Chapter 1

NATIONALISM AND COMMUNALISM IN MODERN BIHAR

Isaiah Berlin says that a liberal does not believe in a hierarchy of inner selves (higher, lower; true, false). Nor does a liberal believe that there can ever be a political solution to the experience of inner human divisions. Human beings are what they are and liberal politics deals only with what human beings say they want.¹ What he says about politics can also be a model for the writing of history. There is always a propensity to go deeper into our recent past; to search out ambivalences, split personalities and contradictions; to explain how ‘distorted’, ‘derivative’ and ‘incomplete’ processes were part of the Indian experience in colonial India. It needs to be stated at the outset that this study is an attempt to study the mentality of the intelligentsia on the basis of what they have written. It tries to argue that while forming the ideology of nationalism, the intelligentsia also created another ideology, which can, in the absence of any other suitable alternative, be called communalism. This argument is largely based on written and published materials, including the archival.

This study takes into consideration only one side of the picture. It deals with Hindu communalism², and the Muslim side of the story is rarely alluded to. As a result, it can only attempt to give an account of the early stages of the rise of Hindu communalism from the

² Some scholars, like Bipan Chandra (Bipan Chandra, Communalism in Modern India (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1993 [1984]), believe that communalism is a separate phenomena which must not be studied along the lines of Hindu or Muslim communalisms. But, with K.N. Panikkar one can say that “the ideology of communal politics in India. … among Hindus and Muslims was not both relational [sic], but integral to the processes of communalization within them.” See K.N. Panikkar, ‘Culture, Nationalism and Communal Politics’, in K. N. Panikkar et.al. (eds.), The Making of History, (Delhi: Tulika, 2000), p. 543.
writings and activities of the intelligentsia and study its complex relationship with the dominant ideology of the time-nationalism.

The area chosen for this study is Bihar but, as and when required, related developments and trends in the adjacent states are referred to; the aim being to prepare an account of how the intelligentsia emerged as the social conscience-keeper of society in the Hindi-speaking world. While articulating their visions of the past and their projections of the future the intelligentsia showed a range of concerns about their own castes and communities, as well as the nation. In their concerns, which are shown in their writings and social activities, scholars have found that Hindu nationalism, communalism and Indian nationalism coexisted. The writings of the intelligentsia could very easily be read as examples of Hindu ‘national’ consciousness, but they could also be interpreted as communal elements.

Scholars have underlined the upper caste Hindu influence in the making of Indian nationalism. Christophe Jaffrelot says that ‘Hindu nationalism’ was constructed as an ideology between the 1870s and the 1920s. It derives from socio-religious movements initiated by high caste Hindus, such as the Arya Samaj. ‘Hindu nationalism’ developed largely as a response to the threat of modernity. As a result of reforms undertaken by the British administration and the proselytizing and educational activities of the missionaries the caste Hindus, mostly Brahmins, undertook to reform society while preserving the core of what they comprehended as Hindu tradition. To Jaffrelot this was defined mainly in Brahmanical terms. Sudhir Chandra finds communal elements in the writings of late

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3 The use of the term ‘Hindi-speaking world’ is perhaps problematic for many. But, like communalism, this term is also used to make an understandable statement in the absence of a better term.


nineteenth century Hindi writers. Achin Vanaik also finds the presence of strong Hindu symbols in Indian renaissance of nineteenth century and he identifies the Indian renaissance as responsible for the growth of communalism. To him, Indian nationalism expressed in this renaissance was a 'Hindu nationalism'. Charu Gupta argues, "Hindu publicists sought to establish the honour, prestige and respectability of the Hindu household and family, to work out a definable community identity and a vibrant Hindu nation."

In most of the literary historical studies that have been carried out, the national perspective was seen to be so dominant that these other concerns remained more or less ignored and underplayed. Ramvilas Sharma and others believe that in the nineteenth century, after 1857, there had been an awakening of Hindi jati, Hindi navajagaran (renaissance) which developed modernity, nationalism and progressive consciousness among the Hindi speaking people. He tried to show that in this phase of the development of Hindi as a modern language the progressive elements are more important and the contradictions such as the orthodoxy and conservatism of the writers' ideology were due to external influences. This line of thinking has been criticized by Hindi critics like Manager Pandey who emphasizes the need to see Hindi

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9 Ramvilas Sharma (1912-2000) was arguably the greatest Hindi critic of modern Hindi after Ramchandra Shukla. He wrote more than 40 books among which many were related to the greats of Hindi renaissance. In a remarkable career spanning over six decades he shaped and reshaped the literary history of modern Hindi. He almost single-handedly established the existence of a progressive Hindi jatiyata (nationality) and Hindi navajagaran (renaissance).

10 Ramvilas Sharma believes that Hindi renaissance was essentially promoting rationalism and it was against spiritualism. The spiritual influences, if any, had come from Bengali influence. The resistance to scientific ideas and modern sciences in the writings of Hindi writers were largely due to the influence of Gujarati literature. (See the summary of Ramvials Sharma’s assessment of Hindi renaissance in Manager Pandey, Sabitva Aur Itihas Drishti (New Delhi: Vani Prakashan, 2000), p.191.
navajagaran (renaissance) as a process that had its own contradictions. The study of ‘ideological weaknesses’ of Hindi renaissance is imperative.11

During the last two decades some studies have tried to explore these areas and have tried to analyse the complex relationship between nationalism and communalism in the colonial context. Perhaps the most significant work is that of Vasudha Dalmia who argues that there was a consolidation of Hindu tradition12 in nineteenth century Hindi literature through the efforts of the intelligentsia. Still, one can say that there is plenty of scope for further research, as literary and historical approaches have tended to remain mutually exclusive. Further, we need access to the documentation to be able to say more about the concerns of the intelligentsia of the colonial period.13

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Scholars seem to agree now, that the making of nationalism was a complex process and we need to study the elements that it carried with it. “It is the paradox of the language of our nationalism; that it contained within it the seeds of both our pluralism and our intolerance.”14 In our country the Hindu renaissance and the Muslim renaissance took place in the nineteenth century and the Indian renaissance took place along with it.15 Explaining the complexities of nationalist discourse Sumit Sarkar observes, “roughly from the 1870s, there was a gradual, incomplete, often inconsistent, but extremely important shift within the entire


12 Vasudha Dalmia, The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and Nineteenth Century Banaras (Delhi: OUP, 1999 (1997)).

13 It has to be said that scholars have gone too deeply into theorisation without realising the necessity of unearthing more literary evidence. Karmendu Sishir, a scholar of ‘Hindi renaissance’, has written in detail about how scholars have come to conclusions without consulting sources that are languishing in various libraries and personal collections for years. (Karmendu Sishir, ‘Hindi Navajagran’, Shabdakarma Vimasha, No. 6, October 2004, pp. 63-65.


universe of the discourse and the action taken by the intelligentsia towards various forms of nationalism; a shift which affected many reformers and revivalists alike. With this shift came communal consciousness and in the 1880s and 1890s ‘communalism’ started acquiring something like an all-India dimension.” In his view this occurred around two issues—the Urdu Devnagari script and the Cow Protection Movement. Papiya Chakravarty also suggests that, “A national perspective and desire for identification with large groups with similar ideas characterized the seventies.” The scheme for an all-India organization called the Maha Hindu Samiti, exclusively committed to the defence of Hindu interests and overtly using the Hindu label was outlined by Rajnarain Basu in his Brind Hindur Aasha (The Wish of an Old Hindu).

Sandria Freitag observes that, around this time, in the late nineteenth century, a wide range of experimental explorations of the definition of community had begun. By the second decade of the twentieth century these community identities had taken on a reality that could be expressed in a newly developed vocabulary or idiom, drawing heavily on religious symbols.

It seems acceptable to most historians, that from the 1870s onwards various kinds of nationalisms had emerged, of which one variety carried the Hindu perspective of nationalism. Whether this can be considered an ideology or not is a matter for debate, but communalism, if taken as an ideology, had its origin in the 1870s.

To historians like Bipan Chandra, communalism is above all an ideology. It is a belief-system based on certain assumptions regarding society, politics and economy; and politics is an

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18 Ibid, pp.8-10.
19 Sandria Freitag, “Sacred Symbol as Mobilizing Ideology: The North Indian Search for a ‘Hindu’ Community,” Studies for Comparative Study of Society and History (1980), p.598. She believes it is necessary to go beyond the historians’ focus on the response of the western-educated elite to the British Empire. She says that it is more important to study the collective activities that express group values and the processes of community identity. Also see Sandria B. Freitag (ed), Culture and Power in Banaras: Community, Performance and Environment 1800-1980 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989).
organized ideology. To him, communalism is a belief that maintains that because a group of people follows a particular religion it has, as a result, common social, political and economic interests. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed the emergence of two ideologies—communalism and nationalism. With this view of communalism, it has been seen as a false ideology, which was perceived, articulated and strengthened by a wrong understanding of Indian society and history. Nationalism is seen to be competing with communalism and finally overshadowing it by the early 1920s. To Bipan Chandra, in India communal violence becomes a force only in the 1920s and this was basically a result of the four decades prior to the 1920s.

Some of the national leaders of modern India were able to visualize that the communal approach was against the national interest and they tried to avoid discussing communal questions on public platforms. Political leaders tried to mobilize the Indian masses along nonreligious and economic issues. This blended well with the approach of the Indian National Congress, which had decided in its early days that it would not discuss communal issues at its meetings. Many liberal, moderate leaders were religious men in their personal beliefs, but they realized that raising communal issues was not desirable. Some of the leaders of the nineteenth century, like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who used religious symbols for nationalist motives, were not seen as communal. But by using Hindu religious symbols, he and others like him, gave strength to Hindu communal forces. These forces shared anti-British sentiments with liberal Congress leaders, but had a communal outlook. Those people with communal outlooks, who remained in the Congress, believed that the development of different communities by their community leaders would lead to the prosperity of the nation as a whole.

Bipan Chandra has said, in understandable historical terms, what Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Rabindranath Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru and others had articulated. Being religious is not being communal; but articulating political, social and economic grievances along communal lines is definitely communalism. It was a subtle process in which there was a contest between the communal and secular perspectives. Tagore, a proud Hindu, later developed into an internationalist humanist. His was a shining example of a nonreligious humanist perspective, which can be denoted as the secular Indian perspective. Hence it can be accepted that many religious people were becoming nationalist without being communal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century context.  

Gyanendra Pandey's critique of communalism challenges the notion that communalism develops after, and in some senses in opposition, to Indian nationalism. He says, “One would have to say that communalism and nationalism, as we understand them today, arose together; the age of communalism was concurrent with the age of nationalism.” He argues that 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' political mobilization had been seen as necessary, even inevitable, at least in the early stages of the building of Indian nationalism. To him, the nationalist elite dictated the terms in which the Congress leaders reconstructed categories like communalism after 1920, when community consciousness was looked upon as a threat to national consciousness. Now, the nationalism and communalism were regarded as being in opposition to each other. Pandey makes a very important observation that there has been an attempt to look for links between cause and 'rationality' (bourgeois). The rationality of the bourgeois variety is highlighted and the other perspectives are more or less ignored. 

21 For a detailed analysis of communalism, see Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1993 [1984]).


23 Ibid.
political complexities involved in various popular movements were generally ignored and communalism is seen as the explanation. By viewing these popular movements as communal, the history and politics behind these movements are not considered. They are simply designated as communal or national thereby viewing these movements primarily through these two categories. For example if a riot in a locality resulted in the deaths of Hindus and Muslims it was seen as a communal riot. It is possible to see the same event as a clash between Muslim labourers and Hindu owners, or between Yadav cultivators and Ashraf landlords. In Gyanendra Pandey’s reckoning the resurgence of Hindu communal ideology in the 1920s was a reaction to Muslim militancy.

Suranjan Das has argued that in Indian context the concept of ‘community’ in the context of a confrontation between an essentially Hindu and exclusively Muslim groups in India needs to be qualified. With D. Sabean he has argued, “the notion of a community can not be taken as an externally given fact, nor can it be conceived either as an organic unity or as a religious and political totality to which class interest and disunity are alien.” His view is that a community is formed when a group of people share something in common which separates them from other group members and this shared element becomes the primary referent of identity. To him the nature of a community embodies a sense of discrimination, “a feeling of what F. Barth has described as being encircled by a boundary within which members are

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24 Here Gyanendra Pandey’s views are similar to those of Majid Siddiqi who had argued that categories like nationalism, religious communalism or peasant unrest often overlap at the popular level. For a detailed discussion, see Majid Hayat Siddiqi, ‘History and Popular Rebellion: Mewat, 1920-33’, Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 28, No. 3, July 1986, p.442.

25 This view has been challenged by K. N. Panikkar. For Panikkar’s criticism, see K. N. Panikkar, ‘Culture, Nationalism and Communal Politics’, http://www.kpanikkar.org. This article originally appeared in K.N. Panikkar, ‘Culture, Nationalism and Communal Politics’, in K. N. Panikkar et. al. (eds.), The Making of History, (Delhi: Tulika, 2000).


supposed to act. The consciousness of a community is encapsulated in the perception of its boundaries through the construction of symbols."29

Sociologists have tried to understand this phenomenon called communalism in a different way. According to sociological interpretations modern India is not the result of a historical transition. It is a case of the ‘modern’ invading the ‘traditional’. This leads to a period of uneasy combination, as exemplified by Indian communalism, which combines religion and nationalism.30 Dumont says, “In communalism, elements of both worlds (political entities of the traditional kind on the one hand, and the modern nation on the other) are mixed... (though) the main trend is perhaps modern.” To him, communalism is fundamentally ambiguous: “It can finally appear either as a genuine transition to the nation, or as an attempt on the part of religion to oppose the transformation by allowing for the external appearances of a modern state.”31 He describes the notion of territoriality as being foreign to Indians and says that it was brought into play at the end of the 1930s. Dumont adds that, “With the replacement of the king as sovereign, dharma is... replaced by the people as a collective individual, mirroring itself in a territory.”32 Here, one can find some common ground between the sociologists, who have tried to focus on a great transformation brought about by capitalism, and the interpretations of Benedict Anderson. Anderson believed that nationalism appeared when the two large cultural systems that had preceded it—the religious community

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30 This is the summary of Dumont’s views by Peter van der Veer. For details of Dumont’s analysis, see Peter van der Veer and Carol Breckenridge (eds.), *Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament Perspectives on Orientalism and South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp.23-24.


and the dynastic realm—disappeared. The implicit argument here is that nationalism as a modern phenomenon arose from the ruins of a ‘traditional’ world. Fixing a clear divide between the traditional and the modern has been a major problem with this line of argument.

Some sociologists and historians have tried to understand the complex relationship between communalism and nationalism by working on the thesis of religious nationalism. Questioning the secular character of Indian nationalism, these efforts see the nationalism of Indians essentially as religious nationalism. To Peter van der Veer, this “Religious nationalism builds on a previous construction of religious community.” Mark Juergensmeyer believes that, “Religious nationalism was one way of reconciling traditional religion and modern politics.” This approach reopens the question of the validity of putting secular nationalism as a universal goal for all societies and nations. The ideas of Hans Kohn and Rupert Emerson, who had tried to argue that universal secular nationalism was the goal for all societies, are questioned. Hans Kohn had observed in 1955 that the twentieth century was unique, as this was the first period in history in which all of mankind has accepted the same political attitude, that of nationalism. He traces its origins to ancient Greeks (presaged by the ancient Hebrews), which "stagnated for almost two thousand years" until suddenly it took off in earnest in the seventeenth century in England, the first modern nation. He had added- “Today the whole World has responded to the awakening of nationalism and

33 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), pp.12-22. He sees the nation as growing from the roots provided by religious communities and dynastic realms. This was achieved primarily by the means of what he calls “print capitalism”. This coming of print languages supported nationalist ideologies.


Rupert Emerson has also shared the enthusiasm of Hans Kohn about nationalism as the goal of all modern societies.\textsuperscript{38}

To this thesis of religious nationalism in Indian society, modern politics created a complex relationship between the process of the making of the nation and religion. It sees the process as reconciliation between traditional religion and modern politics. What adds to the complexity is that the idea of tradition itself was in the process of being made in the nineteenth century India. For political scientist Paul Brass ‘communalism’ is a more common South Asian term for ‘separatism’, to describe all movements which attempt to build a differentiated group-consciousness and identity within a defined population.\textsuperscript{39} He elaborates further that the word ‘community’ can be used to refer to ethnic groups\textsuperscript{40} whose members have developed an awareness of a common identity and have attempted to define the boundaries of the group. A community becomes a nationality or a nation when it mobilises itself for political action and becomes politically significant.\textsuperscript{41}

Focusing on community-consciousness, Partha Chatterjee says that the fundamental feature of anti-colonial nationalism in Asia and Africa is that it creates its own domain of sovereignty within the colonial society, well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power. It does this by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains—the material and the spiritual. The material domain is the domain that is the ‘outside’ (the economy, statecraft, science and technology). It is a domain where the West had

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{38} Rupert Emerson, \textit{From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self Assertion of Asians and African Peoples} (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960).


\textsuperscript{40} According to Brass' definition an ethnic group is a group of individuals who have some objective characteristics in common; which go beyond their mere place in a societal division of labour. Following Deutsch he says that this relationship develops on the basis of language, culture, territory, diet, dress, etc.

proved its superiority and the East had succumbed to it. In this domain, Western superiority had to be acknowledged and its accomplishments studied carefully and replicated. The spiritual domain, on the other hand, is the 'inner' domain, bearing the 'essential' marks of cultural identity.

Partha Chatterjee believes that the period of 'social reform' was actually made up of two distinct phases. In the earlier phase, the Indian reformers depended on the colonial authorities to bring about, by state action, reform of the traditional institutions and customs. In the latter phase, although the need for change was not disputed, there was a strong resistance against allowing the colonial state to intervene in matters affecting 'national culture'. The second phase, in Partha Chatterjee's arguments, was actually the period of nationalism. 42

Nita Kumar has underlined some of the weaknesses of historians of communalism by posing some problems before them in a remarkable review. She says "There is a dual agenda for historians seeking to understand the process by which communalism was constructed, emerged, or developed. The historiographical point is that the past is not a fixed entity to retrieve, but on the contrary has been used for different purposes: by the State, Colonial administrators, observers, religious leaders, nationalist, the elite and the people. The historical point is: what is our theory of 'the reception of the text'? That is, how do these representations get into peoples consciousness and affect behaviour? What is a relative weight of this representation versus other factors (economic, political, and demographic) as agencies of change in the processes that give rise to communalism? 43 The question that follows any critic of British representation would be: upon being (repeatedly) defined by the British as 'Hindus'...


43 Nita Kumar believes that historians like Gyan Pandey fulfil only the first the historiographical agenda satisfactorily.
and ‘Muslims’, did people internalise these definitions? Why, and what is the mechanism for this?"  

If one looks into the questions and see the historical literature one would be disappointed to see that communalism has been talked about too much and researched too little. The discussions invariably bring in the context of the presence of communal organisations as the main agency of the virus of communalism, which try to mobilise people with this false consciousness. Not denying the importance of communal organisations one can argue that communalism existed when there was no communal organisation of any substance. How this could be explained without bringing in the question of nationalist mobilisation in the period between late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

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After this foregoing discussion on the historiography of nationalism and communalism I now wish to assert the terms of reference of my own study of these phenomena. We need to go into the processes of the development of these two ideologies at two levels — the popular level and the literary level. Here an explanation is required as to why the literary level is important. India became nationalist, as Sudipta Kaviraj reminds us, not only in English but also in Indian languages—Tamil, Hindi, Bengali, etc. as well. It is in the development of these modern languages and in the writings of the vernacular intelligentsia that we can study the process of the development of nationalism at the popular level. If it is valid in the case of nationalism, it is still truer in the case of communalism. It is here that the social scientists need

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to go deeper and wider\textsuperscript{45} into the subject to understand the complex relationship between the two ideologies.

With some exceptions, historians have rarely studied literary sources in depth, to discover what the intelligentsia thought about the changes around them, and more importantly, how they saw the country of their vision. A fairly large amount of literature is available, mainly in Hindi, which tries to see the question of nationalism and communalism on a different plane. The most significant aspect of these literary writings is that they reveal the minds of the writers and the vision to which we have alluded. In the early stages of the development of modern Indian languages, writers were generally not guided by any outside influence or by any desire to conceal their real intentions.\textsuperscript{46} They wrote about what they stood for. This explains why their writings are so close to the popular language and spirit. But there cannot be any doubt that the literary level was slightly different from the popular level. As this study will try to argue, literature often expressed the minds of the writers, but was also trying to portray a sense of the past and project a vision of the future with ideological considerations. The popular literature of Bihar perpetuates the social ethos, but these literary outputs were primarily trying to put forward their vision of a new world.

Even a cursory glance at the available literary sources reveals that the Hindi intelligentsia was a \textit{dharmik} (religious) intelligentsia, which sought to keep their religious idioms

\textsuperscript{45} This term is used in order to suggest that scholars need to go beyond the frontiers of the United Provinces to comment about say, the Hindi-speaking areas. So far, we do not have any study on Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan or even the Hindi-speaking world of Calcutta.

\textsuperscript{46} In the case of Hindi literature, it was common in nineteenth century Hindi writings to refer to caste and community characteristics. The castes of the characters were mentioned freely. Two striking examples from the writings of Bihar; one from Hindi, Bhuvaneshwar Mishra’s \textit{Balwant Bhumihar} (1890); and another from Bengali, Nagendra Nath Gupta, \textit{Amar Singh} (Bankipur: Khadagbilas Press, 1907 [1895]). A large number of caste magazines were published in those days. With the advent of modern Hindi literature the references to caste have almost disappeared.
and spirit within the vision of nation building; it was progressive and modern.\textsuperscript{47} The emerging nationalist thinking in the second half of the nineteenth century was broadly in agreement with the progressive model of national development as articulated by them. They all wanted Indian society to progress in the same manner as the European nations had (according to their own understanding of what that was). But while this desire was almost nationally acceptable, the sensitivity towards their traditions, religion, culture and history was manifested quite strongly in terms that were different from those articulated by the English-speaking elite intelligentsia of the large cities. In this thesis an attempt is made to study the intelligentsia of Bihar and its relationship with communalism and nationalism. The use of the term 'Hindi-speaking region' would be more appropriate, but this term has so far been used for studies based entirely on the experiences of the United Provinces. We do not know much about Hindi-speaking areas beyond UP's engagements with nationalism or communalism.

In a nutshell, historians have dealt with communalism as a problem that developed as an ideology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For some, it arose with modern nationalism. Others sought to explain it as Hindu nationalism that had a complex relationship with the nationalism purportedly represented by the Congress. They agreed that by the 1920s this relationship posed some problems. Thereafter there was the parting of ways between the two schools of thought. One school focused on communal nationalism. The other school followed the nationalism of the Congress variety, which could successfully edit out communal agendas from its programs. They were, however, occasionally troubled by those nationalist Hindu elements that were sympathetic to at least some of the demands of the communal forces.

\textsuperscript{47} See Chapter 5 for elaboration on this point.
We must use all such understandings if we are to trace the history of communalism in colonial India. On this subject there is some agreement among the historians. The most representative assessment is that communalism is the offshoot of a complex process of politicisation in which diverse forces—modernity and traditionalism, nationalism and communalism—were at work.

There is considerable historical literature that suggests that the regional intelligentsia (Hindi intelligentsia) had actively supported and popularised nationalism, but they also carried with them an agenda, which could be termed as a communal agenda. At the time when nationalism was in the making (between the 1870s and 1920s), their communal consciousness was very much part of their national consciousness. The elements of communalism continued to be an assisting factor for nationalism until politics took a different turn in the mid 1920s. This communal outlook of the Hindi intelligentsia can be seen in their roles in two important movements—the Hindi Movement and the Cow Protection Movement. Their leaders participated actively in these two movements with the belief that Hindi and Hindu belong to Hindustan. The much-publicised cry of 'Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan' is attributed to the Hindi writer Pratap Narayan Mishra and appeared acceptable by almost all the Hindi-educated people of what we call the Hindi-speaking region.

The contents and tone of the literature and journalism of the region have been seen as other indicators of the communal tendencies of the Hindi intelligentsia. Scholars have tried to show how the communal perspective was perpetuated in the minds of the readers by direct and indirect arguments. Another reason that could have been responsible for this type of understanding of communalism was that in independent India Hindi-speaking regions were
hotbeds of communal riots and tensions.\textsuperscript{48}

This thesis attempts to go beyond these general understandings about how communalism came into existence and developed in the Hindi-speaking regions of the colonial period. How far did the Hindi intelligentsia construct this? Was it interwoven with the emerging ideology of nationalism from the early days or was it a false ideology constructed and strengthened by the traditional Hindu sections of nationalists? It would be interesting to probe into the various layers of the consciousness of the Hindi intelligentsia. Was the virus of communalism lurking behind their national positions? Here, it is imperative to underline that nationalism, as it is understood in history and other social sciences today, did not exist in the nineteenth century India and the nationalism was a product of mass movement phase of Indian national movement. The 'nationalism' of the nineteenth century became part of national discourse as it was linked with the ideological formation of nationalism as an ideology as precursor of nationalism of the twentieth century. In this thesis, the use of nationalism implies meanings which are context based.

This thesis also aims to shift the focus from modern UP to Bihar. The location of Bihar gives it a vantage point in that, it lies between the cities of Banaras and Calcutta, two important centres of north and east India during the colonial period. This would test the influence of the Hindi writings of the late nineteenth century which has been seen so far, as noted before, primarily in terms of the developments in UP.

Whatever be the explanations, nobody should deny that community concerns were linked to an ideological position, which differed from that which became popular in the 1920s. This ideology laid its emphasis on certain issues like cow protection, Hindi, and the question of

\textsuperscript{48} Scholars have suggested that particularly after the demolition of the Babari mosque in December 1992, the 'Hindi belt' has become more sensitive to communal tensions.
the basis of Indian society in the future. All these issues involved the question of India’s past, which could be one basis for their present demands. If one looks back beyond the 1920s one can see how different sections of the national movement had different understandings of their history and different visions for the future of India.

The members of the Indian National Congress held at least two visions of India—a secular liberal vision and a Hindu vision. The first vision was national and was eager to join all communities together against the British. It may have had communal forces within it, but it was always striving to widen its perspective and to enlarge its support base. In a way the Indian National Congress always tried to avoid any controversy that related to community questions. A resolution in 1889 clearly stated that it would not deal with any communal issues. But the changing political situation after 1920 required that they declare their own ideological position on issues that involved communal concerns. At this point the Indian National Congress came out with a national ideology which involved a new understanding of nationalism, and it tried to edit out certain issues and concerns by labelling them communal. As a result differences of opinions started to emerge. Some members who differed with the new ideology left the Congress but some stayed on. Those who remained within the Congress tried to continue with their own versions of nationalism, which did not clash with their association with their community or even caste organisations. It was due to the political power and influence of the national leadership that communal concerns remained subdued to some extent. The presence of the colonial state, identified as ultimate enemy due to nationalist mobilization by the Congress, was the reason why there was no direct confrontation between national and communal ideologies. The contest was temporarily postponed.

This study has four objectives. Firstly, it would try to deal with the extent of communal perspectives in the ideologies of the intelligentsia of the Hindi-speaking world in general, and
Bihar in particular, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Secondly, it would analyse the presence of and the relationships between the two ideological positions, which were later sought to be seen as contesting ideologies. In the process of doing so we will go into the details of two important movements—the Hindi Movement and the Cow Protection Movement. Thirdly, it would look at the variations within communal writings and how they came to terms with new realities in the colonial context. Fourthly, we would look into the way they sought to see their past and what their visions of the future were.

Something must be said about why the intelligentsia's attempts and their perceptions are considered so significant for studying the formation of ideologies like nationalism and communalism in an area where this group was not as prominent as in, say Bengal. In Bihar, the intelligentsia generally meant the Hindi intelligentsia. Some of them knew English as well and they kept track of developments in cities like Calcutta or Bombay where the number of English-educated people was sizable.

The Hindi intelligentsia of Bihar was interestingly very close to the popular, common rural sentiments. Their Hindi was full of colloquial expressions. Their sentiments and views were often expressed in a language clearly understood by the lay villager. The Hindi writings of Bihar, unlike that of the later more mature intelligentsia, were free of inhibitions and spoke frankly, clearly and unequivocally especially with regard to their deeply felt prejudices.

An important aspect of this kind of study is to remember that the process of the formation and popularisation of an ideology required values to be given to the symbols of group identity. The attachment of values to the symbols of group identity does not happen
spontaneously. There is always a particular segment of the group, a class or an elite, that takes this task upon itself. ⁴⁹

Throughout colonial-dominated Asia and Africa the imperial powers relied upon traditional elite groups. Many of these were representatives of local, regional or ethnic cultures. ⁵⁰ In the society of nineteenth-century Bihar, the role of the intelligentsia was to work consistently for the introduction and popularisation of values that helped in the creation of both ideologies—nationalism and communalism. This was done in two stages. In the first stage the intelligentsia took the lead. It attached symbolic values to certain objective characteristics of a group, defined the boundaries, created a myth of group history and destiny and attempted to communicate that myth to the defined population. ⁵¹

Histories of the development of Indian nationalism have concentrated on the processes of change in the three great presidencies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras. The non-Hindi speakers of India as a vast, backward region often look upon the entire Hindi-speaking region. They believe that this region, because of its sheer size, would dominate the Indian Union and impose Hindi as the official language of India upon the non-Hindi-speaking states. It is often noted that from the 1920s onwards, the centre of all-India nationalist political activities moved to North India. Yet very little work was done on the development of group identities and political movements in the two huge states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. ⁵²


⁵¹ Ibid, p.43. He has argued that while doing so the process requires a counter group, which is to be differentiated from the group one is aiming to build values for. In this process of differentiation the role of the intelligentsia was equally significant.