

Modern Indian Historiography: the Indian National Congress and the Local-Based Nature of Indian Politics

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The history of the Indian nationalist movement confronted from the very beginning the single most vital issue: the absence of national solidarity amongst the Indians. A substantial number of historians of modern India have tried to understand the true nature of this problem. Thus the research done has concentrated on regional and parochial studies. As a result widely held views about the nature of the "integrated" nationalist movement conducted by the All India National Congress have been challenged. They have also produced new explanations for varied and differing attitudes, reactions and roles played by all those involved in the movement. These new work describe a parallel world of political movements working in the localities and regions. Due to the dominant local nature of these movements it often seemed impossible for Congress to integrate them with its movement. To achieve their objective the Congress had to work with the local people either through their own leaders, owing to the vertical nature of political mobilization, or through these important issues which directly affected these people. And this kind of relationship meant accommodation and comprises on the part of Congress at the cost of its own policies and ideals. The question arises as to what were the goals of Indian National Congress. They were Indian independence and national integration. The nature of response to the organization working for such a noble cause does not suggest that opposition was due to some inherent weaknesses in its policies or in its organization, and therefore it failed to attract the masses. In fact the country was vast, the population was large and the social, economic,

