

CONCLUSION

This work is an indepth study of the Non-Cooperation Movement and the post Non-Cooperation phase in Bihar. Non-Cooperation Movement was very significant. It marked a new turn to the national movement. After this, the national movement went through a fundamental transformation. The movement no longer remained confined to a few educated sections but witnessed the broadening of popular participation. This is a fact which most of the historians agree with. But to whom does the credit for this enhanced mass participation go? Nationalist historians have given the whole credit of bringing the masses into the movement to the Congress leaders. On the other hand, subaltern historians look at mass mobilization as autonomous and independent of the leaders. But this study demonstrates that the whole process of mobilization was very complex. Apart from the role of the Congress leaders, it was furthered by the efforts of thousands of grass-root nationalist workers-the city-based as well as the village reared-and by nationalist propaganda and campaigns at various levels through meetings, speeches, nationalist songs, pamphlets and newspapers. Social boycott was also resorted to against those not joining the movement by drawing upon traditional institutions of social authority like caste and traditional panchayats.

A strong network of organizations such as peasant sabhas, panchayats and organizations of volunteers developed, providing momentum to the movement. These emerged as the special task forces for the organization of the movement at the local level, for the spreading of nationalist ideology, mobilization of masses, helping in the organization of processions, advertising political meetings and assisting the Congress leaders in their propaganda activities.

The movement began to adopt viable technique and methods of mass politics, a mass-oriented political style and organization, adopting symbols and speaking a political language, expressing the ethos and urges of the masses. The language of the nationalists was pro-people. The nationalists ably read the pulse of the people and the signs of the time. The critique of the nature of British rule and its impact was translated into popular idioms. In fact, the key to the success of the non-cooperators lay in their ability to generate and employ expressions with a metaphor-like function. Many of these metaphors were rooted in indigenous values and also drawn from religious epics with which people were most familiar. These metaphors helped understand concepts that were otherwise difficult to understand, unfamiliar and distant. They also evoked powerful feelings of passion, anger or excitement. Identification with the movement became strong.

The movement witnessed various political trends. It stirred up feelings in many directions and unleashed a variety of protests. Nationalist historiography till now has been built around the retelling of certain well-known and memorable events. It has given an account, which separated out of the great chaos of varying ideological events a single thread and showed nationalism arising and moving to its destiny. This gave a very homogenizing picture of the movement. However, this study brings out a complex picture of the movement. The movement was not monolithic but the people opposed the British with ideas that were differently inflected, grounded, expressed, coloured, stylized and motivated.

The nature of the movement was very fluid. As it spread, it picked up different issues in different areas acquiring new colours and flavours. It took varied shapes and forms in different areas. In Tirhut Division, the movement primarily sharpened struggles against the planters. In some districts like Purnea

and Saran, tensions built up against the landlords. The tenants disputed and delayed payment of rent. In some places, there was hostility to settlement operations. There were *haat* lootings in Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur. In the tribal belt, there was a strong animosity against the landlords and traders. In many districts, the lower rungs of police went on strike. In Purnea and Shahabad, cattle pounds were boycotted. In some places, tension also built up against *chaukidars*. Attempts were made to stop payment of *chaukidari* tax in some districts. The movement received impetus from local grievances, agitations and social tensions and became a vehicle of expressions for a variety of discontentments. The movement in north Bihar not only drew strength from social tensions that had crystallised during the anti-indigo agitation and peasants protest preceding the Non-Cooperation Movement but also sharpened the struggle against the planters and landlords. Thus, the local plural protests during the movement throw new light on nationalism, bringing out its many facets and dimensions and exposing the hitherto concealed layers of the national movement. Masses entered the movement motivated by their own interests and brought their own agenda to the movement. Once the masses became confident and organized and their desires and aspirations got linked up with the movement, the movement then developed its own rhythm and dynamics which often ran independent of the nationalist leaders. The government feared this the most.

The movement had a strong base amongst the peasants. In fact, the movement derived its strength from its peasant base. But in most studies on the national movement, the issue of the agrarian basis of the nationalist agitations has not been central. Generally a lot of work has been done on the peasant movements and nationalist politics but much remains to be explored in the field

of peasant politics within the broader framework of nationalist politics. This work draws out the fact that groundswell modalities of popular protest were not external or just linked to, but were an essential part of nationalist agitations. The study throws interesting light on the Gandhian politics of the peasants and tries to reconstruct the world of peasant nationalists. The peasants were in the forefront of the movement. Their agrarian agitations sharpened. The popular translations of nationalism pitted the peasants and tribals in struggle not only against the colonial but also against their internal exploiters.

In north Bihar, anti-planters protest sharpened. Relations between the planters and the tenants became terribly strained. Planters faced a series of attacks. Their employees and labourers went on strike, demanding higher wages; their tenants did not pay rents, and in many places, they also stopped providing carts, coolies and ploughs to the planters. In many places, the bazaars of the planters were also boycotted. Many factories faced complete boycott. Even the personal servants of the planters stopped working for them. A wide cross-section of peasants were involved in such protests. One could see an increasing solidarity of the poorer sections of villagers in many rebellions. The protest derived its organizational strength from peasant sabhas and seva samitis. The social boycott, as a weapon, was also resorted to against those not joining the strike. All this made it very difficult for the planters to take action against them. The movement thus eroded the hegemony of the planters in north Bihar.

In the tribal belt also, as the Non-Cooperation Movement spread, it sharpened agrarian agitation. The tribal areas where the movement made considerable impact were Ranchi amongst the Tana Bhagats, Kolhan amongst the Hos, Damin-I-Koh in Santhal Pargana and Palamau, amongst the Kherwars and

Cheros. These were the areas which had a strong tradition of protest. Damin-I-Koh belt was famous for the Santhal Rebellion of 1855-56. Rent and land issues were in the forefront of the agitations of the Non-Cooperation period. The movement also brought forth tribal animosity against the traders. Tana Bhagats made attempts to prevent large markets from regulating prices. In Palamau, forest satyagraha was in the forefront, with tenants cutting down jungle claiming that they were entitled to these jungles.

In certain pockets, there were tensions against zamindars. In some places, a proposal to start a campaign for non-payment of rent to the landlords was openly discussed. Tenants in many areas disputed the question of rent and refused payment of other claims of the zamindars. Rents were withheld on a large scale in the Hathwa Estate in the district of Saran. The tenants of the Muhammadia zamindar in the district of Purnea refused to pay rent in some villages. A large number of panchayats were held in villages. The panchayats settled disputes amongst the villagers over land, loans and grazing. This led to an erosion of the hegemony of zamindars. The zamindars saw all this as a great threat to their power and authority.

The tribal and peasant agitations, especially in the planters' belt, throw light on the popular perceptions of Indian nationalism. They often translated the codes of their leaders on the basis of their own worldviews and experiences. The nationalist ideology was adapted by them to their own social and political needs. There existed a millenarian trait in the movement. The peasants and tribals perceived swaraj as a millennium where all exploitation and oppression would end. Under swaraj, it was believed they would get back their land and would not have to pay rent, chaukidari tax, *haat* fees; there would be no protected forests and

no forest rules. In fact, these were the deep-seated grievances of the peasants and tribals over which they had been agitating for long and which surfaced sharply during the Non-Cooperation Movement.

In many cases, the popular struggles, which converged with the Non-Cooperation Movement, developed under the Congress leadership. Amongst the Hos and Tana Bhagats, the Congress leadership provided the initial stimulus. But soon the movement in these areas took on local colours, the tribals bringing their demands, urges and their particular political styles into the movement. Some programmes of the Congress were taken up but the local issues primarily determined their agendas. In the tribal belt, amongst the Congress programme, it was boycott of liquor and panchayats which became very popular but what predominated most was the struggle over rent, forest satyagraha, refusal to pay *haat* dues and chaukidari tax, and regulation of market.

Peasant and tribal actions were framed in terms of what was popularly regarded to be just, fair and possible. However, the peasants and tribals derived their legitimacy for all their actions from the supposed orders of Gandhi. There was a popular tendency to look upon Gandhi as an alternative source of authority. Gandhi became the symbol of their hopes and aspirations. Every thing that was unjust, cruel and oppressive was fought in Gandhi's name. The peasantry looted bazaars in Gandhi's name; the tribals distilled liquor on "his orders", and the peasants burnt planters' factories with the jaikar of Gandhi. In fact, the jaikar of Gandhi became a militant avowal of the organized strength of peasant volunteers, a rallying cry for direct action, a cry that mobilized and struck terror in the hearts of planters. Thus the enthusiasm which Gandhi generated, the expectations he aroused and the attack he launched on British authority all combined to initiate the

process, which given other factors, helped the peasants and tribals to conceptualise the turning of the world upside down. It marked the inversion of power relations deemed inviolable until then such as landlord/peasant relations especially in tribal and planters belt. Thus this study of the popular struggles questions the nationalist historiography which looks at the movement as the creation of a few charismatic leaders but neither does it accept some of the basic premises of subaltern historians like the duality of nationalisms, (i.e., elite and subaltern nationalism), and popular autonomy. Although it accepts the specificity of the popular level and popular translations of swaraj, it illustrates the process of interaction, as to how the Congress and Gandhi shaped as well as got shaped at the popular level. The study focuses on the complexities associated with the interaction of Indian nationalism and popular pressures.

What was breaking down, above all, under the pressure of mass militancy was the legitimacy of foreign rule, its acceptance as sacrosanct. It is in the weakening of the legitimacy or hegemony of the existing order that one can best understand the impact of certain phases of nationalist agitation on the world of subalterns. Most of the studies on Non-Cooperation Movement have generally emphasized how the movement was marked by a series of popular protests. But, one cannot understand popular protests without their context. What emboldened the masses was the diminishing fear of British institutions of authority, which gave the peasants a new self-confidence in their ability to successfully defy the government and resist oppression. This psychological change was so crucial that without it there could be no peasant organization or peasant struggles. The movement built up an atmosphere of defiance. When the Non-Cooperation Movement intensified in its later phase, it was primarily directed against the state

apparatus. There was a general disrespect for law and order and strong contempt for authority. The movement undermined respect for legal authority, police, thana and jail. These were all symbols of British authority. People in large numbers demonstrated outside the courts when non-cooperators were tried in the court or when non-cooperators were taken from the court to the jail. People who appeared as criminals in the eyes of the British came to be looked upon as heroes by the masses. It is interesting to note the dwindling authority of the prison in the popular psyche. The jail as a sign system went through a reversal of role: from a symbol of British rule, authority and terror, it became a site where nationalist forces routinely mocked the imperial insignia. Jail began to be looked upon as a place of pilgrimage. Police were frequently defied and attacked. The significant development of Non-Cooperation Movement was the extent to which it became a vehicle for demonstration of popular hostility against the police. The police had generally served to represent all that was seen as arbitrary and cruel about colonial rule and to epitomize its unaccountability to Indian opinion. Long experience of their high handedness and *zulum* often transformed a dispute from a peaceful, if heated altercation, into a violent confrontation and from defiance to an attack on the police. Frequent attacks on the police demoralized the police force and undermined the prestige of the government. The erosion of respect for authority amongst the masses seemed to be the major concern of the government. Expressing such concern, the local officials said that in the past the small police establishment was able to meet the requirements of the district because of its great prestige and reputation of the government behind it. But now, they said, the police had to rely more on the show of strength, where formerly prestige alone precluded opposition. A larger police force was, therefore, needed. The government

highlighted that success in administration depended as much on the maintenance of a general atmosphere of obedience to authority and acceptance of the existing order of society as on the definite enforcement of statute law or the working of the administrative machinery. Thus, though the Non-Cooperation Movement did not achieve its declared objective of forcing the British to allow Indians to govern themselves, it gave the apparatus of British rule a severe shaking. It built up defiance in all directions, challenging British institutions of authority.

Besides, in the existing historiography of national movement, the focus has been primarily on popular struggles. The other kinds of resistances during the national movement have not received much attention. The general impression about nationalism is that it was a mass struggle against the British, where masses were on one side and the state and its apparatus on the other. This study of Non-Cooperation Movement in Bihar modifies this image. One finds that during the movement there was a strong protest amongst the police, an important agent of state apparatus. Unfortunately episodes of police protest have not received a significant place in the historiography of the national movement. The writings on police have mainly concentrated on the contribution that they have made to the formation and functioning of the colonial state structure. In such writings, their relationship with the colonial state has been portrayed as relatively stable. This work brings out that the lower rung of the police in many districts of Bihar went on strike during the Non-Cooperation Movement, demanding better service conditions. The police subordinates, who hitherto had appeared in the official literature merely as statistical and communal categories, now began to find a collective voice of their own to express their grievances. Their self-assertion took a novel form with the setting up of the police unions. The nation-wide scale of

Non-Cooperation Movement meant that policemen's protest could not be easily isolated and suppressed. In fact, the constables entered collective protest more confidently knowing that they had the backing of a larger movement and a well-developed organization. Even though they were seeking redress for specific grievances over pay, housing and other conditions and not contesting institutional subordination, their decision to go on strike at the time of the movement, when their support was very crucial to the government, sent the message that the state power was cracking. Thus, the police protest is an example of resistance which brings to light that the Non-Cooperation Movement was a struggle where people in a variety of positions taking wide ranging steps contributed to the disruption of the agenda of colonial power.

The lower rungs of the police were also becoming sympathetic to the national movement. A number of constables even resigned. The nationalists, whose policy was to ultimately also bring the bureaucracy under its fold, took the opportunity of discontentment amongst the lower rungs of the police to mobilize them in their favour. The nationalists presented it as the moral duty of Indian policemen to free themselves from service under the British and to identify with the cause of national freedom. Neutralising the police force to some extent can be seen as one of the important achievements of the Non-Cooperation Movement. Police sympathy with the movement appears surprising as one generally tends to look upon them as a part of the state. This study makes us think anew of the other identity of the police that has generally been overlooked in most of the works. The police were also part of society having strong ties and affinities with it, which colonialism could not sever. However, what is of significance is that this other identity of policemen asserted in the context of the national movement.

This study on the Non-Cooperation Movement also brings out the significance of various boycotts, which were a crucial part of the programme of the Non-Cooperation Movement. Generally, the emphasis in most studies has been on how the various boycotts made British governance impossible and crippled the British resources. Apart from highlighting these, this work brings to light that at the core of boycott was the contest for hegemony. National movement was not merely a battle for the termination of British rule but also a contest for hegemony. Boycotts were effective means of undermining the prestige of the Raj. It was a struggle to prove that coercion exceeded persuasion in the organic composition of British power over India. The British rulers emphasized and promoted the collaborative structure or constitutional reform. Legislative Councils and courts were presented as aspects of collaboration. But the Non-Cooperation Movement stressed the alien and unrepresentative character of the British regime, exploding the *mai-baap* myth of a filial attachment on the part of the great majority of Indians to their rulers. All this helped to neutralize the promotion of collaborative structure or constitutional reform. Whatever institutional and ideological resources were at the disposal of British for acquiring hegemony started cracking under the Non-Cooperation Movement. The movement demolished the prestige of the courts and exposed that law was a hegemonic insignia of a colonial state; that educational institutions were an ideological apparatus in the hands of the government; that the real interest in promoting foreign cloth was to advance British trade, which resulted in huge drain of wealth; and that the main interest of the excise policy was to generate revenue for the government. Thus, the boycotts exposed the political, economic and ideological interest of the British rule.

The nationalists also gave notice of their own hegemonic ambitions at the same time in the form of the constructive programme, which would create the social and ideological basis for the future as well as the immediate struggles under the Congress leadership. Constructive programme visualized an alternative society. There was an attempt to create and revive national cultural identity. Nationalist education would root out the ideological justification for the continuation of British rule. It would lay the social and ideological foundation for the regeneration of society, cultural-ideological base for the nationalist struggle and the pattern of future socio-economic developments in the country. Charkha came to be seen as a tool of economic and political emancipation for poverty stricken village masses. Handloom weaving was gradually transformed from an endangered rural craft to a powerful symbol of the moral and spiritual regeneration of India. Around khadi got woven a huge range of beliefs, aspirations and popular symbols. Khadi became a broad cultural symbol. The Non-Cooperation Movement raised the issue of cloth to primary economic and political importance. Khadi dress became an important political symbol, a national identity. In the dress, khadi cap became an obligatory part of Congress uniform, becoming a visible mark of swadeshi and swaraj.

The boycotts had social and cultural dimensions too. At the core of the fight were also issues like self-respect, Indian identity and moral independence. The fight was also presented as a battle between good and evil. By refusing to collaborate with an unjust and oppressive rule, Indians might recover some of their self-respect and moral purity which they had lost in the last two hundred years. Courts were seen as places of falsehood, treachery, deceit, dishonesty, human frailty, wickedness and meanness. In place of courts, panchayats were

promoted because it was believed that justice was meted out in panchayats on the basis of truth. The liquor boycott was not only fuelled by resentment against the colonial liquor laws, but was also part of a widespread movement throughout India in which low status communities began to demand to be considered equal to those of higher social status. Moral element too was strongly linked with it. It was because of the moral element that the liquor boycott drew support even from those sections who had not supported other boycotts.

The study of the boycotts thus brings out that nationalism was not merely a political battle but also a cultural and ideological encounter between Britain and India. Nationalism was not simply about a political struggle for power, it related the question of political independence of the nationalism to virtually every aspect of the material and spiritual life of the people. In the entire phase of the national struggle, the crucial need was to protect, preserve and strengthen the inner core of the national culture, its spiritual essence. No encroachments in it by the colonizers were to be tolerated.

This study not only examines the importance of the Non-Cooperation Movement but also the significance of the post Non-Cooperation phase of the movement. Generally works on the national movement have concentrated on the active phases of the movement. The long periods in-between the mass movements have not drawn much scholarly attention. However, one cannot overlook the significance of these periods. Developments in these periods influenced the later nationalist politics. This study brings out the fact that even when the Non-Cooperation Movement was called off, the movement continued for some time at the local level. In Santhal Pargana, the movement now on took a very intensive form. The government had to resort to heavy repression to suppress the

movement. In fact, even after the movement was officially called off, the fear of civil disobedience continued to haunt the government for some time. The Non-Cooperation Movement, which had built a huge euphoria about the imminence of swaraj, was withdrawn without achieving swaraj. This caused disillusionment and disorganization amongst the Congress members. After the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Congress was in dilemma for some time as to how to keep the nationalist fervour alive. Some of the Congress members, known as Swarajists, advocated entry into the councils. They wanted to transform the legislatures into arenas of political struggle. The other Congress members were opposed to council entry and wanted to concentrate on constructive programme. The Swarajists in Bihar could not get in such large numbers in the Provincial Council so as to wreck constitutional politics. But despite this, one cannot overlook their other contributions. The Swarajists in the Provincial Council raised many issues of nationalist, democratic and general concern like improvement in the condition of jails, release and better treatment of political prisoners, improvement in the condition of workers, promotion of primary education and khadi spinning. The Swarajists thus tried to bring the nationalist agenda in the council. Even though many of these issues could not be pushed through in the council, yet at that juncture of the national movement to raise such issues was also quite significant. Besides, these issues were extensively reported in the press. Newspapers highlighted the discussions and debates on some of the major issues in the Council. They became a focal point for political propaganda, arousing popular interest and criticism.

The work has also highlighted the significance of the Swarajists' election campaign. The Swarajists primarily projected the elections as a fight against

British rule. During the election campaigns, they highlighted the adverse impact of British rule. Their election meetings were basically nationalist meetings where aims of the Congress were explained. Local agitations also got linked up with the election campaign. During this time, peasant agitations were sharpening in some parts of Bihar. There was pressure by the peasants to get the Bengal Tenancy Act amended. The Swarajists took up peasant's demands in their election campaign to the Provincial Council in 1926. They promised to amend the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885. Thus, electioneering accentuated the class divisions in rural society. Elections also activated peasant organizations. For some years, the peasants pinned their hope on the Provincial Council.

The greatest significance of the Swarajists in these elections was that they had succeeded to a large extent in eroding the domination of bigger zamindars or Maharajas in the Provincial Council and local bodies. Up till now, the Maharajas had held their sway in these elections. They used these elections to reassert their power. But in the 1920s, the social base of the candidates in these bodies changed. Amongst the new candidates were many non-cooperators. In fact, the 1924 district board election showed that the Swarajists did well in those districts where the Non-Cooperation Movement had made a strong impact. Nationalism had stolen the support of the Maharaja's national constituency of large tenants by showing them another way of gaining rural power. The tenants saw new political definitions replacing the old ones and with a clear choice before them chose nationalism and electoral politics over traditional means of exercising power. Thus the social group that constituted the bulwark of the British was losing their position of domination. A significant shift in power had occurred in the countryside.

An attempt has also been made in this work to bring out the significance of local bodies in nationalist politics. The role of the Swarajists in the local bodies have so far not received attention from the scholars. Most of the works on Swarajists have concentrated on their role in the councils. But in Bihar, the Swarajists, as compared to their role in the council, were more successful in local bodies. Even the Bihar government in one of the reports brought out that the general political apathy after the withdrawal of Non-Cooperation Movement found a striking contrast in the influence exerted by the Congress on local bodies. The report further said that the politics of municipalities and district boards proved to be of such absorbing interest and so much more productive of immediate and tangible results that little energy or inclination was left among many political leaders for the wider aspects of Indian affairs. Local bodies played a very crucial role in furthering nationalist cause and renewal of political propaganda. Local bodies often convened and addressed political meetings, presented addresses of welcome to the non-cooperators on their visit to their districts and furnished assistance to the Swarajist candidates in election. The local bodies emerged as main promoters of constructive programme. Besides this, many of the municipalities and district boards, despite their circumscribed powers, set out to raise, however little, the quality of life of the people and through these local activities tried to widen the nationalist base. Thus, local bodies filled the political void at a time when the national movement was recouping its strength.

While one wing of the Congress, the Swarajists, were busy in the electoral politics, the other stream of the Congress retired for a quiet and sustained constructive work in villages. So far the studies on constructive programme have not sufficiently highlighted its significance and relevance to nationalist politics.

The constructive programme played a very important role in furthering nationalist activities. The programme had varied aspects-khadi, national school, enrolment of volunteers, collection of funds and social and community service. The khadi programme made the greatest impact in Bihar. Khadi was an activity that associated a wide range of people, including women and teenage boys, with nationalist politics. The membership of the khadi movement was particularly fluid: people joined for a time and then quit or moved on to other forms of political action. Some khadi workers associated their activity directly with the Indian National Congress, seeing khadi as the entrance into other forms of nationalism, while others participated in khadi production in very local terms. Khadi workers continued to expand the influence of khadi and incorporated it into various strands of politics. Khadi movement served as a training ground for political activists. Khadi *bhandars* were not merely khadi centres but played an important political role in the movement. Khadi also aided the economic emancipation of the poverty stricken village masses. However, khadi did not just have economic and political significance, it also became the central symbol of social change in villages. The local khadi centres acted as pivotal points for broader rural construction schemes-arbitration courts, relief work and untouchability campaigns. Thus, khadi emerged as an important political symbol encompassing many meanings. It represented different things to different people. In fact, a political symbol is powerful precisely because of its many meanings, which allows different people to respond to a single unified form with their own meanings but all at the same time defying authority. National schools also played a very crucial role. National educational programme was oriented to meet the social and economic needs of rural area. It was to impress upon youth the dignity

of manual work and the necessity of respect for the individual and to sensitize them to the plight of the disadvantaged classes. Thus, the importance of the establishment of national educational institutions lay in terms of the groups they affected and the ideological guidelines they propounded. These institutions indicated a public spirit rarely found in the government schools and colleges.

Fund raising was equally significant. There was a conscious effort to collect funds from all sections-rich, poor and women-so that all could be tied to the national movement. Besides, fund raising activity was linked up with the nationalist campaign. The contribution of seva samiti volunteers were also important. Social activities in this period could not be seen in isolation from political activities. There was a political aspect to the work of seva samitis. Many such workers, when the civil disobedience started, changed their tactics from quiet and unostentatious nationalist work to open anti-imperialist agitation because the times and leaders so dictated.

Works on the national movement have also not brought out the importance of Gandhi ashrams for the movement. This study brings out that Gandhi ashrams emerged as important centres of constructive programme. Gandhi ashrams were in the forefront of khadi activity and social and community service. These ashrams were also important training ground for satyagrahis. The satyagrahis played an important role in linking the politically neglected villagers with the aims of the Congress. Besides, the ashrams created a space which provided a break from the normal routine of society. There the rules of the outside world about caste relations and women's propriety and respectable occupations became blurred. Joining ashrams marked rebellion at various levels. Such ashrams emerged as centres of protest in rural areas, drawing the wrath of the conservative sections of

the village. Many women joined Gandhi ashrams and remained in the forefront of community service. Khadi ashrams also provided an alternative space for women. Joining the ashram was not only a breach of family's and societal rules, it was also a breach of the normal routine of a formal marriage and children bearing. Many women who wanted to avoid the drudgeries of married life joined the ashrams.

Constructive programme also became an important medium for bringing a large number of women into nationalist politics. Spinning khadi became the most popular activity amongst women. The nationalists particularly directed khadi message to women. There was also a strong tradition of spinning among women. This was also an activity that did not violate women's domestic role. Women could take to spinning khadi and contribute to nationalism even while being at home. Spinning also did not violate *parda*. In this activity, many women from conservative background also participated. Women's political participation via the khadi programme seemed to be an extension of their domestic role. This led to a critique that the nationalists rendered women as domestic(ated) and not political subjects because women's subjectivities were located at home, and that the action did not seem to be linked up with any corresponding leap in domestic or family relations or with a change in their life style and role outside politics. But in fact, in actual political practice, the nationalists had embarked on a far more significant enterprise-bringing women out in the public sphere to engage in strident protest, leading, ultimately to the violent erosion of the privacy of the female space. This became a galvanizing source for further politicization of women. The khadi movement brought women to the streets to picket cloth stores, burn foreign cloth, and protest against British occupation in general. As a result of this early political experience, many women continued to participate in other forms of local politics.

Many women who had joined politics on their husband's initiative also got gradually politicized. The more popular khadi movement became, the more it provided new outlets for rural women with other political agendas. Women, also, both as participants and symbols of discontent within the village social order, were critical to the definition of the khadi movement as social reform. They led marches against *parda*, encouraged village women to come out from their homes and march in public. They advocated village education schemes, organized anti-British cloth boycotts and joined in other nationalist protests. Women in the anti-*parda* movement often served as liaisons between women spinning khadi in villages and those who were willing and able to leave their homes to picket in front of British cloth stores. In that way, the anti-*parda* volunteers like teenage couriers provided an important link among villages and between villages and khadi centres. Many women in Gandhi ashrams through personal intervention provided support to young women willing to rebel against the standard definition of womanhood. Besides, women who joined Gandhi ashrams were dressed in white-the colour of widowhood-thus renouncing at least in appearance the status of marriage.

Thus this work on the Non-Cooperation Movement and the post-Non-Cooperation phase throws fresh interesting light on many facets of nationalism. The work brings forth the significance of the Non-Cooperation Movement. What remains remarkable about the Non-Cooperation Movement was the simultaneous presence in it of so many trends and forces, which went on shaping later nationalist politics. The movement posed a severe challenge to the British authority. The study highlights the mass articulation of nationalism. The work brings out that the nationalism was not only marked by a series of popular protests

but also a struggle where people in a variety of positions taking a wide range of steps contributed to the disruption of colonial hegemony and power. It brings out the linkage between the popular protest and erosion of British hegemony. It highlights that nationalism was not merely a political battle but also a cultural and ideological encounter with the British. The work also brings forth the significance of the so-called “lull period” of the national movement.