Chapter 7

COW PROTECTION

"Hinduism was emerging as a major source of political identification in north India through the activities of linguistic reformers, cow protectors, and Sanatan dharma sabhas."\(^667\) In the previous chapter the activities of linguistic reformers and Sanatan dharma sabhas have already been discussed. In this chapter the issue of cow protection and the intelligentsia's association with this will be discussed.

This chapter is divided into three parts. In the first section the account of the process that made the cow a sacred symbol for Bihar is discussed, focusing primarily on the activities and writings of the intelligentsia. In the second section the role of the intelligentsia during the active and agitational phase is narrated which comes through in their writings and the reporting that appeared in the contemporary newspapers. The third section deals with the legacy of this Cow Protection Movement. In this section an attempt is made to analyse how this issue remained a site for communal conflict in the coming years and how the intelligentsia consistently kept it alive in the social and cultural memory of the Hindu literate world.

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There are three interpretations for the riots of 1893 that took more than 100 lives and affected Hindu-Muslim relations in Bihar, the North Western Provinces, Oudh, Bombay, Madras and some other regions. One view was that various Hindu orthodox and reformist organisations such as the Sanatan Dharma and the Arya Samaj were responsible for the outbreak of these riots. The second view was that the Indian National Congress was recruiting

in the regions to generate popular support. The third view was that the upwardly mobile trading castes, especially the Marwaris, who having reaped the benefits of Pax Britannica, were now bankrolling the cause of Hindu orthodoxy to enhance their social prestige. According to Anthony McDonnell, the then Governor General of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, wrote to the Commissioner of Patna Division in November 1893: “There could be no doubt that the Marwaris were the supporters and fomenters of the agitation.”

The cow protection riots mark the only time between the 1857 Mutiny and the Kisan Sabha activities of 1920s that important mobilising and ideological connections were forged between the city and the countryside. For the ideological connections the role of the Intelligentsia cannot be denied. Gyan Pandey sees the initiative for the establishment of gaurakshini sabhas in very many cases in petit bourgeois elements that drifted from country to

668 The 1893 riots have been a well-attested area of historical research. Relying mostly on the same archival sources, the most important being the Public and Judicial Papers, L/P &J/6/367 No. 257 of 1894, scholars such as McLane, Anand Yang, Sandria Frietag and Gyan Pandey have detailed these riots. Taking the view of the long roots of the communal conflict McLane says that it had its beginning in the early nineteenth century efforts of the orthodox Hindus to develop a ‘community’ identity in the face of the growing reformist movements among the Hindus. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the competition between the elites of the Hindus and the Muslims led to the process of “communalisation of culture and politics.” (See John R. McLane, Indian Nationalism and the Early Indian National Congress (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.) Anand Yang finds the local networks very important for the riots in Saran district and says: “The issue of the cow touched the religious sensibilities of many Hindus deeply, because it centred on their fundamental symbol as well as their ‘sense of place.’” (See, Anand A. Yang, ‘Sacred Symbol and Sacred Space in Rural India: Community Mobilisation in the Anti-Cow Killing Riots of 1893’, Comparative Studies in Society and History Vol. 22, No. 4, October 1980). Sandria Frietag believes that the communal riots in northern India were an urban phenomenon, except for the ones in 1893, which affected the rural areas. These riots mark the only time between the Mutiny of 1857 and the Kisan Sabha activities of the 1920s that important mobilising and ideological connections were forged between the city and the countryside. Gyan Pandey has found continuities in the riots of 1893 and the riots of 1910 to suggest that the penetration of cow slaughter became a major object of the Ahirs as they advanced their bid for a higher social status. This particular aspect of their movement soon gained far wider support, especially among the Marwaris, Rajputs, Brahmans, Bhumihars and Kayasths. In his analysis the upwardly mobile social groups’ participation makes these riots much more than merely a Hindu Muslim sectarian riots. (Gyan Pandey, ‘Rallying Round the Cow’, in Subaltern Studies, Vol. II, Ranajit Guha (New Delhi: OUP), 1983). Peter Robb’s study of the riots of Bihar in 1917 has somewhat similar viewpoints. (Peter Robb, ‘Officials and Non-Officials as Leaders in Popular Agitations Shahabad 1917 and Other Conspiracies’, in Leadership in South Asia, B. N. Pandey (New Delhi: 1977).

669 Cited in Gyan Pandey, ‘Rallying Round the Cow’, p.96.

670 In 1893 more than 100 people were killed in communal riots related to cow slaughter in Bombay city, Junagarh state, the North Western Provinces and Oudh, Bihar and Rangoon.

town and back again: teachers, lawyers, clerks, officials.\textsuperscript{672} As the movement had been gaining ground for some time and its impact lasted beyond the years of the active mobilisational years of the Cow Protection Movement there is a need to see how the intelligentsia perceived this issue between the 1870s and 1920s, the period of our study.

In the literature of the Cow Protection Movement there is hardly any study to analyse the Hindi intelligentsia, the most vocal and consistent supporter of the movement, almost throughout the period of the present study. We have huge amounts of literary evidences to testify that the issue of the cow had been one of the two most important concerns for the intelligentsia, apart from the issue of the progress of jatiyata (national consciousness). We will see, in this chapter, how writers viewed this issue from a perspective that had a role to play in widening the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims. We can also observe how these writers saw, in the Cow Protection Movement, the welfare of the country, and further, that for most of them this was not their community issue but a national issue. Some British officials concluded from the riots that nationalists were starting to mobilise the lower classes for political purposes. The Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, said that the Cow Protection Movement was transforming the Indian National Congress from "a foolish debating society into a real political power, backed by the most dangerous elements in native society."\textsuperscript{673} If we add the intelligentsia's view of cow protection to that of the views of popular leaders like Rajendra Prasad and even Mahatma Gandhi, we should be conscious of the significance of the cow as a sacred symbol in the nationalism discourse.\textsuperscript{674}

\textsuperscript{672} Gyan Pandey, 'Rallying Round the Cow', in \textit{Subaltern Studies} Vol. II, Ranajit Guha (New Delhi: OUP, 1983), p.96. He also says that "strengthening their effort, often goading them into action was a motley crew of swamis, sanyasis and fakirs."


\textsuperscript{674} The views of Gandhi and Prasad will be discussed later in this chapter.
What made the Cow Protection Movement more than a mere religious movement was the participation of a large number of the lower caste agriculturalists in this movement. For many of these participants, it was an opportunity to improve their ritual status. "Extended participation of the lower and middle castes in the gaurakshini sabhas was used as a vehicle for upward social mobility." 675

William Pinch has also underlined the links between the Goala Movement for Kshatriyahood and the Cow Protection Movement, as this numerically powerful caste had seen in cow protection an opportunity to improve their ritual status and to use the Cow Protection Movement as a vehicle for upward social mobility. 676 Historians have found links between these two and Pinch has cited evidence, which hardly leaves any doubt that this movement had the support of the intermediary castes like the Ahir (Goala). Of the twelve cases of forcible seizure of cattle reported in the first five months of 1893 (the year in which the Cow Protection Movement was at its most intense phase) in Gaya district, six cited the Goalas as the offending party. Of the remaining six cases, four failed to identify the jati of the accused. 677 This trend continued even in 1911 when the participation of the Goalas in the Cow Protection Movement was the highest from amongst all the castes. There were disturbances related to the killing of cows in Monghyr and Patna districts, chiefly under the influence of the Goala movement. 678 There is evidence that gives us the caste wise composition of people who were caught in connection with the riots. According to records from among 430 people


677 William R. Pinch, Peasants and Monks in British India (New Delhi: OUP, 1996), p.120.

connected with 6 trials there were 99 Rajputs, 63 Brahmins, 43 Babhans, 16 Kayasths, 66 Ahirs, 37 Koeries, 96 Dusadhs, Doms and Chamars, and 10 whose caste identities were not known.679

All this leaves us with important questions related to the Cow Protection Movements. In this chapter the following three aspects would be taken up: a) how the issue of cow protection came up; b) the role of the intelligentsia in making the cow a symbol of Hindu awakening and an integral part of Hindu history or memory and; c) how this issue came to be accommodated in the discourse of nationalism through the efforts of the Hindi intelligentsia.

A. How the Issue of Cow Protection Arose

The cow has been a traditional focus of communal discord between Hindus and Muslims ever since the arrival of Islam in India.680 The Cow Protection Movement and the laws relating to it brought the issue out from the realms of folk culture and religion into the modern political arena.681 The Cow Protection Movement arose in Northern India in the wake of the efforts of the Kuka and the Arya Samaj to highlight the need for action on this issue. Stimulated by the writings and activities of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the movement found a number of gaurakshini sabhas (cow protection societies) in the early 1880s. The first was established in Punjab and then the movement spread to other parts of Northern and Central India. Nagpur, in the Central Provinces, was described as being the headquarters of the Gaurakshini Movement in that decade.682 The founder of the Arya Samaj, Swami Dayanand, can be considered the man who popularised the notion of the cow's significance, not only in

679 Ibid.
681 Ibid.
religious terms, but also in economic terms. He wrote *Go Karuna Nidhi* to establish the usefulness of the cow in our lives. He collected thousands of signatures in support of cow protection and sent it to Queen Victoria. After his death a number of *gaushalas* (homes for cows) were started. It can be said that on this issue even his Sanatan Hindu adversaries supported him. On this issue the Arya Samaj was at one with the Sanatan Hindus. In 1882, a year before his death, Dayanand had set up a committee in Calcutta, in cooperation with the Maharaja of Banaras, to seek an all India Hindu movement for an agitation to prevent cow slaughter. All these efforts made the cow an important Hindu issue. In 1886 the magazine, *Bharatendu*, published an article in which the limited success of the movement was acknowledged. It mentions that a memorial with the signatures of "several lakh of Hindus" was sent to Queen Victoria, but after the death of Swami Dayanand, the movement slowed down and not much could be achieved. *Paropkarini Sabha* met twice to try and make some progress but no success was achieved. After the Hardwar Gauraksha Sabha conference, it was expected that something substantial would be done. The magazine suggested some concrete steps to make the campaign successful. It suggested the following six steps:

a) The Brahmins who get cows as gift should not sell them to beefeaters.

b) The Goalas openly sell their cows to people who slaughter them. All those Goalas who do this should now take an oath in front of the panchayat not to do so. If they fail to take the oath, their caste men and the Brahmins should boycott them.

c) In every city there should be at least one *gaushala* where old cows can be fed.

d) All those demons who do not cooperate in cow protection (taking this as an issue Dayanand believed in) should be considered *gaurakshhas* (cow-demons) and they should be condemned.

e) We should try to impress the government by showing it the benefits of protecting cows.

f) Something related to this should keep happening so that the issue is not ignored.\(^{683}\)

\(^{683}\) 'Gauraksha', *Bharatendu*, 14 August 1886.
Scholars have dealt with the agitational phases of the Cow Protection Movement but little attention has been paid on how the question became so important in the years before the first major riots took place in 1893. Scholars have recognised that the main reason for the spread of cow protection was the creation of the gaurakshini sabhas, which were well organised and resorted to tactics and jargon, which appealed to all sections of Hindu society.

The sabhas were strongest in Patna division. In 1893 there were 23 sabhas in Patna division. Bihar experienced the largest number of riots—22 riots. McLane shares a similar opinion when he says that the 1893 riots were the climax of the Cow Protection Movement, which had spread in the previous five years throughout Western Bihar and other states. In this phase the belief was that the cultural values of the original inhabitants and the majority should prevail.

Most of the West Bihar districts had cow protection societies organised in 1887 and 1888. Agents of the major zamindars including those of Darbhanga and Dumraon, Hathwa and Bettia were reported to have helped the movement, as did the priest of Gaya.

The heart of the Cow Protection Movement in the Gangetic districts which experiences rioting in 1893 was neither the Congress leaders nor the zamindars nor the wandering sadhus, but rather the local gaurakshini sabhas. A Bengali newspaper sums up the situation aptly: "The affrays which are now frequently found to take place between Hindus and Muslims in connection with cow slaughter seem to be due to a determination on the part of

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the Hindus to completely put down the practice in India; a determination which is a result of agitation by certain Hindu papers and political sanyasis like Sriman Swami. 689

Sriman Swami stands out for his efforts to carry the Cow Protection Movement across regional boundaries. In 1888 and 1889 he toured extensively through the North Western Provinces, Oudh, Bihar, Madras and Bombay. Among the notables who were said to have given funds were the Maharajas of Darbhanga, Hathua and Bettia. A Thagi and Dacoity Department Report credited him with reviving the Cow Protection Movement in Bihar. 690 In government records we find mention of people like Pandit Jagat Narayan of Allahabad who had toured Saran in 1888 and every year thereafter. Kishori Lal, also from Allahabad, had lectured in Saran district in 1890. 691

In 1893, prior to the Basantpur riot, the most serious riot related to Cow protection movement, there was a noticeable influx of messengers from the North Western Provinces and Oudh. Ram Golam Pandit and Jagdev Bahadur of Ballia, and Amar Patha(k), Mahabir Upadhya and Govind Das, alias Powhari Baba of Gorakhpur were some of the names mentioned in this connection. 692 McLane has suggested that there were three types of people who were associated with the Cow Protection Movement. The first group consisted of those

689 Sudhakar, Bengali daily, Calcutta, 8 July 1892, cited in Bengal, Report on Native Papers for the week ending 16 July 1892.

690 Note by D.F. Mc Kracken, Officiating General Superintendent, Thagi and Dacoity Department, IOL: L/P &S/: J& P 254/1894 (India Office Library), reproduced in Dharmapal and T.M. Mukundan, The British Origin of Cow Slaughter in India, Mussoorie : Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas, 2002, p. 100. This report mentions: “In 1889, Bengal reported a renewal of activity in consequence of the proceedings of Sriman Swami, who was on a lecture tour in the districts. In November 1888, the Swami had visited Nepal and gave out, on his return to Calcutta in December following, that the Darbar had contributed Rs 10,000 towards this agitation, and had promised a fuller contribution. The Resident in Nepal, however, reported that Sriman Swami got no money either from the Maharaja or any of the Sardars. He was said to have asked for 3 Lakh rupees to overthrow the British Government, and this request caused his temporary confinement in his quarters at Kathmandu. In March 1889, the Maharaja of Jeypur was reported to have become a member of the Gaya Cow Protection Society while on pilgrimage to that place, and the Raja of Faridkot was also said to have joined the movement.”

691 Ibid.

people who ate beef. (The British and the Muslims were the main culprits as offenders of this Hindu custom.) The second group joined the movement believing that such movements would lead to the economic prosperity of the country. The third group defended the cow to strike back at the attacks on orthodox Hinduism by Hindu social reformers and British legislators, so as to reassert their role as upholders of eroding Hindu values.\footnote{John. R. McLane, Indian Nationalism and the Early Indian National Congress, p.274.}

The network of gaushalas spread throughout Bihar in the period between the 1880s and 1920s, clearly suggesting that the Cow Protection Movement had achieved considerable success in making the protection of the cow an issue that Hindus must take up seriously. According to the statistics\footnote{Jayanti Smarak Granth - Sri Ram Lochan Saran Ji ki Swarna Jayanti, Pustak Bhandar ki Rajat Jayanti, Editor: Professor Shivpujan Sahay, Professor Harimohan Jha, Sri Achyutananda Dutt, 1942, pp. 176-179.} there were 88 gaushalas in Bihar.

*The making of the cow as a symbol of Hindu nationalism*

A British Intelligence Note quoted an official: “To Hindus it is the question of all questions and it will always be the war cry of the discontented.”\footnote{British Intelligence Note (India Office Library : L/P & J/ : J& P 254/ 1894 Note by D. F. Mc Kracken, 9 August 1893), reproduced in Dharmapal and T.M. Mukundan, The British Origin of Cow Slaughter in India, Mussorie :Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas, 2002, p 112.} This report observed in its report: “The primary danger is that the cow protection furnishes a common platform on which all Hindus of whatever sect, however much at variance on other questions, can and do unite.”\footnote{Ibid.} The popularisation of the cow as a cultural symbol of Hinduism has been an important element in the writings of the Hindi intelligentsia of Bengal, of which Bihar was a part, and of the United Provinces. In fact, the cow emerged as a leading symbol that the Hindi intelligentsia took up to articulate their ideologies. The Hindi intelligentsia not only supported the Cow Protection Movement from its early days, but also helped in keeping the issue alive in
the public memory as a symbol of Hinduism. It helped the communal forces in the later years, to see history in Hindu terms, in which cows were to be protected, along with the Brahmans, by all Hindus, as their religious duty. The imaginative literature, so very appealing to young minds, informed the nationalist youth in such a way, that in later years when they became mature politicians they would see the Cow Protection Movement as a part of their national movement. Prominent leaders of Bihar like Rajendra Prasad, Srikrishna Sinha, Anugraha Narayan Sinha and many others remained ardent supporters of cow protection throughout their political careers; even after they achieved high offices like the President of India, Chief Minister of Bihar and Home Minister of Bihar, etc. The Hindi intelligentsia had a decisive role in making cow protection a political issue on which all ‘Hindus’ were united. It can be said that it was largely due to the Hindi intelligentsia that cow protection could become, what McLane calls, ‘a species of sub national movements.’

Even a casual look into the literary sources reveals that in Bihar, the question of cow protection had originated in the 1870s. The view, that prior to the 1880s efforts to stop cow slaughter had been mainly limited to the Punjab, needs to be qualified.

One evidence suggests that it was even in earlier years people had been writing strongly against the cow slaughter. Hitnarayan Singh who died in 1866 had composed a poem that contains these lines:

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\text{Kshatriya raj kul jo ahe, socho man thabray.} \\
\text{Go hatya ko dekhi ke kyon na taras ur aay. [The sight of cow} \\
\text{slaughter is heart-breaking experience for any Kshatriya]} \]

In mid 1870s the leading Hindi paper of Bihar, Bihar Bandhu published a story with an introductory note by the writer in which the significance of cow protection had been

698 Hitnarayan Singh (1803-66); a social reformer and a writer; wrote a book on the benefits of Ayurveda; knew Sanskrit and Persian well and had a passable knowledge of English; relative of famous Ramdeen Singh.
emphatically asserted:

"Kai akhabara mein Gauon ki rakhba ke bare mein jo kai nasihatain dekhi, usse apne jee mein umang uthi, jee chaha ki... ek Kahani likh bhojien ki... sab janei ki hum sabke deb par Gay ray ka baq hai ba nabi... Mahashay! hamare Hinduon ke sashankartaon ne Gay ko jaisi kuchh pratistha di hai to jahir hai, yani jo kisi Hindu se bhoolkar bhi Gay-gbat ho to wah goonga bankar desh-pradesh bheekh mange... Ha Ishwar! kab hamare Hindu bhaiyon ki dasha phirgi... (Darbhanga mein) ek bar Gau ke bare mein Hinduon aur Musalmano mein badi laraai hui thi babutere sar kat gaye. [These days a lot is being written in papers about the significance of cow in Hindus' lives. I felt like writing a story depicting the significance of cow. If a Hindu kills a cow even unintentionally he would become dumb and he will spend rest of his life begging. Once there was a clash between Hindus and Muslims in Darbahnga over the cow that resulted in deaths of many.]

We can even trace the movement for cow protection to the early 1880s, when people were trying to organise support for cow protection. Hitnarayan Singh's poetry expressing strong sentiments about cow protection was published in 1883 and even if we assume that the poem was not really written by him, its publication in 1883 has to be accepted. It has to be conceded that the Bihari intelligentsia did hold strong opinions about cow protection in the early 1880s. This view also agrees with the evidence of the book Goraksha that was published in 1884. This important book contained some very persuasive economic explanations for cow protection and asked for support for the cause from the government and the intelligentsia. An appeal was drafted on behalf of the sacred cow's cry for help, and an appeal to the British Queen made by distinguished Hindu notables also included in this book leaves us with no doubt but to accept that cow protection was an important issue for many educated Hindus in the early 1880s. Many important people were called upon to save the cow

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700 Bihar Bandhu, 14 July 1874. For the story see the story which was published in this issue.

701 This book has not been adequately taken care of by the researchers of cow protection riots. A brittle copy of it is available in Chaitanya Pustakalaya, a library of Patna city.
in the 'Cry of the Cow'.

The government was also approached to take up this sensitive issue for the Hindus. It was claimed that the ancient Hindu texts told all Hindus to save the cow even at the cost of their lives. It was also underlined that under the good rule of the British Government the wishes of the Hindus should be taken care of. There was a memorandum to the Queen of England to stop this practice of cow slaughter. In this letter the Queen was urged to take steps for respecting the views of the 18 crore Muslims who wanted, claimed the memorandum, an end to this practice.

A letter was circulated and published under the name of a Rana of Nepal that urged all Hindus to stop this practice of cow slaughter, being true Hindus. The terms in which the Kshatriyas were defined in this letter is similar to those in Hitnarayan Singh’s poem. One can assume that this spirit was shared by a number of people in the early 1880s in Bihar as we find evidences suggesting that butchers’ shops should not be located on public roads. *Bihar Bandhu* complained in 1878 that the municipality was taking no notice of the way in which butchers exposed the carcasses of slaughtered animals on public roads. It suggested that butcher’s shops should be located in some distant place.702

Attempts were made in the different parts of North India for cow protection in the early years of 1880s. It was reported that the government showed apathy towards these genuine demands of the Hindus. Hindi Pradip expressed this sentiment: “These days enormous efforts are being made by the Hindus for cow protection. …But, all these are futile. Almost every day we receive news of the atrocities of the Muslims on the Hindus, but the government does not do anything to suppress these oppressors. The government always

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702 *Bihar Bandhu*, 4 September 1874.
threatens us."  

*Bharat Mitra* published an advertisement in 1881, issued by Harischandra, which was repeated many times over, where prizes of Rs.5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 were announced for anybody who composed poems in support of cow protection. In subsequent years a number of debates on this issue appeared in *Bharat Mitra*. Even in 1887 Balmukund Gupta, a famous writer, found plenty of writings in support of cow protection.

Around this time we find several stories being circulated which tried to establish that cow protection had always been important for Hindus, and all benevolent kings, including Muslim ones like Akbar, had acknowledged it. It had also become common to view Akbar as a good king, as he had accepted that the cow was sacred for the Hindus. On 23 March 1884, Brahmamrit Varshini Sabha of Kashi passed a resolution, which stated that they would send a letter to the Nizam of Hyderabad appealing to him to ban cow slaughter. If that were granted the sabha would consider the state of Hyderabad as a ‘State of Akbar’ (a state where the ruler cares for the sentiments of the ruled). The newspaper that carried this report published a story in which the poet Narahara saw a *ka rasai* (meat-seller) forcibly taking away a cow. Infuriated, he took possession of the cow and went to Akbar, the Mughal emperor. The poet composed a poem on behalf of the cow. Deeply moved, the Emperor ordered the ban on cow slaughter in his Empire.

Hindi newspapers regularly published views and reports that supported cow protection. The following letter by Pandit Vijayananda of Kashi gives us an idea about the

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705 Ibid, p.403.
706 Ibid, p.413.
707 *Bharat Jivan*, 24 March 1884.
nature of the material that was published: "Here a cow was saved from a cow-killer, a crooked Yavana (Muslim). An old cow entered the garden of a pandit of Gwalior. A Muslim came there searching for the cow. At that time Babu Jhullu Singh of Chitaipur was present. He offered to pay the Muslim for the cow. But the Muslim, going by his jatiya (communal) character insisted on taking the cow. At last, he agreed. The Kunwar (Singh) deposited the cow in the gaushala at Ramnagar. We thank Babu Sahab and appeal to all Aryans to do something for the protection of cows."  

Hindi Pradip wrote that the death of innumerable cows is very harmful for our country. The most direct appeal to Hindus was made under a pamphlet called 'Gai ka vilap' (Cry of Cow) which says that all Hindus should be ashamed for not being able to save the cow, which is the symbol of their religion.

In 1893 there were plays written about cow slaughter, which were in circulation. A Hindu drama called Bharat Dirdima Natak was sold at railway bookstalls. It linked India's grim economic conditions to cow slaughter. The gaurakshini sabhas and the itinerant cow-protectors made efficient use of the printing press. They distributed thousands of pamphlets and drawings on the subject. One illustration called 'The Present State' showed a cow about to be slaughtered by three Muslim butchers. Another drawing entitled 'The Kaliyug' showed a cow whose body was composed of Hindu gods confronted by a demon with a drawn sword. In another drawing, the former Dharmaraj (rule of right conduct), there is a cow drinking from a stream to the sound of music and then contrasting that to the present Kaliyug in which the cow was about to be butchered. A Hindu had explained the scene as follows: "As every man drinks cow's milk, just as he, as an infant, has drawn milk from his mother, the cow must be regarded

708 Bharat Jivan, 7 April 1884.
709 Hindi Pradip, July-August 1889.
710 Governor General to Secretary of State, 27 December 1893, note on the agitation, 1893, cited in John. R. McLane, Indian Nationalism and the Early Indian National Congress, p.312.
711 Ibid.
as the universal mother, and so is called ‘Gau Mata’. It is therefore matricide to kill a cow. Nay more, all the gods dwell in the cow, to kill is to insult every Hindu.” 712 In a Hindi play, published in a Banaras weekly a Brahmin was shown as a helpless man who wanted to save his cow but could not do so. The cow was donated to him by a landowner. In the play’s published portion in the weekly Muslims entered Brahmin’s house and forcibly took his cow for slaughtering. Brahmin cried and protested helplessly but the Muslims went away with the cow. 713 On the basis of these evidences McLane observes rightly that the distribution of cartoons, plays, and pamphlets, together with the other activities of the sadhus and sabhas, created an atmosphere that was increasingly hostile to the Muslims. 714

The writings of contemporary Hindi writers also give us a fair idea of their sentiments for the protection of cow. Madhav Mishra, a leading writer and editor of Sudarshan, a well-read paper, wrote that once the great Mughal emperor Akbar asked the Maharaja of Jodhpur, “Who is a Hindu”. The Maharaja said that he would give his answer after thinking it over. He asked an intelligent friend of his, who smiled and told the Maharaja that any layman in Jodhpur could answer this question. A layman, a barber was asked the question and gave the answer. On the basis of the barber’s answer, the Maharaja of Jodhpur gave his reply to the Mughal Emperor. He said that if one foolish, rustic old Brahmin who could die any moment, an ill, old cow and a man’s only son were trapped in a burning house, the man who saves the old Brahmin or the old cow before his only son is a real shrestha (superior) Hindu. All those who worship the Brahmin and the cow are true Hindus. It is said that after hearing this, cow

712 Note on the agitation by D. F. McCracken, 9 August 1893.
713 Go-Sevak (Benaras), 22 and 29 December 1892 and 5 January 1893, cited in John. R. McLane, Indian Nationalism and the Early Indian National Congress, p.312.
714 John. R. McLane, Indian Nationalism and the Early Indian National Congress, p.313.
slaughter was forbidden in Akbar’s Empire.\textsuperscript{715}

This story sums up the approach of many educated Sanatan Hindus to cow protection. There are hundreds of writings in which the Hinduness and the protection of the cow was closely linked. A Hindu was expected not to accept the killing of a cow at any cost, and anyone who saved a cow was considered a true Hindu.

On the basis of reports and writings of the intelligentsia it can be said that in the late 70s and the early 80s the cow protection propaganda intensified. Many reports appeared in the Hindi newspapers of the United Provinces, Bihar and Bengal on the significance of the cow for Hindus. \textit{Hindi Pradip} quoted the Ramayana in support of cow protection: “\textit{dharmasheel tab nar aru nari, Go-swami nit harshat bhari}”.\textsuperscript{716} Many write-ups gave prominence to ‘communal riots’ and suggestions were even put forward showing a clear pro-Hindu bias. As already mentioned \textit{Bihar Bandhu} had reported that the butchers expose the carcasses of slaughtered animals on the public road and advise that “butcher shops be located in some quite out of the way place.”\textsuperscript{717}

The earliest book on cow protection was \textit{Go Dharma Sar}, written by the head of the Hardwar Go Rakshini Sabha, Mohan Lal, which was published from Prayag in 1886.\textsuperscript{718} During the next two years Atmaram Sagar wrote \textit{Go Raksha Prakash} and Kashinath Khatri wrote \textit{Go Raksha Prabandha}.\textsuperscript{719} But much before these books were written, the issue of cow protection had been in circulation in the newspapers and literary writings of the United Provinces, Bihar and Calcutta. As already mentioned, Hitnarayan Singh, who died in 1866, had composed a poem which contains these lines in which the Kshatriyas are supposed to get enraged to see any cow


\bibitem{716}\textit{Hindi Pradip}, January 1878.

\bibitem{717}\textit{Bihar Bandhu}, 4 September 1878.


\bibitem{719}Ibid.
slaughter:

_Sar Sudha Nidhi_, a much respected and widely circulated newspaper of Calcutta, published an editorial on cow protection, which stated: "Frankly, not to have a law prohibiting cow slaughter is a shame for every Hindu. The bad state of affairs of the country is a result of this very sin."[720] It went on to explain the economic benefits of the cow and concluded: "God has come to the earth in the form of the cow. Every bit of our existence is indebted to the mother cow."[721]

In this connection the writings of Bharatendu Hazichandra, whose response both in tone and substances presaged and set the pattern for the attitude of his fellow Hindi litterateurs are also worth considering. In fact, throughout his life Bharatendu was respected for his attempts to stop cow slaughter. In a poetic emotional obituary of Bharatendu a respected magazine _Ananda Kadambini_ acknowledged that: "_Ha Govadh ke band hit udyam karna apar_ [He ceaselessly tried to stop cow slaughter]."[722]

During this phase some people were active on cow protection in Calcutta also. One Babu Uma Prasad wrote a book on this theme and distributed it free of cost.[723] A book _Go Raksha_ was published at that time. This, 104-page book containing a collection of material related to the Cow Protection Movement was published by Pandit Jagat Narayan of Bihar in 1884. This important book was divided into three sections and the case for cow protection was argued from 'historical', 'economic' and 'religious' viewpoints. Quoting extensively from Hindu, Islamic and Christian texts, English newspapers and 'medical experts from America, Bulgaria, Turkey', it tried to argue that cow slaughter was the worst kind of sin and could lead

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[721] Ibid.
[723] _Sar Sudha Nidhi_, 17 February 1879.
to famine, all kinds of diseases and loss of life and so on. It also contains an account of the activities of go svaks, some letters, the memorandum submitted to Queen Victoria by the Hindus (in 1884) and some bhajans. The arguments put forward in this book remained widely popular in the later years.

In literary evidences we find many references which emphasised cow protection as the religious duty of every Hindu. Some attempts were made to give it a historical basis. We have considerable literature on the theme of cow protection. Among them some of the most important titles include Akbar Go Raksha Nyaya, a play by Jagat Narayan Sharma, Jai Gomata, a play by Lalta Singh Arya of Calcutta, Gau Gaubar Geetavali, a collection of poems and bhajans which runs into three volumes, written by Atma Ram Sanyasi and published from Calcutta in 1888. Sanyasi also wrote Bhajan Go Raksha in 1892. Sanatani scholar Pandit Ambikadatta Vyas wrote Go Sankat, a play. The background to the story is Akbar’s reign. On the occasion of Bakrid Id a maulvi wanted to sacrifice a cow and the Hindus protested against it.

Newspapers like Dharma Diwakar reported consistently on issues related to cow protection. Its reports say much against cow slaughter. In one report it says that a Muslim was given the penalty of Rs 25 for breaking the left foot of his cow and the judge was sorry that there was no provision in law, else he would have given him the punishment of being flogged 25 times for the crime he had committed. The adjective ‘cruel’ was used many times over in this report.724

In 1889 Pratap Narayan Mishra wrote: “In our country these days, discussions on the benefits and qualities of mother cow and cow protection can be heard everywhere.”725 Such a leading Hindi writer was telling the truth that the issue had been in discussion among the

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724 Dharma Diwakar, Samvat 1944, 6 Mayukha.

725 Brahman, 15 April 1889. For his support for the Cow Protection Movement see his ‘Alame Tasweer’ which appeared in Brahman 15 April 1888.
The contemporary newspapers were full of reports on the different types of clashes related to cow slaughter. The reports were often picturesque and suggestive and in no report ever, was any Hindu considered guilty of anything. All these reports invariably sought to convey that the Muslims were conspiring to kill cows. The following report can give us an idea of the type of reporting: “On the night of 9 December last, someone slaughtered a cow in the house of Daya Lal Singh, a resident of Panighata- Velagachi within the jurisdiction of Kaliganj thana in the Purnea district, and left the head of the slaughtered animal suspended by a rope in the well whose water was used for drinking purposes, and the four legs in the four rooms of the house, in one of which was the family of God…Investigations are on.”

Hindi newspapers not only published such reports but also sought to argue that Hindus only asked that cows should not be slaughtered in an offensive manner. The papers reported the official government views and praised those officials who took the side of the Hindus. One report says: “Sir Anthony McDonnell has not accepted the opinion of Mr. Forbes, Commissioner of Patna Division, that the Hindus are entirely responsible for the cow slaughter quarrels. (He considered the Muslims equally responsible.) Sir Anthony has also assured the Hindus that steps will be taken to prevent the Muslims from killing cows in an offensive manner. And the Hindus want nothing more than that.” What is noticeable in these reports is that the Hindus are shown as the passive receivers of unjust actions by the Muslims and the government as insensitive.

At times the papers tried to take reasonable positions, but overall their tone bares their

726 Bangavasi, 23 December (Calcutta), cited in Bengal, Report on Native Papers for the week ending 30 December, 1893, p. 1092-93.
intentions. A kind of respectability was bestowed on those who had led the movement. Reports like these appearing on the same day can be seen.

*Sahchar* published a report on the riots in different parts of the country on the occasion of Ramlila. It reads: “At Balia the Hindus did not at all observe the ceremony. It was at the request of the Magistrate, Mr Part that they were afterwards prevailed upon to perform the ceremony in the most simple and unostentatious manner possible. The people feared that if the subscription were raised (a normal thing on the occasion) they might be considered connected with a gaurakshini sabha and sent to jail.”\(^{728}\) The same day the paper also said: “At Patna, the Commissioner, Mr Forbes has come down on the gaurakshini sabhas and in doing so has only indicated his acceptance of Sir Anthony McDonnell’s view. There is no gaurakshini sabha yet there is riot; there is no proof that the gaurakshini sabha is guilty... the real cause of the cow slaughter riots, therefore lies in misconception and prejudice. The Hindus never prayed for the total abolition of the slaughter of cows.”\(^{729}\) This report claimed that the Hindus object to cow slaughter only where it was done offensively. Also, they felt aggrieved when cow slaughter is done publicly.\(^{730}\) There were reports in which it was claimed that the government officers were taking the side of the Muslims against the Hindus. A newspaper accused the government of persecuting the Hindus. Referring to a letter of Babu Ramkumar Ghosh in *Amrit Bazar Patrika* it wrote: “The Hindus are not favourites of the Government which believes them to be disloyal though that is not the case.”\(^{731}\) A Bengali daily reported that the Lt. Governor had admitted that without the aid of the zamindars of Bihar, the disturbances

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\(^{728}\) *Sahchar*, 8 November 1893. In the issue in the next week, i.e., 15 November, the paper reports that the Magistrate had the festival (Ramlila) performed with money which they themselves raised through the subscription, cited in *Bengal, Report on Native Papers for the week ending 18 November 1893*, p.976-77.

\(^{729}\) *Sahchar*, 8 November 1893, cited in *Bengal, Report on Native Papers for the week ending 18 November 1893*, p. 977.

\(^{730}\) Ibid.

\(^{731}\) *Samay*, 10 November 1893, cited in *Bengal, Report on Native Papers for the week ending 18 November 1893*, p. 977.
could not have been suppressed so easily.\textsuperscript{732}

On 12 October 1893 the authorities ordered the cow asylums of Ballia to send cows to the Dadari fair for sale. This made the papers write: “It is said that the large quantity of cow flesh which will be required at the fair for the large number of Muslims and European soldiers who will be stationed there will be procured in this way. It is said that cow will be slaughtered in the fair. Strict orders have been issued upon the amla of the Dumraon Raj, requiring them to bring cows to the fair. These orders have created alarm throughout Ballia.”\textsuperscript{733}

The Allahabad High Court allowed Muslims to kill cows in their own yards but forbade them from taking the slaughtered animals onto the public streets. Bangavasi wrote: “Whilst advising the people to settle their disputes, the Viceroy ought also to have advised the officials to conduct themselves impartially in the matter. The partial conduct of the officials leads most people to think that it is they who should be held responsible for the riots.” The Court was seen by the paper as “calculated to do a great deal of mischief.”\textsuperscript{734} The Government of the North Western Provinces prohibited the Hindu officers from joining any gaurakshini sabha. The papers also did not like this. Bharat Mitra reported that the Hindu officers in the North Western Provinces ‘justly’ felt offended by the order of their government prohibiting them from taking part in the gaurakshini sabhas.\textsuperscript{735} A Bengali paper even started reporting events that could suggest that Muslims were trying to create tensions on the cow slaughter issue. Bangavasi reported of “cow slaughter in Chittagong in the very place ...where Hindus are in the

\textsuperscript{732} Dainik Samachar Chandrika (Calcutta), 15 November 1893, cited in Bengal, Report on Native Papers for the week ending 18 November 1893, p.984.


\textsuperscript{734} Bangavasi (Calcutta), 18 November 1893, cited in Bengal, Report on Native Papers for the week ending 25 November 1893, p. 1002.

habit of worshipping their God Karanth.\footnote{Bangavari, 30 December 1893, cited in Bengal, Report on Native Papers for the week ending 6 January 1894, p. 14.}

The Urdu newspapers also widely reported the incidents involving the activities associated with the Cow Protection Movement. They believed that the government was treating the Hindus softly. After the result of the Basantpur case, an Urdu newspaper said: “The result of the Basantpur case has not been what it should have been. The acquittal of the Hindus has emboldened them to seek fresh opportunities to quarrel with the Muslims.”\footnote{Al Punch, 18 January 1894, cited in Bengal, Report on Native Papers for the week ending 3 February 1894, p. 76.} In Arrah and Monghyr the Muslims organised protest meetings against the letter of ‘Chhote Lat’ relating to cow slaughter.\footnote{Bihar Bandhu, March 1894.}

The Maharaja of Dumraon declared that he would disassociate himself from all the activities of the gaurakshini sabhas. The papers wrote about it as if he had succumbed to pressure from the government.\footnote{Sulabh Dainik, 2 January 1894; Sababar (Calcutta), 3 Jan. 1894, Bengal, Report on Native Paper for the week ending 13 January 1894.} A paper expressed disappointment over the approach of this leading zamindar. It said: “surprised to see that the Maharaja is so frightened by the attitude of the North Western Provinces Police towards the gaurakshini sabhas and everything connected with them, that he has issued a proclamation denying all connection with gaurakshini sabhas and prohibiting his servants from having any connection with them. …It is to encourage the high-handedness of the police and it is discrediting the gaurakshini sabhas.”\footnote{Samay, 5 January 1894, cited in Bengal, Report on Native Papers for the week ending 13 January 1894.} One week after that the paper changed its tone and said that “the rules which have been laid down by Sir Charles Elliot regulating cow slaughter within municipalities and cantonments have given satisfaction to the writer.”\footnote{Ibid., 12 January 1894, cited in Bengal, Report on Native Papers for the week ending 20 January 1894.}
Pratap Narayan Mishra wrote in *Brahman* in 1894: “There is no need to produce evidence anymore to say that without cow protection the real emancipation of the Hindu nation and the Hind nation (desh) is impossible.” He added further that the Muslim brothers are to be convinced that they are to consider the climatic demands and the wishes of the majority population and thus accept cow protection. This view is in line with the view expressed by Gopal Hari Bhide, secretary, Gaurakshini Sabha, Nagpur, who said, in reference to Lord Lansdowne’s address at Agra on 10 December 1893 that the government was not against cow protection. It only wanted regulation in such a way that believers of other religions would not be aggrieved. Attempts were made by the Calcutta Hindi newspapers to depict the Muslims as problem creators. A paper reports: “The Muslims of Dinopore are doing their best to nullify the cow slaughter circular and are pretending that beef forms an essential food of the Muslims.” The writer defends the gaurakshini sabhas against the charges of complicity in the cow slaughter agitation by saying that the gaurakshini sabha at Nagpur has both Hindus and Muslims as its members.

Around this time a number of plays were written on the cow protection theme. The writers of the Bharatendu era had written plays to support the cause of cow protection unitedly. A famous ‘pracharak’ (activist) of gauraksha and a writer, Pandit Jagat Narayan wrote a play *Akbar Goraksha Nyaya* and *Bharat Dimdima*. Sannulal Gupta Kanungo of Bulandshahar wrote *Syrabhi Santapi* in which countrymen were urged to rise against cow slaughter. In the play a character says, “Arisel Protect the cow, convince the government about

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742 *Brahman*, December 1894.
743 Ibid.
744 *Bihar Bandhu*, February, 1894.
the benefits of cow protection, reach out to Queen Victoria with your appeals, take financial assistance from rich merchants and kings to encourage the protectors of the cow,” 747 A historian of the plays of that period, Bhanudev Shukla, observed that in these plays, written in support of cow protection, the arguments were almost similar and hence it indicated that all of them had been influenced in some way or the other by the Cow Protection Movement of the 1880s. 748

The contemporary newspapers’ reporting of different riots and tension situations also played a role in influencing their readers. Bihar Bandhu wrote: Serious communal riots broke out in Ballia, Azamgarh and other places in which many Hindus and Muslims were killed. The officials were found at fault everywhere 749

In the municipal elections the Muslim candidates carried out a bitter campaign against the Hindus in general, and the Kayasth Lala pleaders in particular. 750 The fear of Kayasth domination was the main factor. Communal feelings became bitter over the cow slaughter question on the occasion of Bakrid Id. A riot took place in the district of Darbhanga in 1910 and Al Punch alleged that the Hindus burnt down Muslim houses. 751

The Raj was generous in conferring awards to Hindu and Muslim communalists. C. S. Bailey, Lt. Governor of Bihar, recommended the Maharaja of Darbhanga for a G.C.I.E. as he had emerged a great champion of Hindu communalism. The Maharaja gratefully acknowledged it and reported that he would organise a conference of the Hindu Sabha during the Kumbh Mela at Hardwar, which would pass a resolution for the success of the King

748 Ibid., p.132.
750 Home Political February 1912, Programmes A. No.47-48 (National Archive of India, New Delhi).
Emperor in the First World War.\footnote{Darbhanga to Du Boulay, 15 March 1895, Cited in Mrinal K. Basu, \textit{Indian Historical Review} (New Delhi) III, 2 (1977), p.75.}

As a result of this kind of consistent propaganda the cow became one of the key issues in Bihar, which determined the relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. Now the cow was a theme for hundreds of poems in which she was looked upon as the symbol of Hindu dignity. Putti Lal Shukla wrote a poem –

‘Protector of cows, the destroyer of demons,
The source of all happiness and the preserver of Gods where are you...
You have protected the Sanatan dharma
And served the cows and Brahmins
O king of Braj, protector of cows
Do not delay (and come down upon the earth).’\footnote{Brahman Saraswati, January 1913.}

In another play Haridas says: “\textit{Kyonki main Hindu hoon aur Hindu hokar gochar bhoomi ko bech go mataon ko kasht dane ka karya nabin kar sakta. Punyabhumi kamaonga karke uttam karma, Go rakshe Go bhakti hi hai Hindu ka dharma.} [Being a Hindu it would not be desirable for me to sell land that cows graze. Cow protection and devotion for cow is the religion of Hindus.]”\footnote{Ibid, p.11.}

\textit{Support from the Zamindars for Cow protections}

It was reported that the Maharaja of Darbhanga had donated Rs. one lakh for the Cow Memorial Fund. The 11\textsuperscript{th} Annual Function of the Sanatan Arya Dharma Pracharini Sabha, Motihari, was to be held from 3 to 6 February 1889.\footnote{Saran Saroj, February, 1889.}
Ancient tales of Maharaja Dilip and Arjun followed this. The story related to Arjun is particularly interesting. In the Mahabharata the Pandavas were hiding in the Agyatvas phase of their exile. Had they been identified they would have had to stay in exile for another twelve years. So they were in disguise. They get news that a cow was being stolen. Putting the fear of another twelve years of exile behind him, Arjun comes forward to save the cow...God loves the cow so much that his abode (home) is called Golok.756

Around 1908, in Bihar, the Gaurakshini Movement overlapped with the Goala Movement. It was repeatedly emphasised that cows were not to be sold to the Muslims. Subsequently, in 1911 the Hindus in various parts of South Monghyr and Patna districts obstructed the qurbani. Two years later there were confrontations on Bakrid Id in Chandi and Hilsa in Patna district.757 The official records note that "in contrast with the riots of the 1890s which had occurred at different times of the year, those of 1915-16 were organised attempts at preventing qurbani on Baqri Id."758

The Shahabad riots of 1917 surpassed all previous Baqri Id riots. Starting from Ibrahimpur and Piru between 28 September and 7 October 129 villages were looted and 14 attacked.759 It spread to other parts of Bihar and according to one estimate 80 people were

756 Saran Sany, Monthly, Chapra, October 1888.
757 Papiya Ghosh, 'Community Questions and Bihar Politics 1917-23', The Indian Historical Review (Delhi) XVI, 1-2 (July 1989- January 1990), p.196. She cites the Patna Commissioner's Double Lock Records, Box No. 10: 10/1913 and other archival sources to give details of riots related to the Cow Protection Movement in 1916 at Kanchanpur, Jodhpur and Barh subdivisions. In the villages of these divisions the qurbani ritual was customary. The supporters of the Cow Protection Movement were demanding and putting pressure on the Muslims not to sacrifice cows.
758 See Political Department Special Section 58/1918, "Note on Previous cow-killing riots" and Political Police PS5/2/1917, May 1917, No. 23-24. Extract from the judgement in Jodhpur 147 case, cited in Papiya Ghosh, 'Community Questions and Bihar Politics 1917-23,' p.196
759 Political Department Special Section PS 58/1918, PS 162/1918 and PS 223/1919. For more details about the riots in Gaya and other districts see Papiya Ghosh, 'Community Questions and Bihar Politics 1917-23', p.197.
killed and no less than 2,457 were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The Patna Commissioner noted that: "nothing similar had occurred in Bihar since the disturbances of 1857-58." Large forces were requisitioned from Calcutta, Allahabad, Merrut and Assam before the riots could be suppressed. The *patisas* (snowball letters) that were circulated in Shahabad, often by the Chaukidars, before and during riots reveal that often the date and location for various acts of looting were specified. Some letters also mentioned that revenge was to be sought for the *qurbani* and that Muslims had to be killed. All these developments show how the Cow Protection Movement, which began in the 1880s, had consistently been active with the political consequences of hardening Hindu and Muslim identities.

B. The Cow Protection Issue After the Cow Protection Movements; Its Cooptation in the National Discourse

The Congress leaders of Bihar were fully conscious of its appeal among Hindus and its opposition among sections of Muslims. The Congress, as an organisation had not acknowledged that cow should be considered sacred and cows were to be protected for the welfare of the country. But, for the rank and file of the Congress the issue of Cow protection had a considerable appeal. For many Congress supporters the cow was sacred and needed to be protected for the welfare of the country.

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762 In a number of interviews, which I conducted in 1992-93 to study political mobilisation in Monghyr district between 1934 and 1942 it was noticeable that all local level leaders had mentioned the issue of the cow as a national issue and an integral part of the Congress programme. They had all put forward the economic logic of cow protection made popular by Gandhi himself. This is obviously not technically correct to say that cow protection was an issue which was supported by the Congress as the Congress never accepted the programme of Cow protection. (A publication- Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, *Civil Disobedience in Indian Tradition*, Varanasi, 1971 claims that "the Congress since the 1890s had been strongly against cow slaughter". Cited in Dhamapal and T.M. Mukundan, *The British Origin of Cow Slaughter in India*, Mussoorie: Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas, 2002, p 451). It should, however, be admitted that in the rank and file many Congress members of Bihar had been against cow slaughter.
The role of the Hindi intelligentsia in keeping the memory of the riots and the issue of Hindu concerns is very crucial. The newspapers reported anything related to communal tensions in any part of India and thereby helped in creating the impression that this communal issue was very crucial and the responsibility of creating trouble lay with the Muslims only.

_Hindi Pradip_ published an eight-page report by M.M.M. (a pseudonym), giving details of riots taking place in different parts of Northern India. It said:

"_gatvarsha keval mirzapur hi nahin kintu Bhagalpur, Jaunpur, Kashi, Multan, aadi anek nagron mein charon ore se phir yeh chirkal se bujhi bujhai aag achanak dahak uthi…_ Gat bakrid ke awsar par is upadrava ki zad bandhi [Last year not only Mirzapur but also Bhagalpur, Jaunpur, Kashi witnessed the outburst of suppressed anger (of Hindus)]."^763_

The success of the Cow Protection Movement in the years between 1887 and 1917 lies in this fact that more and more people started considering the issue of protection of cows as a Hindu sentiments’ issue. It has already mentioned earlier that the movement initially claimed that it was not against the rights of Muslims to slaughter cow and only thing that was demanded or appealed for was that it should be done at a “distant place” and not “on the road”.^764_ But, by 1917 for many people the issue of Cow protection became central to the identity of Hindu. Even leaders like Gandhi had found nothing wrong to see the protection of cow as a communal matter. When Gandhi came to Bihar he found that the associations formed primarily to protect cows were the same associations that were ready to support the national movement.

In 1918, Mahatma Gandhi was accused by a correspondent of the _Pioneer_ (Lucknow) for making an attack on the _saheblog_ (the British landlords) who slaughter and eat cows

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^763_ Hindi Pradip, October 1881.

^764_ See pp. 223-24 and 231 of this chapter.
everyday.\textsuperscript{765} Gandhi wrote to the paper in which he asserted: "The question of cow protection is, in my opinion, as large as the empire to which Mr. (Lord) Irwin and I belong."\textsuperscript{766} He added further: "There is not a single Hindu throughout the length and breadth of India who does not expect one day to free his land from cow slaughter."\textsuperscript{767} Gandhi was also convinced that this issue is not going to be resolved soon. He said, "Rightly or wrongly, worship of the cow is ingrained in the Hindu nature and I see no escape from a most bigoted and sanguinary strife over this question between the Christians and Muslims on the one hand and the Hindus on the other."\textsuperscript{768} If one thinks that Gandhi's speech was made to please the local Hindu Congressmen or the gaurakshini sabha members who had organised the meeting in which he spoke, his views about the importance of the cow published in Young India in 1921 can be mentioned: "I would not kill a human being for protecting a cow, as I will not kill a cow for saving a human life, be it ever so precious...The cow question is a big question, the greatest for a Hindu. I yield to no one in my regard for the cow."\textsuperscript{769}

These remarks from Gandhi, expressing his views on cow protection was not something that he had introduced into Bihar politics. The writings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have clearly established it as a sacred symbol for all Hindus. Any

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\textsuperscript{765} Gandhi also said in the meeting delivered in Bihar in 1918: "Hindus have no warrant for resenting the slaughter of cows by their Muslim brethren who kill them from their religious conviction, as long as they themselves are a party to the killing by inches, of thousands of cattle, who are horribly ill-treated by their Hindu owners; to the drinking milk drawn from cows in the inhuman dairies of Calcutta; and as long as they calmly contemplate the slaughter of thousands of cattle in the slaughter houses of India for providing beef to the European and Christian residents of India." (This is the version of his speech delivered at the Gaurakshini Sabha, written by Gandhi himself, in his letter to the editor of the Pioneer.)

\textsuperscript{766} Cited in Mahatma Gandhi, Writing and Speeches of Mahatma Gandhi Relating to Bihar from 1917 to 1947, K. K. Datta (Patna: Government of Bihar, 1960), and p.138.

\textsuperscript{767} Ibid, p.139.

\textsuperscript{768} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{769} Young India, 18 May 1921.
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number of examples can be cited in the writings of the intelligentsias of Bihar and the United Provinces to show that cow protection figured prominently in their ideology.

Perhaps the most important evidence of the cooptation of many communal elements into the ideology of nationalism is found in the writings that were in wide circulation as literature promoting nationalism. Maithili Sharan Gupta, acknowledged as the Rashtra Kavi (national poet) by the Congress, wrote a book Hindu that contained many poems aiming to arouse national consciousness among the countrymen. Internalising the Hindu view of Indian history, it addressed the Hindus to unite themselves and to be proud of their history, culture and religion so that they could regain their lost glory. In one poem, he said that the entire world was once the colonies of the Aryans and now those great Aryans were divided amongst themselves.\textsuperscript{770} A detailed discussion on this book has already been taken up.\textsuperscript{771} Here his cow-related poems can be discussed. Keeping his views very close to those of the Congress and Gandhi regarding the regeneration of Indian society, he said that the cow slaughter issue was a matter of mutual consent, but he appealed to Muslims in such a way that cow slaughter became a kind of proof of Muslim arrogance. He says:

"Gavkushi? Marqi ki bat!

Kintu socho tanik he tat!

Artha dharma ka hai yadi karya,

To Gokushi nabi hai anivarya...

Ooton ki kurbani band

Ki thi Hajarat ne sanand!

\textsuperscript{770} Maithilisharan Gupta, Hindu, 1987 (1912/1927). The introduction of this book is dated 1927. In this book Maithili Sharan Gupta's call for the awakening of the Hindu nation is elaborated upon. The creative efforts of Maithili Sharna Gupta towards these types of Hinducentric national poems began with his collection of poems Bharat Bharati which was published in 1912.

\textsuperscript{771} See Chapter III.
Kyoki Arab ka dhan the Oont,
Wahan sarva sadhan the Oont.
Musalman bhai, ho shant,
Manno Hajrat ka siddhant.
Bharat ka dhan Godhan matra,
Hai pahle raksha ka patra.
Piyon na pyare uska khoon,
Ki jo doodh de dono joon.
Chhodo us shonlit ki chab,
Bahne do phir payah pravah.
Doodh pilane wali Gay,
Sabki jeevan bhar ki dhay.
Na ho bhajo ispe kroor,
Doodh poot pao bharpoor.
Kabul mein bhi Go vadh band,
Wah kafir hai ya swachchan?
Nahin wahan Bajo ki rar,
Naye Musalma ho tum yar!

[The Muslims must try to understand that Hijarat prohibited the sacrifice of camel as camel was considered wealth of Arab. In India cow enjoys similar status and she is considered wealth in this country. She gives you milk and you must not drink her blood. She is a great help for everybody. Cow slaughter is prohibited in Kabul too.]
The real Muslims should understand the worth of cow as a source of wealth and happiness. Cow is the wealth of India.]^{772}

*Go Raksha* (a play) written by Babu Durga Prasad Gupta^{773} was published in 1926 from Calcutta. It contained a scene in which Mother Earth (Prithvi), appearing as a cow is crying before Lord Vishnu. Mother Earth says:

"Dhao dhao, he srishti ke karta...shesh sajja chod kar Go raksha ke liye mrityulok mein aao. Nabin to param swarthy kriatkhna kutte ke swabhav vale matrivrodhi mansahari jeev Go mata ko satane se na rukenge...srishti ka vinash kar denge [Oh God! the creator of this world. You must come down to the earth again to save mother Cow. Otherwise, the selfish meat-eaters would not stop killing mother Cow and thereby they would destroy this world.]".

Lord Vishnu replies:

"...Main Go raksha se alag boon aisa na samjho. Dekho meri go bhakti ka roop dekho...[Do not consider myself aloof from Cow protection. See my devotion for Cow]"

He then appears as Lord Krishna and says:

"Go raksha se prithaka boon kar na aisa khyal. [Get rid of any thoughts which keep myself separate from Cow Protection.]^{774}

Elsewhere in the play, Haridas says:

"Kyonki main Hindu boon aur Hindu bokar gochar bhoomi ko bech go mataon ko kasht dene ka karya nabin kar sakta. Punnyabhumi kamaaonga karke uttam karma, Go raksha Go bhakti hi hai Hindu ka dharma. [As I am a Hindu, I cannot do anything that can give trouble to mother Cow. The worship of mother Cow is the religion of (every) Hindu.]^{775}


^{773} Wrote *Nal Damyanti*, Bharat Ramani, Garib Kisan, Nar Pisach, Chandal Chaukari, Dohhari Talwar, Maharana Pratap and other books.


^{775} Ibid, p.11.
This appeal which appeared in *The Searchlight* could give some idea about the success of cow protection movement by the first quarter of twentieth century:

"The aborigines (Uraons, Mundas etc) of Chotanagpur had established the Chotanagpur Gorachhini and Jatisudhar Sabha being to improve the condition of the cows and to reform the society. The Sabha was highly successful in her attempts. Spending about thousand rupees about 108000 cows were rescued from the hands of butchers during the last three years. Three paid and some unpaid workers were employed this year for propaganda of Sangathan in the villages. Uptill now the works of the Sabha are carried on only by the help of the villagers."  

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776 In this appeal for help the donations were asked to be sent to Babu Seo Kumar Haldar, Retired Deputy Magistrate, President of Chotanagpur Gorachhini and Jatisudhar Sabha, Ranchi. The figure of 108000 of cows looks doubtful but even if this number is less the success of cow protection movement can easily be underlined in this kind of effort coming in the tribal dominated area of Chotanagpur. See *The Searchlight*, 1 June 1927 for this appeal.