{122}. For example, regional reactions to the Lucknow Pact showed just how unrepresentative the League was, and how divided the Muslim community was\textsuperscript{123}. Although Punjab wrongs helped to push Gandhi towards dominance among the politicians by giving him an all-India and inter-communal cause to balance the Muslim cause of Khilafat\textsuperscript{124}. However, the Congressmen’s need of ‘token Muslim’ was a persistent problem stretching into the problem of Twentieth century Nationalism and even into the political choices of presidents for independent India\textsuperscript{125}. Criticizing the role of Muslim community in the Freedom Struggle, Judith remarks that Muslim politics was as disintegrated as they had been for

\textsuperscript{121} The Indian Economic and Social Review, Vol 60 (Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi) p.77.

\textsuperscript{122} Brown, Judith : Gandhi’s Rise to Power : Indian Politics, 1915-1922

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p.31.

\textsuperscript{124} Brown, Judith : Modern India : The Origins of an Asian Democracy


\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p.184.
decades. That a vital political development which had enormous potential as an integrative force among Muslims was the emerging idea of a separate homeland for a separate Muslim nation. Giving the concluding remarks on the above issue, Judith states that in almost all the circumstances, the common element in the diverse striving by occupational and religious groups, castes and linguistic areas was that all were reactions to a changing environment as India was laid open to the West for an increasing length of time. Moreover Judith firmly believed that any national party or an all-India leader would have to come to terms with the provincial leadership and their interests, offering them a range of inducements or threatening them with real sanctions.

Analysing some of the crucial years of Indian Freedom Movement, Judith says that the turmoil of 1928-34 was at heart the compound of a number of crisis of legitimacy. The British faced a major challenge to their position as the country’s rightful rulers. With the Congress there were divisions and threats of open discord late in 1928. A powerful faction favoured complete independence rather than dominionhood envisaged in Nehru Report. Taking a worldwide view, Judith says that as India’s relations with the wider world and Great Britain had began to change, the British government in London also found it increasingly difficult for political reasons to extract from India the service and compliance with imperial needs which had helped to make her so

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126 Brown Judith; op. cit., p.304.
129 Ibid., p.255.
130 Ibid., p.257.
strong a foundation of Britain’s total world position. By the end of the 1930’s it was evident to some that the Indian empire was a thing of the past. Although it was seldom openly admitted, the British interest in India was declining. A further constraint of British ability to rule in the old ways was the embracing articulation of world opinion in favour of Colonial Nationalism which was apparent in the British Left-wing circles and America, particularly when there was physical conflict between the Raj and the Indian politicians claiming to speak in the name of an Indian nation.

Gandhi’s Civil-Disobedience campaign between 1930 and 1934 was of lasting importance in the development of Indian politics. It proved to be a powerful bonding agent among Indians within and across regions under the Congress banner. True to the fact that Gandhi’s career demonstrated the significance of all-India leaders, in the process of political change. According to Judith, Gandhi was clear about the goal of renewed Satyagraha, (Civil- Disobedience Movement). In the long term he hoped to create a new, organic unity to build Swaraj and to shatter the fear and dependence in his countrymen which were to him, psychological roots of the Raj. That the Civil-Disobedience was often little more than a loose alignment of local conflicts, yet in 1930, it became clearly national in span, if not in drive and intention. On the other hand, Irwin’s strategy was to establish a form of government for India on a consensus generated by a rational discussion of constitutional possibilities. It was a brave initiative on the part of the government, given the blatancy of Indian

131 Brown, Judith ;op. cit., p.253.
132 Ibid., p.254.
133 Ibid., p.255.
134 Ibid., p.265.
135 Ibid., p.269.
divisions and the hostility among the many British politicians to any radical change in India\textsuperscript{136}. That the contribution of the early 1930's to the sense of Indian Nationalism is more ambiguous. That the desperate nature of the Civil-Disobedience Movement suggests that the National Movement was built as much on the particularistic interests and provincial identities as on an upsurge of commitment to a single free nation\textsuperscript{137}. Judith rightly states that for all the Satyagraha participants, Civil-Disobedience Movement was an educative and united experience giving them a wider sense of national identity and new relations to authority\textsuperscript{138}.

In the 1970's, the Cambridge historians tended to focus study, less on India as a political unit than on particular provinces and regions\textsuperscript{139}. Citing an example, Judith says that the crisis of a nationhood in a plural and deeply regionalised society was even more apparent in the careers of aspirant all-India leaders. That India was experiencing a broad range of change at different political levels, the rate and unevenness of which were sharpened at the prospect of the devolution of power\textsuperscript{140}. Such leaders tried to do different things, had different power bases and could only be persuaded at particular movements to cooperate across sectional and regional interests to create a movement which was continental in spread if not national in aim\textsuperscript{141}. Judith further states that with

\textsuperscript{136} Brown, Judith, \textit{op. cit.}, p.263.

\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Ibid.}, p.278.

\textsuperscript{138} \textit{Ibid.}, p.270.

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Ibid.}, p.226.

\textsuperscript{140} \textit{Ibid.}, p.282.

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Ibid.}, p.283.
the elections and the outbreak of War the rift between the politicians of Hindu and Muslim communities widened and the Muslims' fear for their future increased. The criticism and the accusations hurled by each group further poisoned communal relations in widening the circles, whatever were the factual foundations of the allegations.\textsuperscript{142}

Analysing the most turbulent years of Indian Freedom Movement, Judith claims that although Satyagraha or violent upheaval never pushed the British into the Indian ocean, there accumulated during the 1940's indispensable evidence of the weakening of the network collaboration on which the British had relied for imperial stability and the routine functioning of their administration.\textsuperscript{143} The post-war study reveals that the loyalty of the police and troops came to be seriously doubted.\textsuperscript{144} In addition to this, Judith states that it was not only groups clearly distinguishable by their minority status or their separate historical development which raised the issue of national identity. Others who were deeply committed to independent India had a very different vision of the essence of Indian nationhood from that of the Congress leadership.\textsuperscript{145}

Summing up the political conditions of India in the post-independence, Judith remarks that the element of continuity is most powerfully demonstrated in Mrs. Indira Gandhi's emergency rule, thirty years after independence. Although Congress in opposition had bitterly opposed government's ability to rule with emergency powers, yet as the party of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{142}Brown, Judith \textit{op. cit.}, p.298.
\item \textsuperscript{143} Ibid., p.314.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Ibid., p.315.
\item \textsuperscript{145} Ibid., p.335.
\end{itemize}
government intent of welding a new state it incorporated. It permitted the president of India to suspend the right to freedom and to constitutional remedies in situation of national emergency and also provided for preventive detention of those thought likely to injure society. Ironically too, the new governments in Delhi and the former provinces faced political problems of attracting collaboration similar to those of their predecessors, though they had themselves as the main opposition to the Raj, constituted one of its major dilemmas.

Judith Brown's argument on the element of continuity in the Indian government during the pre and post-independence era undermines the very basis of her debate. Surprisingly, she ignored the very fact that in the post-1947, India is governed by the Indians under a democratically elected government. The people of India when desired, pulled down the Indian government in 1977. But on the other hand, the pre-1947 India was ruled by the strongest Imperial power of the world. Consequently, the British-Indian government after committing so many grave mistakes, continued in office only because of its military strength. Therefore, the Indians could do nothing to remove this Colonial government except reeling under its repressive policies.

\[146\] Brown, Judith, *op. cit.*, p.345.

\[147\] Ibid., p.342.