THE INTELLIGENTSIA AND THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC FORUMS AND COMMUNALISM

A detailed analysis of the vernacular politics\(^\text{536}\) of Bihar in the period between the 1870s and 1917 is still awaited. The difficulty in getting archival support and the insensitivity shown towards the preservation of old documents by the government has resulted in the destruction, and in some cases, the 'export' of literary and journalistic materials, has made this task really difficult.\(^\text{537}\) But, historians must try to analyse the significant aspects of the history of modern Bihar, with whatever material is available. The main question addressed in this chapter is how vernacular politics were developing in Bihar during the period when modern politics entered Bihar. The main concern here is to observe how the intelligentsia was addressing the questions of community, nation and caste. The term \textit{jati} was used for all these categories—caste, community and nation—at different times by different organisations. In the first section the attempts made by the Hindu organisations of both the Sanatan and Arya beliefs are discussed. In the next sections the main political organisation that got the support of the intelligentsia of Bihar, the Congress, is discussed, particularly in connection with those

\(^{536}\) By vernacular politics we mean, "a value-centred political process rooted in local culture, interpersonal relations, and community networks" (Jenny White, \textit{Islamist Mobilisation in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics} (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), p.27.

\(^{537}\) It is painful to find that all old repositories, both government and private, are left to be destroyed without preservation. Even good private collections, maintained with great difficulties by people like the Goswami family, the late Ramji Mishra 'Manohar', Mangalmurti, Karmendu Sishir and others have not been taken care of by the government. The last two people mentioned have thought it wise to send the material to American and German libraries.
activities that were concerned with the question of community. In the last section the caste associations in which the intelligentsia were active are discussed mainly to highlight that in this phase the caste (jati), national (jatiya) and dharma (jatiya dharma) loyalties were not considered contradictory. It would not be correct to make broad generalisations on the basis of such limited literary sources and selective reporting, but it can be suggested that Hindu communal ideas were not really challenged in any national discourse nor did it get diluted or weakened in various caste discourses. In fact, the process of caste associations strengthened community consciousness.

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The challenge to indigenous faiths posed by colonialism and missionary activities provoked the formation of a multitude of religious reform movements in North India.\(^538\) Throughout Northern India the desire to see the Hindu community as an organised and cohesive community was shared by a large number of people. The other religions—Christianity and Islam—posed major cultural threats to the Hindu community. Scholars have not adequately discussed the threat factor as a powerful element in the thinking of the intelligentsia. What is well documented, however, is the threat posed by the reformist movements from within the Hindu fold to Sanatan Hinduism.\(^539\) But, these researches have left out two crucial elements: firstly, the strength of Sanatan Hinduism, as was shown by its widening appeal through movements like the Cow Protection Movement, and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, its success in getting accommodated within the emerging national


space in such a way that the nation called India had to have a Hindu spirit. This is particularly interesting as both, *Sanatan dharma* in its modern *avatar* (incarnation) and nationalism were themselves in the process of evolution.

In this chapter two things are attempted:

a) An account of the activities of the Sanatan dharma organisations and individuals related to the ideology which kept Hinduness at the centre of Indian nationhood

b) An account of the activities of other socio-political forums through which we can study the mind of the emerging intelligentsia in Bihar.

To maintain a proper perspective, the struggles between the three main contestants—Sanatan Hindu, Arya Samaj (reformist Hindu/Arya) and Congress activities—are discussed. The fourth type of organisation, the caste associations, which have not been analysed ideologically so far, have been brought into the picture as a supportive space to argue that in the period of this study the intelligentsia could dwell effortlessly in the three domains of religious, national and caste spaces. This was done through the use of one category that could apply to all three categories, namely *jati*. *Jatiyata* has been used for nationality without any difficulty and the term *jati* is used for caste as well. To extend this *jati* to Hinduness or *Sanatan dharma* was linked with an ideological struggle that was started by the Hindu writers at the level of idea and articulation. The success of this programme is summed up in what Vasudha Dalmia has called ‘nationalisation of Hindu tradition’.540

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540 Here the use of the word ‘nation’ in the context of pre-modern society is somewhat problematic. But, if used in the primordial notion of nationalism it can be used.
Sanatani Response to Reformist Challenge

The emergence of new politics and new kinds of changes brought in the need to organise and mobilise popular support for issues and causes, in order that they remain significant. This created the possibility of the emergence of three kinds of organisations—religious, social and political. Earlier these three streams were not separate. For many Hindu educated people this came as a threat to their dharma.

A look at what this orthodox Sanatan Hindu section thought about the true Hindu dharma is imperative here. It is important to note that for them the Hindu dharma was essentially varnasram dharma, which accepted the caste system and various rituals associated with Sanatan dharma. It was only to the reformists, like the Arya Samajis and others, that the question of caste was crucial, as a matter that was hindering the development of Indian society. For the Sanatani intelligentsia it was modern education and secular education, which was causing all the disturbances. For the intelligentsia the three realms of social existence—religious, social and political—in that order, had been separated in recent times, and this was against Sanatan dharma. Madhav Mishra finds that a Christian could understand this separation of the social, political and religious lives, but for a Sanatan Hindu it was unthinkable. For him politics was part of dharma. What Mishra and others like him actually meant, was that politics was secondary or less significant. At another level, we also find that the Sanatan dharma sabhas were ready to leave political affairs in the hands of the benevolent British Government while the Sanatan Hindu organisations at the national level would take care of

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541 The term 'secular' was used in the most prominent and successful Sanatan organizational correspondences with the Governor General. That is why it can be used here.


543 The Sanatan sabhas invariably used the term udar (liberal) when dealing with the government. This word can be translated as liberal but the meaning the user wanted to convey was closer to 'benevolent'.

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religious and social affairs. On this issue there is a point to be taken into account. At the time when these ideas were emerging, there was a conscious effort made by the Sanatani intelligentsia to prepare an explanation of Sanatan dharma, which could be called Arya Dharma, Hindu dharma or varnashram dharma. They used these terms interchangeably. In articulating their views this facility of interchanging the terms caused some confusion. In most cases in the name of Sanatan dharma, what was sought to be projected was varnashram dharma. This is evident when we take a close look into the organisational reports and the public speeches by the leaders of the Sanatan dharma.

The efforts made by Sanatan Hindus to organise meetings and mobilise Hindus in Bihar in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have not been historically documented so far. In fact, one finds that writers tend to ignore the role of Bihar in any kind of study of mobilisation of the nineteenth century. It needs to be explained that crucial information (like the help Bharatendu Harischandra got from the Bihari people and institutions, without which he would have gone bankrupt and his books would not have reached the public as effectively as they did; or that the larger financiers of both the Congress and the Sanatan Sabhas came from Bihar) have strangely been ignored by scholars. An attempt is being made in this thesis to rectify this. It would help us in understanding and explaining the state of mind and the habits of life, which could produce and support communal ideology.

The primary objective of most religious and linguistic reform movements was to reduce internal social divisions or to remove perceived character deficiencies. Rarely did

544 The amount provided by Darbhanga Maharaj to Hindu organisations is well documented in the organisational papers, but scholars, except Sandra Freitag, seem to have ignored this. Even Kenneth Jones relied on the unpublished biography of Bharat Dharma Mahamandal Deendayalu Sharma for all his accounts of Hindu organisations and he did not find it necessary to look into the organisational papers of Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, which would have given him an idea of how crucial the role of the Bihari zamindar was in the running of this organisation.
leaders of these movements seek conflict with other religious and linguistic groups.\(^545\) This observation requires qualification in the context of Bihar. Ambikadatta Vyas, the most significant Sanatan Hindu leader, who was active in Bihar, had said in his *Avatar Mimansa*, a book written for countering the questions and reservations, etc. of the reformists, that he did not want to say anything against any other faith. But, as this account would suggest there was deep antagonism between the Sanatani Hindus and the reformist Hindus. In fact, the manner in which the entire perspective showed a systematic unawareness of the necessity of including the Muslim or even the Shudras for any national upliftment tells us a lot about their kind of Hinduness, which sought to give the agency of Hinduness primarily to the Brahmins, Rajputs and Vaishyas. The attitude of the Hindu leaders against the Muslims and the attitude of the Hindi supporters against Urdu have been dealt with elsewhere in this thesis.\(^546\)

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The Bihari people had not yet been influenced by modern ideas and movements, and the people were rooted to their Sanatani traditions. The organisations that believed in the need to save the Sanatan dharma from the reformers had taken the view that the people of Bihar did not need to be saved from the bad influences of modern reformers. This was mainly because the bad elements, the reformists, had not been able to make any real impact in this province as they had in some other parts of India.\(^547\) Still, there were attempts by the Sanatan dharma supporters to counter reformist challenge in Bihar. The Sanatan pracharak, Pandit Ambikadatta Vyas, founded many dharma sabhas in Bihar. Pandit Devnath Sharma, and others also founded many dharma sabhas. With the help of these people and others like Babu Rameshwar Prasad Sahab Mahta, a fair was organised every year at Harihar Khetra in which all


\(^{546}\) For detailed analysis see Chapter 3 of this thesis.

\(^{547}\) *Bharat Dharma Mahamandal Ki Report* (1889), p.63.
the sabhas participated. The Maharaja of Darbhanga used to preside over these festivals of the dharmasabhas (religious conventions).\textsuperscript{548} He was also the patron of Shri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, which was formed in 1887 at Hardwar by Pandit Deen Dayalu Sharma (b. 1863).\textsuperscript{549} Ambikadatta Vyas\textsuperscript{550} also attended this Hardwar dharma sabha.\textsuperscript{551} The Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal was trying to forge Hindu unity in India. Judging by its organisational reports it can be said that their activities were very effective in parts of the United Provinces and Bihar. Speaking largely from orthodox Sanatan Hindu positions, this organisation had at one point wanted to meet annually like the Congress in appropriate pilgrimage centres.\textsuperscript{552}

Before coming to the views and activities of the Sanatan dharma intelligentsia of Bihar a look into the most important and successful Sanatan organisation is necessary. Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal was founded with a view to unite all Hindus and their organisations under a national Mahamandal (organisation) around 1890. The process had begun around five years earlier. The Mahamandal’s official publication said that there are three stages of Sanatan Dharma organisational activities. Brahmins and sadhus, who were troubled first by the Brahma Samajis and then by the Arya Samajis, started it in 1885.\textsuperscript{553} The publication further said that the Mahamandal was currently in its second stage. The third stage will begin when a national organisation for the development of Hindu nationalities (jati) would come into existence.\textsuperscript{554}

\textsuperscript{548} Bharat Dharma Mahamandal Ki Report (1889), p.63.
\textsuperscript{549} Madhav Mishra, Madhav Mishra Nibandhavali, VII, pp.1,4. He wrote it in 1899.
\textsuperscript{550} Ambikadatta Vyas had written 78 books by 1897. Many more were added later. See Balmukunda Gupta Nibandhavali, p.23.
\textsuperscript{551} Balmukunda Gupta, Gupta Nibandhavali Vol I, p.21.
\textsuperscript{552} Dharma Diwakar, Samvat 1944 (1887), 3-4 Mayukh, pp.45-6.
\textsuperscript{553} In the organisational reports published in 1910 it is said “25 years ago”.
\textsuperscript{554} Sri Mahamandal ki Bahavastha, (Banaras: Shri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal Head Office, 1910), p.24.
Dharma Diwakar also informs us that Pandit Deendayalu had visited different dharma sabhas between Calcutta and Peshawar several times and had wanted to bring all of them under one banner so that “all patriotic dharma sabhas could come together for the benefit of the people of the country”. With this motive he organised the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal at Hardwar. Their organisational conventions were well attended and the annual conventions lasted for 5 days. The Dharma Sabha Mahamandal took place at Kankhal in 1889, where it lasted for 5 days during which people like Ambikadatta Vyas gave lectures. The reason why the Hindus organisations wanted to form a Hindu national organisation needs to be understood. Judging by some of the writers’ inclinations shown in their writings we get the impression that the Congress was not looked upon as an organisation that could be supported wholeheartedly. “We are not against them,” wrote Madhav Mishra, the editor of Sudarshan, “and all Hindus should contribute towards the efforts made for swaraj but they must not lose their Hindu perspective (dristikon).” The main objections to his support for organisations like the National Congress and the caste associations were that the gentlemen who dominated these organisations did not conform to varnashram dharma ideals. He was pained to see that “on the pattern of our Kayasth brothers the Brahmins and Banias have also established caste associations and have started lecturing like the gentlemen.”

What pained him was that in the Brahmin caste organisations the job of treasurer, fit for a Vaishya, was given to a Brahmin and the job of updeshak (sermon-giver), suitable for a Brahmin, was assigned to a Vaishya by Vaishya caste organisations. This was against the spirit of varnashram dharma. For all Hindus who respected varnashram dharma only those

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555 Sri Mahamandal ki Bahavastha, (Banaras: Shri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal Head Office, 1910), p.43.

556 For an insightful discussion on this see Madhav Mishra, Madhav Mishra Nibandhavali, VII, pp.8-9 in which he says that these political and social organisations cannot be supported wholly as these are guided by foreign (ujjaty) ideas and based on foreign bhav (feelings).
organisations could be considered jatiya sabha if they respected dharma and the varnashram dharma, and if Brahmins were present.557

Many Brahmin writers often tried to highlight the importance of Brahmins in any Hindu discourse. A story is narrated about the Maharaja of Darbhanga. Once he was staying with the Governor General, and on a particular day no shrotriya Brahmin was available to prepare his food. The Maharaja started cooking. When the Governor General inquired about this, he replied with pride that he might be a Maharaja but he was a Brahmin (too).558

These writings must not be taken as the personal views of a few writers. The most detailed and well-prepared report on the views and developments of Mahamandal, can be found in the book, Sri Mahamandal ki Ba!javastha, published in 1910 by the head office of the organisation. This book states clearly why the organisation was formed. It also reveals the extent of the pro-government attitude of the organisation. It mentions that after the yuga’s four phases, Satayug (1,72,800 years), Tetyayug (12,96,000 years), Dwaparyug (86,400 years) and Kaliyug (4,32,000 years), good times were coming.559 “By the grace of God the people are united under one chhatrapati rule of the British in which we have got facilities like the railways and telegraph and post offices. Our welfare is taken care of by the government. But, as the rulers are from another country and they belong to another religion we need to work for our religious

557 Madhav Mishra, ‘Hinduon ki Mahasabha’, Madhav Mishra Nibandhamala Pratham Bhag, Chaturvedi Dwarkaprasad Sharma and Jawaharlal Sharma, I vols. (Prayag: The Indian Press Limited, 1935). Khand VII, He criticizes all those organizations and their activities where Brahmins were not invited. The reason, in his view, was that they were afraid of the Brahmins. Once the Brahmins came to their meetings, the Brahmins would oppose their acts. As the common people respected the Brahmins, the duplicit of the caste leaders and their anti-religion acts would get exposed. (see pp.10-13). For his views on caste and varnashram dharma see his telling comments in ‘Brahmans par Vritba Aakraman’ (Unnecessary attacks on Brahmins) in Vol.VII, pp.37-46. In this article while refuting the charges leveled against the Brahmins that they were the real troublemakers, by someone named Gupta, he says that a Vaishya (Agarwal) cannot write such words against the Brahmins. He also wrote that the Kshatriyas and Brahmins have been very close throughout history and the Kshatriyas have sacrificed their lives for the honour of the Brahmins, so even a Kshatriya cannot attack the Brahmins in such a manner.

558 Ibid, p.233-34.

development ourselves." The report says that, "God has sent the most liberal people (jati) of the world to rule over us and be the saviour of this country. Therefore, considering that it is the order of God it is the duty of every Hindu to leave external development in the hands of the British Government and work for religious, educational, industrial and agro-commercial developments...First of all we need to develop our religion, education and society and for that we need a national organisation. We should not worry about politics and concentrate on these areas for our progress." It also answers the question of how it can be done. It says, "We can do it by our organizational power (sangashakti, panchayati shakti) which is appreciated even by European pandits. It was largely due to this shakti that we (Hindus) have survived the onslaughts of Muslim rule and could escape being vidharmi." It underlined the need to form a united Hindu popular panchayat of the national level.

Explaining the significance of the sangashakti it says that during every yug a particular type of shakti is more powerful than the other kinds. During Kaliyug, sangashakti is most powerful. Regarding their attitude towards the government the book says: "Many organisations have been formed for political development and many more will be formed. Political organisations like the Indian National Congress, the Naram Dal (moderates) and Garam Dal (extremists)...The Mahamandal is not concerned about them. This Mahamandal is only concerned about the development of Sanatan Hindus, the development of their dharma, education, society and prosperity." It quotes a sloka in which God Ram says that whoever be the king must be respected as the gods on earth. Therefore, it is the duty of all Sanatan Hindus

563 Ibid.
564 Ibid, pp.6-8.
to accept their ruler as God while doing whatever possible for the development of the religion.\footnote{Ibid, pp.13-14.}

The next significant aspect that comes through in the reports and articles is the supremacy of the Brahmins in Hindu society. It clearly states: "Brahmins are the highest of all the varnas and sanyas dharma is the highest dharma. The decline of these ordained practices has caused the decline of the Hindu Samaj." It shows relief by saying that, "even today there are people who respect Sanatan dharma rituals and the seeds of varnashram are not dead. People still assemble in great numbers at pilgrim centres. The Brahmins are the highest people of all and only good Brahmins would be given a place in this organisation. According to Sanatan Dharma from all the four varnas—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra—the Brahmins are the greatest and they are the leaders of the remaining three varnas.\footnote{These things were stated repeatedly throughout the 140-page-long book. But, for specific observations about the superiority of the Brahmins as a central point of reference for any Sanatan dharma organisation to be true to the religion see pp. 5, 15.}

Many Journals that tried to propagate the ideals of Sanatan Dharma were published. Some of the magazines were as follows: *Sanatan Dharma*, a monthly from Saharanpur,\footnote{It was published by Hasmat Hussain, Khair Khwah e Sarkar Press from 1898 onwards.} *Sanatan Dharma*, (1905),\footnote{This monthly was published from Kashi. There was another Sanatan Dharma monthly magazine published from Kashi about which details are not available.} *Sanatan Dharma Pataka*, (1897),\footnote{It was published by Arya Bhaskar Press, Moradabad and its editor was Pandit Bhawandeen.} *Sanatan Dharma Pataka* (1898),\footnote{Published by Diamond Jubilee Press, Kanpur under the editorship of Pandit Ram Swarup.} *Sanatan Dharma Pataka* (1900),\footnote{It was also edited by Ram Swarup Sharma from Moradabad.} *Sanatan Dharma Pataka* (1911),\footnote{Edited by Ram Swarup Sharma Gaur of Moradabad.} *Sanatan Dharma Prakash*,\footnote{Published from Ferozpur.} *Sanatan Dharma Pracharak*,\footnote{Published from Amritsar and edited by Ralaram.} *Sanatan Dharma Mandal* (1913).\footnote{Edited by Ram Chandra Sharma.}
The Hindu newspapers generally appreciated the work done by Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal. *Sudarshan*, in May 1900 appreciated Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal's works over the past 12 years since its inception at Hardwar. It also mentioned that the Indraprastha (Delhi) session of 1890 was very successful.

The success of Bharat Dharma Mahamandal was noticeable after Darbhanga Maharaj became its secretary in 1900. He was the chief patron of the organisation. He donated a huge sum of Rs.20,000 (twenty thousand) for the Delhi session of the Mahamandal. For the sessions at Kashi and Prayag he donated Rs.18,000. He also donated an additional sum of Rs.20,000 to the Mahamandal, besides contributing to many branches of the Mahamandal funds to help in running the organisations. Rs.100 per month, which was later increased to Rs.150, was sent for meeting the running expenses of the Mahamandal office. The zamindar of Darbhanga also gave Rs.350-400 every month for running a Sanskrit *vidyalaya* on the advice of the Mahamandal besides donating Rs.350 every month for running the Sanskrit-learning centre at Mithila.

The patron of Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal was Rameshwar Singh, the brother of Maharaj Lakshmishwar Singh of Darbhanga. According to the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal reports, there were five Arya dharma pracharini sabhas at Monghyr, Bhagalpur, Motihari and Santhwada (Chhapra) in Bihar. Apart from these there were dharma sabhas at Riysat Sursar, Bankipore, Maune Sereyya (Chhapra), Sultanganj, Benailaa, Navani (Darbhanga), Hajipur,

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576 According to Sandria Frietag before the turn of the century the Mahamandal remained loosely organised, depending on local, often ad hoc, arrangement for recruitment and implementation of its programmes. She also adds that the wealthy and influential members of the Mahamandal looked to the Maharaja of Darbhanga for substantial financial support and to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (a religiously educated member of the "new" middle classes for leadership. See Sandria Frietag, 'Sacred Symbol as Mobilizing Ideology: The North Indian Search for a "Hindu" Community,' *Studies for Comparative Study of Society and History* 22, 4 (October 1980), p.605.


578 *Bharat Dharma Mahamandal Ki Report* (1889) p.166.
Gazipur, Danapur, Chhapra, Nayagaon (Saran), Sahabganj. There were six dharma sabhas called Suniti Sancharini at Bankipur, Gaya, Monghyr, Jamalpur, Madhubani, and Arrah. There were dharma sabhas named Hari Sabha at Bankipur, Maradpur, Jamalpur, and Darbhanga. There were also Haribhaktidayini sabhas.\textsuperscript{579}

A list of dharma sabhas is also provided by Dharma Diwakar that mentions Sheikhpura Dharma Sabha (Monghyr), Bhagalpur Dharma Sabha, Darbhanga Dharma Sabha, Madhubani Dharma Sabha, Tajpur Dharma Sabha, Muzaffarpur Dharma Sangrakshini Sabha, Muzaffarpur Dharmopdeshini Sabha, Hajipur Dharma Sabha, Bakhara Dharma Sabha (Muzaffarpur), Motihari Dharma Sabha, and Motihari Suniti Sancharini Sabha as most active dharma sabhas of the state.\textsuperscript{580}

The Mahamandal also got the support of three religious peeth—Jagannath Puri, Dwaraka Puri, and Shringeri for its work for the Sanatan dharma. Two of these gave ‘aagya patra’ while one gave its sympathy for the cause.\textsuperscript{581} The organisation used all available forums, meetings and fairs to reach out to the Hindus. Even the Calcutta Congress was used for this purpose.

\textsuperscript{579} Ibid, pp.167-8.

\textsuperscript{580} Dharma Diwakar, Vol 5, no. 1, 1887. The full list is as follows : Bankipur Suniti Sancharini Sabha (Bihar branch), Bihar Bandhu Press, Muradpur, Bankipur, Patna; Bankipur Dharma Sabha, Munsidpur, Bankipur, Patna Dharma Sabha, Gaya; Suniti Sanchari.ni Sabha, Gaya Dharma Sabha, Jehanabad; Suniti Sancharini Sabha, Pathekatti thana Tetua, district Gaya; Dharma Sabha Daudnagar; Suniti Sancharini Sabha, Dumraon; Sasaram Dharma Sabha, Basnaul, district Rohtas, Bhagalpur Suniti Sancharini Sabha Bhagalpur; Monghyr Dharma Sabha, Monghyr; Suniti sancharini Sabha, Monghyr; Sheikhpura; Dharma Sabha, Darbhanga; Dharma Sanrakshini Sabha, Muzaffarpur; Dharmopdeshini Sabha, Muzaffarpur; Dharma Sabha, Bakhara, district Muzaffarpur; Dharma Sabha, Basantpur, district Muzaffarpur; Dharma Sabha, Hajipur; Dharma Sabha Chhapra; Dharma Sabha, Nayagaon, Saran; Dharma Sabha, Motihari and Suniti Sancharini Sabha, Motihari.

\textsuperscript{581} Sri Mahamandal ki Bahavastha, p.33.
If the Mahamandal claims are true there were 240 dharma sabhas in India\(^{582}\) at that time. If this gets added to the number of gaurakshini sabhas and different caste associations that were looked upon as followers by the Mahamandal\(^{583}\) it can be said that a large number of people and organisations were active in saving the Sanatan dharma by 1889. According to Mahamandal reports the Mahamandal work was done in Bihar, in Mithila, Chhotanagpur and adjacent districts in the name of Sri Janak Dharma Mandal and the provincial headquarters was the Raj Bhavan (residence) of the Maharaja himself.\(^{584}\) There were 22 representatives and 10 managers working for the Mahamandal in Bihar. Many sabhas, maths, temples, devalayas and dharmalayas got formally associated with the Dharma Mahamandal after filling up the forms of the Mahamandal for acceptance. These member organisations were sent the monthly paper of the organisation free of cost.\(^{585}\)

The Mahamandal sent a memorial to the Governor General of India on March 1910 to state that: "Hindus are naturally law abiding and loyal to the core; and most of the irreligious tendencies of the modern Hindu youth must be attributed to the present materialistic civilisation and secular education which deprive them of their ancient religious training, character and intuition." It also prayed to be allowed to "send ...trained preachers all over India to preach the Sanatan Dharma to the people and to develop their sense of duty towards God and His representative the King Emperor."\(^{586}\)

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\(^{582}\) Ibid, p.168.

\(^{583}\) Ibid, p.168.

\(^{584}\) Sri Mahamandal ki Bahyavastha, p.49.

\(^{585}\) Ibid.

The Mahamandal reports and the official versions of the different activities also show how the Mandal was eager to reach out to Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. There is perhaps no mention of Shudras in the hundreds of pages published by the organisation aiming to make it a national body of the Hindu jati. It tried to develop links with the prominent social and political leaders of the times.⁵⁸⁷

A look into the activities of these dharma sabhas and other organisations gives us some idea about the nature of these meetings and the people's involvement in the Hindu religious activities. Most of the meetings and programmes were organised in such a manner that the local elite and the general public could attend the programmes without difficulty. These activities were widely reported in different newspapers. One report says:

"The fifth annual conference of Arya Dharma Pracharini Sabha was held from 23 to 27 December. There was a programme of Narayan pujañ (the prayer of God) in the Thakurbari of Ramdhyan Dasji and Brahman bhojan (feeding the Brahmans). At 2 Ambikadatta Vyas and Shrikrishna Prasanna Sen lectured on sadachar (good conduct) and religious sect. On the second day Parivrajak lectured on ‘why God takes avatar (incarnation)?’ On the third day Shri Vyas lectured at Maharaj Hathwa’s camp and Pandit Vishshwar Prasad Awasthi lectured on ‘true love’. On the fourth day the second annual festival of Suniti Sancharini Sabha took place and Parivrajak spoke on civilization and Sanatan dharma. On the fifth day at the temple of Munshi Ram Sahay a Sadhu baba and Shri Kal Prasanna Sen beautifully lectured on ‘Shrikrishna leela’. Every day a large number of people came to listen these lectures.”⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid, p.35.
⁵⁸⁸ Saraj Saraj, January, 1889.
Mahatma Vaidehi Sharan of Sitamarhi is credited with being the main organiser of the Sanatan dharma sabhas at the fair at Sonepur. In 1901, Shivanandan Sahay had noted that for many years he had been the main organiser of these sabhas at Sonepur.\(^{589}\)

Another report says:

"This year at Harihar Kshetra's fair the religious discourse had dominated. The activists and preachers from Chhapra and Darbhanga gave lectures all around. Pandit Jagat Ram's troupe gave lectures on *go dharma* from morning till 8 'o' clock in the evening ... the third annual conference of central Bihar dharma sabha took place with fanfare. At the racecourse area there was a big preparation of Gaurakshini Sabha that was supported by Darbhanga Maharaj. The representatives from entire Bihar province had been invited. The meeting of 18 November was attended by many who came from Banaras and other places... The Maharaja of Hathua presided over the meeting in the absence of the Maharaja of Darbhanga, who could not attend, as he was unwell. The Maharaja of Hathua was elected the president of the Madhya Dharma Sabha. On this occasion, Pandit Ambika Dutt Vyas delivered a lecture.\(^{590}\)

All along the response to the criticism and propaganda from the Arya Samaj was regularly countered, and at times this reflected the mindset of the Sanatan supporters. Whenever a book or pamphlet against Arya Samaj ideals was published they were discussed in the newspapers. *Saranj Saroj* published articles in which the "fallacies" of the ideas of Arya Samaj leaders were exposed. One of the most hard-hitting books written in those days from the side of Sanatan dharma was *Dayananda Matnhed Prakash*, which was penned by Gokhul Prasad. This worked as a source book for writers who contributed to the newspapers like *Saran Saroj*. In a hard-hitting article of *Saran Saroj* a writer is particularly harsh on those who were being lured by the promises made by the Arya Samaj to raise them to a higher caste. It

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\(^{589}\) Shivanandan Sahai, *Babu Saheb Prasad Singh ki Jivani*, 1907, p.52.

\(^{590}\) *Saran Saroj*, January 1889.
concluded: "Dayanandis are advised humble not to dream of becoming Kshatriya or Brahmin and they better come and join in Sanatan dharma."\footnote{Saran Saroj, 1 January 1889.}

The paper contested the arguments which came up in Aryavarta, a supporter of Arya Samaj, by saying that in recent times the scholars like Ambikadatta Vyas, Damodar Shastri, Kishori Lal Goswami, Gokhul Nand Sharma and others have been insulted when the debate between Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharma supporters took place. It also countered charges levelled against Kishori Lal Goswami.\footnote{This episode involving serious personal charges against the Sanatan activist Kishorilal Goswami reveals the extent to which the bad blood between the Sanatanis and the Arya Sanajis at that time. Particularly embarrassing was the episode involving a prostitute which had caused expulsion of an activist from Sanatan organization. The Arya Samajis camp which had welcomed the expelled member claimed that the real reason for the expulsion was the exposure of Goswami to the expelled member. The Sanatan camp denied this allegation and said that the expulsion was due to the concerned person’s addiction to drink. See Saran Saroj, February 1889.} In those days Chaturbhuj Mishra\footnote{B. 1846; d. 1918.} wrote a book \textit{Subodh Chandrodya} in which he countered the views of Swami Dayanand.\footnote{Shivapujan Sahay (ed), \textit{Hindi Sahitya aur Bihar}, Vol. II, p.92.}

In the closing decade of nineteenth century the Sanatan supporters were unwilling to listen to reformist voices that advocated the loosening of caste bonds and the superiority of Vedic knowledge. A Sanatani writer of \textit{Saran Saroj} was pained to see that at the meeting held on 10 February 1889 in the temple of Chitragupta, the Kayasth speakers spoke while seated on the chair in the presence of Chitragupta.\footnote{Saran Saroj, March 1889.} In this paper’s next issue a challenge was thrown to anybody who could show the negation of idol worship in the Vedas with a bet of Rs.5, 000.\footnote{Saran Saroj, April 1889.} Antipathy towards the Kayasths was normal for the Brahmins and even the Kshatriyas. One Kshatriya Patrika’s editor did not hesitate in saying this in his magazine: "It is a shame upon us Kshatriyas, that a \textit{neech jati} (low caste) like the Kayasths are being appointed to high posts and
our brothers are living in misery."\(^{597}\) Another incident is also very suggestive. Madhav Mishra, \(^{598}\) a famous writer and a very active Sanatan dharma pracharak in Bihar, commented once that the Agrawals had always respected the Brahmins, while referring to a derogatory remark that had been made.

In 1890s the newspapers of Bihar shared similar views about the sacredness of caste rules. The leading newspaper report finds it strange that Annie Besant dined with Bihari and Bengali members of the Theosophical Society. It is relieved that the distinguished lady did not eat with them. The report says: "It was recorded in the English Newspapers that Annie Besant called herself a Hindu and she ate with Bihari and Bengalis members of the Theosophical Society. We doubt that she ate with them and therefore enquired about it. We came to know that she did not eat with them."\(^{599}\)

Hindi newspapers also supported the development of this kind of communal view of progress. This was not something that had developed suddenly. As early as mid 1870s Bihar Bandhu wrote that although the Muslims were comparatively few in Bihar they nevertheless possessed a good deal of power and influence; and this accounted for their being so wealthy in the province and being held in such high esteem by the government. The writer further said: "This has induced the Muslims to exert all their ability to have their letters and language introduced into the courts here, which are places of resort, possessing as they do the

\(^{597}\) Krhatrfya Patrika, first issue, 1880.

\(^{598}\) Madhav Mishra (1871-1907); an outstanding scholar and a well known Hindi writer and Sanatan dharma pracharak; originally a Gaud (Rajasthani) Brahmin, worked mainly in UP, Bihar and Calcutta; edited Sudarshan. Wrote innumerable articles in different newspapers in defence of Hindu dharma, Arya culture and on literature and other themes; a friend of Sakharam Deuskar, helped him in publication of his classic Desher Katha, a supporter of Hindi, cow protection and the national movement under Tilak; died during the plague. Viswamitra, Calcutta, wrote that he was amongst the makers of the history of Hindi.

\(^{599}\) Bihar Bandhu, January 1894, p.29.
capabilities of making one rich, are in the hands of the Muslims ... when the sovereignty of
this country was in the hands of the Muslims, it was quite proper for everyone of that creed
and nationality to be elevated and dignified but their present exalted position...must be said to
be mainly due to the folly of the Hindus, and the wisdom of the Muslims in taking advantage
of it."

It is noticeable that Sanatani organisations had been targeting reformists like the Arya
Samajis in the strongest possible manner, but they tried not to offend the
government. They
stated their anguish over the government's attitude mildly and were generally soft on the
government. One of the most prominent Sanatan dharma leaders, Madhav Mishra, believed
that: "the government protects us from external invasions and the Sanatan dharma has saved
us from internal enemies." The Bharat Dharma Mahamandal report also wrote along similar
lines in an extremely important report in which the activities of the Mahamandal are
documented. The report has an introduction that gives us an idea about the attitude of the
leadership towards the government. Even before the formation of the Mahamandal,

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600 Bihar Bandba, 8 November 1876.
602 Shri Bhagawan ne apne jyestha putra ki suraksha ke lye pritihi bhar ko jatiyo se utartam British jati ko rakshak ke roop mein
Bharatvarsha mein bhaja hain. Sutra, Iswar ke aaya par dityan dekar Hindu jati ki is samay kartarya hai ki bahya raksha ka
bhar katrajapurvav British Government ko saupkar unnati ke lye apni dharmena sambandhi aur krishi vanijya sambandhi unnati
kare, yahi sarvada hitkari hai ... Rajniti ke karyon 1 er dityan na de ... Is samay Shribhagawan ki kripa se Bharatvarsha mein
sampurna prajya ek chhatrapati samrat ke adhin hi rahi hain Is vihald desh bhar mein rail, tar, dak ghar aur rajya sashtan ki
swadha se arya prajya ko anek prakar ka samandya prapta bhi hain. Is samay Aarya prajya apne abhudyat ke artha sugamata ke sath
babut utyog kar rakhi hain. Parentu samrat aarya dharmasalambhi boste ke koran aarya prajya ko adhysthak, samajik aur dharma
sambandhi unnati ke artha utte vihishh sahayata nahi mil skati hai. Aise is Aarya prajya ka kartarya hai ki wah kuchh swam
vihishh utyog kar apni dharma sambandhi, Vidya sambandhi aur Samaj sambandhi unnati ke yato ke kare ... Uttar mein Himachal
Pradesh ke dekar dukshin mein mahabhamuda ke lat parvany aur poorva mein Brampatra ke lat se paschim mein Sindhu nadri ke
teer parvany is vihald parvitra bloomi ke ananta uthane mein ananta teertha samooch Sanatan dharmena ki maranq ghasht kar nahi
hain. Sri Mahamandal ki Bahiyavastha [The God has sent the most liberal nation (British) to save the eldest nation
(Hindus). The introduction of modern systems like railways, post offices etc have benefited the Hindus. At this
juncture we better not think of politics and try to improve our condition in other fields. In the field of religious
advancement we will have to make efforts ourselves as the ruler belongs to other religion.] Shri Bharat Dharma
603 Sri Mahamandal ki Bahiyavastha (Banaras: Shri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal Head Office, 1910), pp.2-5.
organisations that were trying to organise Hindus had been all praises for the British Government, as the saviour of the Hindus from the oppressive rule of the Muslims. In 1881 an appeal to Lord Dufferin clearly stated how the Sun of the Empire which emanated even more light than the sun in the universe, had freed them from the ‘yavanraj’s karal gaal’ (darkness of the Muslim rule). The appeal thanked the light of the lion, the British Raj because it had removed all darkness except from a few areas where improvements were yet to be made.\footnote{See the text of the appeal, which was carried by \textit{Anand Kadambini}, Nos. 6,7,8, 1881, p.17. It says: “...maharaj ne is deen dus par daya prakash ki hai, ksaun use nahi janata, wa sachte man se uska upkar nahi manata; kyonki woh nyay roop suraj jo maharaj ke rajya shahban samey mein uday bha use sachte surya se bhi adhik prakash is desh roopi akash mein faileya. \textit{Yaddhapi jabse yavanraj yamaraaj ke karatgal gras bate gras tuhya yeb bharat british singh dwara nikala gaya, anyay timir ka lesh kadachit kahin kahin rab gya.}”}

Most Hindi newspapers tried to defend the position of the Sanatani Hindu organisations, or at least tried not to support anything that could go against the Hindus. This was the case with many Hindi newspapers of Calcutta and Banaras. Religious matters were published regularly in all newspapers. \textit{Bharat Mitra} regularly published religious articles. Ambikadatta Vyas, the famous Sanatani scholar, had started \textit{Vaishnav Patrika} from Banaras, which was an organ for Sanatan propaganda.\footnote{Shripal Sharma, \textit{Hindi Patrakarita: Rashtriya Navadbothan} (Delhi: Raj Pulication House, 1978), p.99. Ambikadatta Vyas also wrote \textit{Abodinivarananam} to counter the arguments put forward by Swami Dayanand in his book \textit{Sanaskrit Vakya Prabodh}.} Even \textit{Sar Sudha Nidhi}\footnote{It was edited in 1879 by Sadanand Mishra who was a supporter of Sanatan Dharma.} carried religious articles, which supported orthodox Hindu views. In most of the articles the reformist views of Dayanand and his followers were countered. This paper was also a strong supporter of cow protection and religious scriptures were frequently reproduced in support of cow protection.\footnote{Shripal Sharma, \textit{Hindi Patrakarita: Rashtriya Navadbothan}, p.99.} Another newspaper from Calcutta \textit{Uchit Vakta}, edited by a staunch Sanatan dharma supporter, Pandit Durga prasad Mishra, also supported cow protection. One of its editorials says: “Brahma
Samaj and Arya Samaj oppose Hindus. The Government has saved us from outsider’s attack. Similarly, Sanatan Dharma Sabhas have saved us from the internal enemies.\textsuperscript{608}

Radhakrishna Das edited a magazine \textit{Dharma Pracharak} from 1884, which was published from Banaras. It was also a supporter of the Sanatan dharma. Pandit Harishankar edited a magazine \textit{Dharma Sabha} from Lucknow, which regularly published articles in favour of the Sanatan dharma and against the Arya Samaj. Gaurishankar Vaidya edited another magazine \textit{Dharma Sabha} from Farrukhabad in 1889. In 1892 a magazine, \textit{Gau Sevak}, was brought out from Prayag\textsuperscript{609}. An important paper from Calcutta, \textit{Hindi Bangawasi}, started in 1890, favoured Sanatan Dharma in a beautiful and determined manner.\textsuperscript{610}

All along the defence of Sanatan dharma or \textit{varnashram} dharma was an important theme for the writings in newspapers. A paper like Bihar Bandhu defended even the practice of child marriage. It was argued that: “young men are disturbed about the prevalence of child marriage in Hindu society. But, they must try to understand that the Aryas adopted this custom after long experiences. Young men are wrong in criticising Hindu society on this issue much like the way the Muslims criticise the Hindus about idol worship.”\textsuperscript{611}

The annual function of Sanatan Dharma Sancharini Sabha was organised with great success at the Anglo Sanskrit School of Nayatola on 4, 5 and 6 October 1901.\textsuperscript{612}

\textit{The Arya Samaj}

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\textsuperscript{608} Editorial comment, 21 May 1881, Editor Pandit Durga Prasad Mishra.

\textsuperscript{609} Shripal Sharma, \textit{Hindi Patrakarita Rashtra\textquotesingle\textquotesingle Navanubodhan} (1978), p.100.

\textsuperscript{610} Radhakrishna Das, \textit{Radhakrishna Granthavali}, 1930, p.510.

\textsuperscript{611} \textit{Bihar Bandhu}, 29 January 1885.

\textsuperscript{612} \textit{Bihar Bandhu}, 15 October 1901.
The major importance of the Arya Samaj is not to be found in its direct messages or appeals, but in its impact on Hindu discourse in general. The Sanatan opponents of the Arya Samaj had to defend their discourses against the reformist attacks, which led both groups to the organisation of Sanatan dharma in the direction of a unified system. In this process the Arya Samaj and their opponents discovered that they had a common ground in their defence of the Hindu nation. In Bihar this seems a valid statement at least as far as the issues of cow protection and the language issue was concerned. The number of Arya Samaj members was never very alarming for the Sanatan dharma supporters, but by raising issues which could disturb the social organisations of the Hindus and by consistently raising the issue of cow protection the Arya Samaj had a very significant presence in Bihar and its impact on the life of the Hindus of Bihar was felt from the very beginning.

In Bihar the Arya Samaj was first established at Danapore in April 1878. As Janakdhari Lal, Madholal and some others had lost faith in traditional Hindu worship; they established a society, called the Hindu Sabha. According to a source Madholal, Janakdhari Lal, Karman Sah and other reformers had set up in 1866 a Hindu Sat Sabha and deliberated on subjects like the nature of Hindu religion, the relevance of rites and rituals, and varna division of the society. They were opposed by the Brahmins of the locality. To their opponents these reformers were

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614 R. R. Diwakar ed, Bihar Through the Ages, p.678
615 The internal sources of the Arya Samaj tell us that Madholal, Ramnarayan, Janakdhari Lal had described how these people were seeking new paths of religion since 1864. They were dissatisfied with their religion and they met regularly, started a school and called themselves vicharpanthi. Apart from Madholal and Janakdhari Lal were Shivagulam Prasad, Thakur Prasad Shah, Baboolal, Shyamlal, Hiralal They organised the Vichar Sabha and had discussions with some Brahma Samajis like Tarak Babu, Nanddalal Gupta, Shivachandra Singh, Munshi Ganesh Prasad. See Lekhram, 'Danapur mein dharma prachar', Jeevan Charitra- Maharshi Swami Dayananda Saraswati (Delhi: Arsha Sahitya Prachar Trust, 1989), pp. 497-99.
nastiks (atheist) and dharma drohis (the enemies of their religion). This source also points out that in this locality the number of intermidary castes like Gwala (Yadav), Koeri and Kurmi were numerically strong. Swami Dayanand Saraswati came to Danapore (Patna) in November 1879 and he gave 14 lectures. The themes on which he delivered lectures were Sristi Vishay, Desonnati, Vedic Dharma, Pauranik Mat Khandan, Isai Mat Khandan, Musalmani Mat Khandan, Dharma Mein Ekta Ki Awaysakta, Ishwariya Gyan, Siksha Paddhati and Murti Pujan. These lectures generated some tensions and the Sanatan Dharma supporters found it necessary to invite Pandit Chaturbhuj of Aligarh to counter the Swami’s arguments. Judging by the details of the lectures, it can be said that the Sanatanis tried to create problems for any scholarly dialogue between the exponents of the Arya and Sanatan ideals.

In these lectures Swami Dayanand was requested not to say anything against the Muslims as this could lead to communal tension but Dayanand did not find that necessary. He said that, ‘Young men today stop me from telling the truth, but why should I hide the truth? After getting this kind of swaraj, I will not stop and I will expose the truth before the people.’ In these lectures Swami Dayanand tried to be reasonable and did not deliver lectures that could lead to confrontations between the Arya Samaj and others. But his mere presence was enough to disturb the Sanatan Dharma supporters. Going by the reports of 10 November 1879, he, in fact, tried to have a dialogue with Pandit Chaturbhuj but this led to

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616 Vibhumitra Shastri, Danapur mein Rishi Dayanand ka padarpan aur prabha, Danapur, 1978, p. 6
617 Ibid, p. 3.
618 Swami Dayanand had come to Patna, Munger and Bhagalpur in October 1872 where he had delivered a series of lectures. These lectures were not very successful except for the fact that Swamiji came into contact with some of the enlightened Brahmo Samajis of Bhagalpur who perhaps gave him the idea or inspiration to go to Calcutta. Dayanand’s journey to Calcutta from Bhagalpur (15 December 1872) brought him into contact with some important Brahmo Samaj leaders. Dayanand in fact came back to Bhagalpur in April 1873 and he delivered lectures in Patna and Chhapra between 25 May and 9 June 1873. He also went to Arrah and Dummon in July 1873. (See Lekhram, Jeevan Chorita- Maharshi Swami Dayananda Saraswati (Delhi: Arsha Sahitya Prachar Trust, 1989), pp.209-11.
some very unpleasant incidents in which stone-throwing was also involved. Swami Dayanand remained in Danapur for 20 days.

When Dayanand Saraswati came to Calcutta he was entertained by Bengali gentlemen and not by Hindi-speaking people. Keshav Chandra Sen, Devendranath Thakur, Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and some other scholars belonging to the Brahma Samaj met and attended his lectures. It is significant that mostly Bengalis attended Dayanand’s lectures. Upadhyay also says that most of the Marwari supported the Sanatan dharma sabhas while the Marwari-Hariyanavi people were with the Arya Samaj. So, this struggle was not merely a religious one, but also a social one. The protest against Swami Dayanand in Calcutta culminated in a big meeting in the senate hall of Calcutta University attended by about 300 Bengali, Marwari and Hindi-speaking rich people.

From those days to the 1920s the presence of the Arya Samaj activities had a dual role. It not only maintained and guided a Hindu Arya Samaji discourse, which informed all Hindus about the greatness of ancient Hindu history but also kept an organised force in all the important cities that were prepared to take on any communal issue or debate. In normal times, or most of the time, the Arya Samaj leaders tried to attack Sanatan dharma ideals and practices but in critical times, when there was any communal issue or communal tensions, the Arya Samaj was ready to help in Hindu solidarity. The struggles of the Arya Samaj as a reformist organisation and its role in arousing the lower castes against the orthodoxies of the Sanatan

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622 Ibid, pp. 671-2 cited *Sar Sudha Nidhi* in his support.
623 The activities of the Arya Samaj had its greatest success in 1918 when it held a huge meeting of the *chamars* at Danapur, where it was decided that *chamars* could join the Arya Samaj and should refrain from eating beef.
dharma must not be ignored.\textsuperscript{624} But as far as its role in a polarised communal situation was concerned, it was seen as a Hindu force.

When Swami Sahajananda Saraswati (a famous Arya Samaj leader) toured Bihar, his tour was reported extensively in \textit{Bihar Bandhu}.\textsuperscript{625} There were a large number of meetings and \textit{shashtrartha} between the Arya Samaj leaders and the Sanatan scholars in Bihar in the closing decade of the nineteenth century and after. It began in the days of Dayanand himself with his \textit{shashtrartha} with Durgadatta in Dumraon, with Rudradatta in Arrah, with Jagannath in Chhapra and with Jayashri in Patna.\textsuperscript{626}

Around 1910, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was active in Bihar. Satyagrahi Pandit Bhavani Dayalji preached Arya ideals without making any derogatory remarks against any religion. He wrote a book \textit{Arya Bhajan Prakash} in 1911. Ramnandan Shah of Raghunathpur printed this book in the thousands and distributed copies free of cost.\textsuperscript{627} Around 1913, in Bhagalpur, \textit{Aryavarta} tried hard to propagate the Arya Dharma. Its editor Shyamji Sharma was credited for this.\textsuperscript{628} Attempts were made in these days to approach rich Sanatan Dharma leaders for supporting Hindu cause. In a very courteous letter to the Maharaja of Darbhanga- 'Letter of Your Highness most obedient servant' Madan Mohan Malaviya wrote 'I beg to enclose...an appeal for the proposed boarding house...necessity for the Hindu youth who come to Muir

\textsuperscript{624} For an understanding of how the strong-willed Arya Samaj leaders had to face the orthodox social orders one can read an important book written by the granddaughter of Mohit Mishra, the famous Arya Samaj leader of Bihar. In this book titled \textit{Jo Jane Nahi Gaye}, the plight of Mohit Mishra's family for challenging the practice of untouchability is well documented. Also see the writings of Suresh Mishra, son of Mohit Mishra, and an important Congress leader of the Gandhian era. I met Suresh Mishra in 1992 at Purnea when he handed over some of his writings that had appeared in various magazines and papers, and in which the story of an Arya Samaj family is vividly described.

\textsuperscript{625} \textit{Bihar Bandhu}, 19 November 1885, pp.3-4.

\textsuperscript{626} Raghuvir Sharan Bansal, \textit{Arya Samaj Neta}, Delhi, p.25.

\textsuperscript{627} D. D. Singh Verma, \textit{Audumbar} (Monthly), Banaras, 1914.

\textsuperscript{628} \textit{Bhaskar} (Monthly), Merrut, 1913.
College from all parts of the North Western Provinces, Oudh and Bihar particularly if they are not to be left behind in the competition with the Muslim youth of the province."

It was popular among many Hindus and Arya Samajis in the 1920s, for Hindus to come forward to fight for the cause of the country, which was termed jatiyata (nationalism), but not to leave out the Hindu drishtikon (perspective) while participating in the national movement. One can see a very important article written by Pandit Ramgopalji Shastri of the Punjab that was published in the balidan ank (sacrifice number) of Suddhi Samachar in 1928. In this the writer says, "Hindus leaders are mistaken in accepting Muslim demands. It is wrong to assume that all Hindus are to serve the country. Those people (the Muslims) who live on this land's 'anna' and betray this land are our enemies. We do not want any Islamic nation. If we twenty-two crore Hindus stick to Hindu bahv the Muslims would have to support us. Every Hindu should contribute to the national movement but they must keep in mind the Hindu angle (perspective)." This paper regularly reported news of the Suddhis (Hindus who had converted to Islam and were readmitted into the Hindu fold after the ritual purification) from Bihar. A report on the Bihar Provincial Suddhi Sammelan's meeting is worth noticing: "On 28 January a Suddhi programme was organised, in which Muslims were converted to Hinduism. The number of people present was five thousand. The meeting was presided over by Swami


630 Suddhi Samachar (Balidan Ank), Vol. 5, Nos. 1-2, p.71. This paper gives the most direct references to the communalisation of Hindu national thinking by the mid 1920s. All kinds of anti-Muslim reports were published in this paper under a section 'Islami Samachar' which were full of reports which not only depicted Muslims in a very poor light but published reports which could alarm the Hindus regarding the motives of the Muslims. The Balidan Ank is a particularly important source which did so. An issue of Suddhi Samachar of 1928, published a report of Vishwamitra in which it was said that "Mullaon ko desh se dadhi pakar kar nikal do" as "Hindustan is the land of Hindus."
Chinmayanandaji Sanyasi and the assembled crowd was entertained by six-year-old Shyam Devi and the wrestlers of the Monghyr district.  

Despite the fact that these organisations—Sanatani and reformists like the Arya Samaj—often worked against each other, their very existence and the organisations and propaganda efforts contributed to the spread of Hindu consciousness. Hindus were becoming more conscious that they constituted members of an identifiable community. There were issues too, on which the various Hindu organisations could unite; issues which could be distinctly recognised as 'Hindu' issues.

By 1923, communal tensions had become a common thing in many parts of Bihar. The 'Suddhi movement' could not make much headway in the area but it worsened Hindu-Muslim relations. Visits by leaders like Pandit Ayodhya Prasad of Calcutta to Shahabad (twice) in May 1923 and Swami Shraddhananda to Arrah, Patna and Bhagalpur, led to the creation of an environment of suspicion between Hindus and Muslims. This mutual suspicion led to the formation of anti-Sangathan-Suddhi organisations and secret Islamic societies. In February 1924, the first provincial Hindu Conference was held at Darbhanga. On the same occasion, the Bihar Provincial Go Sammelan was also held. The Shankaracharya was made the president of both the conferences.

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Hindu Sabha and its Activities in Bihar

In the post non-cooperation days the Hindu Sabha activities began with the objective of organising Hindus for their self-defence. A number of meetings were held which leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya attended. In Bihar this movement generated some hope among the Hindu leaders who wished to see a Hindu political organisation. The meetings attracted large crowds and it was hoped that in the coming days the Hindu political voice would get stronger. Differences of perceptions on castes, child marriage and female education made the task of the Hindu Sabha workers difficult, and in the absence of a well-knit organisational set-up, backed by sound financial assistance, the local branches of the sabha depended largely on a few committed Hindu workers. So we find that when their conferences were held, they were attended by a large number of people, but once the conferences were over, the local sabhas did very little work. At all the conferences of 1922, 1924 and 1928, the Hindu Sabha got considerable popular support. Their leaders remained popular and their meetings were well attended and well organised. The Searchlight gives detailed reports of the meetings and speeches by Hindu leaders.

At the Gaya session of the Hindu Sabha a resolution reminded the Hindus of their religious obligation to ban cow slaughter and called upon them not to sell cows to people likely to send them for slaughter and to discard, as far as possible, the use of leather articles. It seems likely that the success of the Gaya session gave Hindu Sabha leaders the confidence to expand the organisation to different parts of India. Pandit Madan Malaviya was serious about it and

634 Details of these debates can be seen in Sanatan Dharma Patavka, 1924, No. 1, p.33; 1925, No. 2, pp.27-34, No. 9, pp.7-14, No. 11, pp.49-54; 1926, No. 2, pp.8-10, 14-18, No. 5, p.59, No. 6, pp.29-30, 37. For official reportings see Home Department (Political) Fortnightly Report of August I & II 1923. Also see The Searchlight, 8, 12 August 1923.

635 See the reports on the Shankaracharya's trips to raise funds for the Hindu Sabha in The Searchlight, 22 February 1924; For details of trips to B. S. Moonje to raise funds, see Jagat Narayan Lal, Autobiographical Notes (in Hindi), Note book No. A-13, pp. 69-76.
when he visited Lahore he conferred with the local Hindu leaders regarding the organisation of Hindu Sabhas throughout India. He was reported to be ‘preparing a programme of work to be carried out for a strong organisation of the Hindu community’. The next Hindu Sabha was held at Banaras with ambitious projects, where for the first time, the Sabha developed the character of an all-India organisation. Hindus all over the country seemed to have been sufficiently aroused. But differences over issues like untouchability created disharmony and this conference could not bring the Hindus together.

The biggest obstacle in the path of Hindu organisational unity at this stage was the conflict between the traditional orthodox Sanatanis and reformists like the Arya Samajis. Hardcore Sanatanis were so hostile to any change in their rituals and social practices that they were more critical of the Arya Samajis than of the Muslims. When they discovered that the Hindu Sabha was also supporting some reformist demands they became very critical of the Sabha as well. The debate over the status of untouchables must have disheartened Hindu Sabha leaders.

They wished to see the untouchables and lower castes of Bihar coming to their meetings whereas for the Sanatan dharma supporters it was anti-religion. The organ of Sanatan dharma supporters had consistently opposed the reformist inclination of the Hindu leaders. As they saw in the activities of Hindu Sabha shades of the Arya Samaj they described the Hindu Sabha as ‘virtually Arya Sabha’. The main objections of the Sanatan supporters were that the Hindu Sabha did not respect the varnashram dharma, the backbone of the Hindu religion. For Sanatan dharma leaders the battle lines were very clear. They considered Congress leaders, including Gandhi, as people who were bent on weakening the solidarity of the Hindu Samaj by

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636 For an article of *Sanatan Dharma Pataka* see its issue of 1926, No 2, pp.27-34.
weakening the social organisation of Hindu society. They also condemned Madan Mohan Malaviya for his inclination to be open to both sides, Gandhi and Darbhanga Maharaj.

To be able to make a compromise between these two was for them an attempt to make the North Pole meet the South Pole. In a write-up that sums up the approach of the Sanatan dharma supporters we find these words: “Some cynical reformists have made Malaviya agreeable to some anti-religion proposals. First the Arya Samajis have organised a party by provoking the Christians and the untouchables. Now, the Hindu Sabhaites are out to create permanent tension between the Sanatanis and the untouchables by raising some unavoidable issues.”

The differences between the approaches of the Sanatanis and the Hindu Sabhaites are clearer in the shashtrarlha (discourses) held at Chhapra between Babu Chandrika Prasad of the Hindu Sabha and Pandit Kaluram Shastri of the Sanatan Dharma.

The lack of financial backing had always been a problem for Hindu Sabha workers in Bihar. To meet expenses attempts—unsuccessful as they turned out—were made in 1924 to use the property of the maths (Hindu monasteries) for organisational work. Jagat Narayan Lal tried his best to obtain permission, but for several reasons he did not get support from any quarter. He mentioned that Madan Mohan Malaviya was a ‘moderate’ and that Rajendra Prasad and other Congress leaders were not seriously interested. Since most of the owners of the

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637 Ibid, p.29.
638 Ibid, p.31.
639 See Sanatan Dharma Pataka, 1926, No. 9, pp 7-14. This debate clearly demonstrates how any type of mixing with the untouchables was unacceptable to the Sanatanis, whereas the Hindu Sabha had been advocating the inclusion of Dom-Mehtars into the fold of Hindu jati for the solidarity of Hindus. Kaluram Shastri quotes ancient Hindu texts to say this: “Brahmanotes ke sath Shudra ke sansarg se jo sanatan boli hai uska nam chandol bai. Wah lohe ke aur sheetha ke zewar pahine, gale mein baddhi bandbe, kankh mein peti rukhe din ke poorvardha mein nagar ka mal (pakhana) sof kar de uitarartha mein phir nagar mein na jaye ye ikatthe hokar nagar ke baabar rahin. Aisa na kartein to dandameya bain.” (p.8) He also quotes from Purashar Smriti, in which it is said: “Yadi chandal ka darshan bo jaye to Surya ka avalokan karo aur yadi chandal ka sparsha ho jawe to pahire hue vastron ko dhawo aur man karo. Yeh dharma shashtra ki aagya hai.” (p.8) When countered strongly by Babu Chandrika Prasad who quoted ancient texts in support of receiving water and food from the homes of Shudras, Pandit says: “Aap itna bhi nahiye jante ki shudron ke sath Hindu jati ko kya vyawahar hai. Sat shudra, sati shudra, anyuj, chandal, swapach shudron mein paanch bhed bain. Shastrarain paanch ka sath prithak prithak vyawhar hai. Hum sat shudron ka pani bhi peete bain aur unkha anna bhi le sake kain, wohon shudron ka vivid nabia hai kewal chandal aur swampachon ka hai.” (p.10). For some more examples see Chapters 3& 8.
moths were Bhumihars, Sir Ganesh Dutt Singh, an influential Bhumihar, was also approached by Lal to coax the rich moth owners into helping the Hindu Sabha. However, Lal failed to get any help from Dutt.640

The inadequacy of funds led to concessions on the part of Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai, to those people who could be helpful in mobilising financial support. This proved disastrous for the Sabha. Jagat Narayan Lal notes that in 1926 Rs.15,000 was needed for a provincial conference of the Hindu Sabha, which he could only arrange with great difficulty. He ascribes the success of the conference largely to his own efforts and influence. He also considered his achievements as an organiser as by far the best among the Sabha leaders and believed that he would be unanimously elected as the secretary of the Bihar Provincial Hindu Sabha. But he was shocked to find that his name was ignored and the post went to a Marwari from Calcutta. Anguished, Lal later learned that the Birla brothers wanted to see a Marwari as the secretary. Malaviya, who had received money from the Birlas, could not go against their wishes and thus, ignored his name. Deeply hurt, Lal asked Malaviya what he should do for his financial needs (he was dependent on the salary of the organisation). Malaviya suggested that he restart his law practice, which Lal had given up five years ago during the non-cooperation days. After this incident, Jagat Narayan Lal did not devote his full attention to organisational work.641

The Hindu Sabha, however, organised several conferences in Bihar. Among the important ones organised by the Bihar Hindu Sabha was a special session held at Sonepur fair.

641 Jagat Narayan Lal mentions that the Birla brothers donated Rs.5,000-7,000 per month to Malaviyaji (for Hindu organisational work), to Lala Lajpat Rai (for the upliftment of the untouchables) and to Swami Shradhananda (till he was alive) Ibid, pp.46–52.
under the Presidentship of Swami Dayanandji of Kashi and at Muzaffarpur under the Presidentship of Lala Lajpat Rai. Lalaji’s main plea was for the organisation and internal reform of Hinduism. Rajendra Prasad also attended this meeting and appealed for men and money to combat the activities of the Christian missions in Chhotanagpur. Dr Moonje, the President of the All India Hindu Sabha presided over several meetings at Gaya in April 1927. In the second half of June, he was on a national tour during which visited Darbhanga and other places in Bihar to mobilise support for ‘Sangathan’ and ‘Suddhi’.

Intelligentsia and Their Socio-political Forums

A. Caste Organisations

Commenting on the public life of Patna in 1875-76, the Commissioner of Patna wrote: “In the city of Patna there existed throughout the year several societies which have for their object the encouragement of learning. Very excellent addresses, both in English and vernacular languages, are delivered at their meetings on education and other social subjects. There is every disposition on the part of these societies to develop into something practical and useful for the good of the province. It seems to me that they are far more eager to take irritative action for the good of their respective caste men than we give them credit for.”

The late nineteenth century witnessed some significant social changes as the lower and intermediary castes were becoming organised and thereby powerful. This assertion of the lower and intermediary castes was seen as a threat to the position of the upper castes in society. Nagendra Nath Gupta’s popular novel written in Bengali and translated into Hindi by

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642 The Searchlight, 23 November 1924.
Pratap Narayan Mishra notes the changes over time. Referring to the days of the 1857 revolt the writer says: "The title of babu was not so cheap in those days, unlike today when even Koeri-Chamars are becoming babus by wearing white (clean) clothes." In the same novel the villain of the story, Ramsharan, is demonised from the outset and is guilty of all types of wrongdoings. The writer says: "If somebody asked him about his caste he would say it was Ayodhyavasi Kayasth. People wondered whether this caste ever existed at all. Everybody, however, knew very well that his father, Ravani, was a kahar who used to carry palanquins. This Ramsharan was formerly called Ramsharan Ram. It is only recently that it was changed to Lala Ramsharan... The Rajputs did not entertain him as he was a low caste man." There are many other literary evidences that suggest the upward mobility of the lower castes in Bihar.

The introduction of modern education had helped in the creation of a sizable section of educated people coming from the lower and intermediary castes. Judging by the government records we get the impression that government officials were conscious of this change. In Murshidabad district, adjacent to Bihar, the changes were perceived by Adam in this way:

"The time is not distant when it would have been considered contrary to all the maxims of the Hindu civilization that individuals of the Malo, Chandal, Kahar, Jalia, Lahari, Bagdi, Dhoba and Muchi castes should learn to read, write and keep accounts; and if some aged and venerable Brahmin who has passed his life removed from European contamination were told that these low castes are now raising their aspirations so high, he would deplore it as one of the many proofs of the gross and increasing degeneracy of the age. The encroachment of these castes on the outskirts of learning is a spontaneous movement in native society, the effect of a strong foreign rule unshackled by native usages and prejudices, and protecting all the enjoyment of equal rights."  

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646 Ibid, p.18.
K. K. Verma says: "The first attempt to construct Kurmi Mythology was made in 1895 by Ganesh Swami Sadhu in his work Kurmi Vansawali."\textsuperscript{648} Kurmi Kshtriya Darpan (1910), Chatra Kul Darshan (1912) by Devi Prasad Singh, Kurmi Kshtriya Nirnai (1924) by Dip Narayan Singh and Kurmi Kshtriya Itihas (1936) by Shiv Prasad Singh were some of the others.

Though the motive-force of caste organisations was a challenge to the upper caste landlords, the sabhas also had strong links with the Cow Protection Movement, which was seen as a means of raising their ritual status.\textsuperscript{649}

\textbf{B. The Congress}

We know little about the nature of support that the Congress enjoyed in a state like Bihar. We have evidence to indicate that the Congress had a fair financial backing of a powerful Bihari landlord, Lakshmishwar Singh. He is said to have contributed Rs.2,500 towards the expense of the second annual Congress meeting held in Calcutta where the total expenditure was around Rs.16,000. The biographer of Lakshmeshwar Singh claims that Singh had contributed substantially towards the Congress fund through A. O. Hume. But, apart from him only a few names have been discussed in the accounts of the Congress activities between 1885 and 1900. Some of the people who were active in the early Congress have already been discussed in Chapter 1. Here the nature of the support to the Congress is discussed.

One notices that the Congress was consistently criticised as a Bengali Hindu organisation by the powerful sections of the Muslim intelligentsia of Bihar. An important Urdu magazine of Patna Al-Punch consistently wrote articles and published reports and even literary pieces, which tried to see the Congress in a poor light. None is more suggestive than a poem published in


\textsuperscript{649} Vinita Damodaran, \textit{Broken Promises} (Delhi: OUP, 1992), p.46.
January 1887 titled *San Chhijasi Ka Lacheha Chitha*.\(^{650}\) In a letter to the editor of *Al-Punch* the National Congress was seen as the institution of the Hindus. The writer also claimed that, “all supporters and well wishers of our community have been opposed to the Congress.”\(^{651}\) The disgust for the organisation was so complete that the Congress meeting was seen as a mere tamasha and a report says, “Is it a congress or the plague in another form? Chairs vanished,

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\(^{650}\) “Chand Bangalion ne hoke khafa,
National League ke dali hai bena
Hinduon ne bhi thami wahi League,
Hagyeh Josh ke saath usmai sharik
Abhi usth League main bara tha kharosh,
Ek jalsa bha tha purjosh…
Yekhtalefat se jo bo ranjoor,
Wab government ko karde majboor…
Ume do ek Musalman bhi the,
Apane agyar ke mehman bhi the.
Barna kya gair Musalman ko,
Aite jalon se jo begana ho…
Chetan matalab se yah kab khali hai,
Aria boshiyar yah Bengali hai.
Isate meri government achachi,
Wahi jo chabe karb bus wahi.
Jo Musalman ke hoga boshiyar,
Wash sharik izme na hoga jimbar.”

(Some disgruntled Bengalis have laid the foundation of the National League. Hindus have also given their support, and joined the League with enthusiasm. There was enthusiasm in the League recently, and an enthusiastic convention has been held, of which the objective was rather attainable; and of which the possibility of success, I know is bleak. Those who suffer from internal differences (how can) they force the government …There are some Muslims in it too, who were the guests of the ‘antagonists’, otherwise what interest have the Muslims with such conventions of the ‘antagonists’…This move is not without an ulterior purpose. Beware, these Bengalis are very crafty. Our government is far better than this; let it work as it pleases. A Muslim who has proper understanding, will never associate with it.) Both the original in Roman script and the translation is cited in Jata Shankar Jha, *Aspects of the History of Modern Bihar* (Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1988), pp.12-14.

\(^{651}\) *Al-Punch*, 12 December 1887, cited in Report on Native Papers for week ending 17 December 1887.
cots vanished, all passed into the services of the delegates. If the congress is held a few times more then Alambagh will turn into a wasteland."

A complete contrast is evident in the papers and literary writings of the Hindi intelligentsia where the Congress was seen as just the kind of national organisation that could transform Indian society and emerge as the organisation under which people could rally together as a nation. This crucial aspect, of why the Congress could be seen as a national organisation almost throughout the Hindi-speaking regions from the outset, needs some attention.

Radha Charan Goswami wrote an article in February, 1889, 'National Congress Ki Jai' in which he says the work done by the Congress in the last six years and the various movements lead by it in India and England can be seen as evidence by every knowledgeable man, that if India's political fortunes are to change it will do so through this organisation only. When Bangavasi criticised the Congress from Hindu points of view Bharatendu criticised Bangavasi for being critical of the Congress. Ridiculing the orthodox points of view, the paper said that if Bangavasi was really a Sanatan Hindu supporter and a believer in the Sanatan Hindu ideals then it should stop organising meetings along the pattern of the British, as this would be mlacbchabhar."

On this point, however, there is need for some qualification. There were some Hindi writings that welcomed the National Congress without diluting their Hinduness, which was defined in strict varnashram terms. The view expressed by Sudarshan in 1900 is the view held by many Sanatan Hindus throughout the period 1885-1900. "In India due to the efforts of many well wishers of this country a national congress has come into existence to deal with

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652 For some more examples of these types of reportings see Jata Shankar Jha, Aspects of the History of Modern Bihar, pp.12-20.

653 Bharatendu, No.2, 1 February 1891.
political issues. We are not against them although we do not support everything it does. Although this is called and considered a national organisation this is based and run on anti-national norms and rules. In India treating political, religious and social issues separately is a new thing. Here these three have always been looked upon as united. All those who believe in \textit{varnasram dharma} must treat any organisation as national only if the organisation ensures respect for religion, \textit{varnasram dharma} and the presence of Brahmins.\cite{654} It was sure that this new compartmentalisation of politics, religion and social issues were the result of the British rule. The paper found no contradictions between religion and politics.\cite{655}

These perceptions of politics, religion and society had not been confined to only Sanatani Hindu activists and writers. We find a somewhat similar kind of reasoning in the writings and activities of some of the nationalist leaders and writers. At least, the situations were analysed in community terms and the “Hindus’ side” and “Muslims’ attitude” were alluded to without any difficulty. This can be obvious when we look into the news of “Muslim atrocities” in Malabar started reaching Bihar.

Even those Hindu leaders who had not given much importance to Hindu political interests earlier seemed to have started thinking on these lines after these incidents. Rajendra Prasad wrote in his autobiography that due to these riots (in which Hindus were attacked, killed and forcibly converted) Hindus all over the country were deeply stirred.\cite{656} Shiva Kant Mishra, a Congress leader, also believed that the Muslims had changed their behaviour after the Khilafat Movement and things changed after that in a major way.\cite{657} In a way the Congress leaders of Bihar saw the post-Khilafat riots of Multan and Malabar as the point from which

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Sudarshan}, June 1900
\item \textit{Ibid.}
\item Rajendra Prasad, \textit{Aatmakatha}, 1965, p 212.
\item Interview with him in 1992.
\end{itemize}
Hindu-Muslim relations deteriorated in the region. This argument justified the activities of communal Hindu organisations in Bihar. In fact, a careful perusal of the writings and speeches of Congress leaders suggest that they were trying to conceptualise the rise of Hindu organisations and their communal mobilisation under the programmes ‘Suddhi’ and ‘Sangathan’, largely as a reaction to these developments.658

This view can be challenged by the fact that in Bihar there had been attempts at work, much before the news of these riots reached the region, to mobilise Hindu support along communal lines. Jagat Narayan Lal, the most important leader of the Hindu Mahasabha from Bihar, mentions in his autobiographical notes how Srinarayan Badheji, famous Hindu Mahasabha leader, was trying to stop cow slaughter at the Sonepur fair. Badheji had launched a Satyagraha with the assistance of Congress leaders like Pandit Bharat Mishra of Chhapra and others. He repeatedly tried to persuade Jagat Narayan Lal to join him in his campaign. He requested Lal to make arrangements for welcoming the Shankaracharya of Shardapith who was elected the President of the Akhil Bhartiya Go Seva Mahamandal Conference of November 1922.659

With the Shankaracharya’s arrival at Patna on 1 November 1922, a new phase of Hindu communal propaganda began in Bihar. The Shankaracharya told Jagat Narayan Lal that he felt the need for a Hindu organisation and that was the reason he had changed the constitution of the Hindu Sabha, to make it more popular, when he was elected as its president. The Shankaracharya wanted an all-India conference of the Hindu Sabha to be organised and a new executive to be elected. It was decided to hold the Gaya Conference of

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658 Rajendra Prasad says in his Aatmakatha, which was his autobiography written in Hindi and published before the English translation, ‘Koi bhi karya apni protikarya ke bina nahi rahii. Kattarpan Hinduon mein bhi aane laga’,[ any action invites a reaction. (As a result of Muslim fanaticism in Malabar) fanaticism started gaining ground among Hindus also.] (New Delhi: Sasta Sahitya Mandal, 1965), p.212.

the Hindu Sabha in December. The Shankaracharya’s association with the Cow Protection Movement in Bihar proved vital. Gobardhan Ashram was established with his blessings. Pandit Badheji performed the foundation ceremony. On 4 and 5 November 1922, the Bharat Go Parishad was held at Sonepur and the Akhil Bhartiya Go Seva Mahamandal was formed. The Shankaracharya presided over the meetings, where a provincial organising board of the All-India Hindu Sabha was formed.660

Meanwhile attempts were made to stop all cow slaughter and sale of cows to the commissariat department. A report mentions that, “a large number of volunteers and helpers will attend the fair to assist in obtaining this object, will do so under the guise of membership of the Seva Samitis, an organisation which has apparently been captured by the non-cooperators. This proved effective as ‘there was no slaughter of cattle at the fair.’” 661

Cow sacrifice could not be stopped by these attempts. In fact, if official versions are to be believed, it increased. An official reported that in 1922 a large number of cows were sacrificed and it was more than the number in 1921 in many districts on Bakrid-Id. In Munger, where the increase was marked,” the Muslims feared that further abstention from cow sacrifice …might arouse the presumption that they had abandoned their rights’. 662

Thus, while Turkish victories were being celebrated, Hindu organisations were trying to mobilise the Hindus in favour of cow protection. The proximity of these Hindu programmes to the Congress cannot be ignored. It can be said that nationalist organisations and leaders did not find anything wrong with these Hindu programmes and the Hindu organisations used this benevolence with maximum effect. It is significant that while a ‘turning point’, to use Srikrishna Sinha’s phrase, was being reached in Indian nationalist politics, Vedic

660The Searchlight, 8 November 1922.
661Fortnightly Report, October II, 1922.
662Fortnightly Report, August II, 1922.
*dharma prachar* (or the spread of Vedic religious beliefs) was to begin at the Arya Sabha camp opposite the Congress pandal from 20 December 1922 to 5 January 1923. Newspapers sympathetic to the Congress, reported on the programmes, which were as follows:

Bihar Provincial Vaidya Sammelan on 24 and 25 December 1922.

All India Sadhu Sammelan on 24 and 25 December.

All India Aryan Conference on 26, 27 and 28 December.

Cow Parishad on 28 December.

Lectures, songs and various physical feats on 29 December night.

Arya Ladies Conference on 30 December from 12 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Meeting of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha on 31 December.

Arya Learned Men’s Association on 1 January 1923.

The Gurukul Sabha on 1 January 1923. 663

In the 1920s it was a common sight to see a Congress leader participating in the activities of Hindu organisations. At a time when the cow slaughter issue was very sensitive and even government records suggested a build-up of communal tensions in different parts of Bihar, the amity between the Hindu organisations and the Congress is an important aspect on the construction of the ‘Indian tradition’.

At the Gaya Conference of the Hindu Sabha, Rajendra Prasad was the chairman of the reception committee. One can agree with Rajendra Prasad that at that time neither was the Hindu Mahasabha an organised body nor was its policy necessarily anti-Congress, so there was ‘nothing wrong’ in his accepting the chairmanship of the reception committee of the Sabha. But, his speech certainly gives us an impression of the importance of the cow issue for even a leader of his stature. He also appears to have firmly believed in the necessity of a Hindu

663 The Searchlight, 24 December 1922.
organisation at that time. He observed in his autobiography: "...it was essential for the members of the Hindu race to have a living, virile organisation that could find out their needs...such organisation...essential for bringing about Hindu rights whenever they were assailed. There was the question of the cow. Every Hindu was united in this reverence for the cow and the cow question was one, which the Hindu Sabha could take up in cooperation with other communities. In India the problem of the cow was one which the Hindus could never let rest till it was satisfactorily settled."

Rajendra Prasad and Srikrishna Sinha were on the executive committee of the Hindu Sabha at least till 1926. Thereafter also they remained sympathetic to the organisations that was attempting to forge unity among the Hindus as a necessary step to strengthen the chances of a prosperous India. The third important leader of Bihar Anugraha Narayan Sinha had also been ideologically pro-Hindu.

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664 *The Searchlight*, 31 December 1922. Also see Jagat Narayan Lal, Autobiographical Notes.


666 This may sound like a very sweeping statement but going by the assessment he had made of the complex situation in the 1946 riots in Bihar in his accounts, one can say that deep within him he also had a feeling that the Muslims were organised communally and the Hindus would have to be united to face them. Although he never took sides as a minister and as an administrator, his close associates and Congress workers took him as a person who was pro-Hindu. See Jagat Narayan Lal, Autobiographical Notes; A. K. Verma, *Political Biography of A. N. Sinha,* (M Phil dissertation, Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, J N U, 1993). Also see Anugrah Narayan Sinha, *Mere Sansmaran* (Patna: Kusum Prakashan, 1961).