UNIT 2 THEORIZING THE NATION-2

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2.1 Introduction

In the previous Unit, you have been introduced to some of the major theories of and approaches towards nationalism. You have learnt how to understand and define the concept of the nation, as well as the various factors involved in these understandings and definitions, such as ethnicity, culture, language, race and gender. You have also been introduced to some of the issues that have been central to the debates around nationalism, such as territoriality, common heritage, the invention of histories and traditions. In addition, you have been introduced to feminist perspectives on nations and nationalism, on the issues noted above, as well as on the ways in which masculinity and femininity are deployed in these nationalist discourses.

The current Unit aims to extend and deepen your understanding and analysis of these issues. The Unit will explore the specific case of India in some detail, to draw out the ways in which nationalism evolved under colonialism, and the complex gender dynamics of this process. Specifically, it will focus on the complex ways in which nations and nationalism relate to patriarchal formations, drawing on them but often also reinventing them and/or reinforcing them. It will attempt to elaborate the dynamic between
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constructions of gender masculinity in particular which you have already studied in the MWG-002, Block1, Concepts, Unit 3, Masculinity and the operations of patriarchal formations. The Unit will also attempt to outline some of the limits and limitations with the idea of the nation.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

After completing this Unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss the emergence of nationalism in the Indian context;
- Analyze its roots in colonial discourses, as well as its complex evolution;
- Establish its relations to patriarchal formations, as they evolved under colonialism; and
- Comment on the impact of independence and the subsequent trajectories of nationalism.

2.3 THE EMERGENCE OF NATIONALISM IN INDIA

Central to understanding the emergence of nationalism in India, is the question of understanding the nation that is India. It is often forgotten that the territory that we today recognize as India did not exist in this specific form as a nation-state prior to the colonization of the subcontinent by the British. The subcontinent has historically seen the rise and fall of several empires, many kingdoms and innumerable princedoms; but although some of the largest empires, like Asoka’s or Akbar’s, almost covered the entire subcontinent, at no point did any of these cover the territory that today constitutes India. Even the territory established as an integrated colony under British rule, during colonial times, does not coincide with the India of today. British colonial India stretched as far as, and included, places like Myanmar (or Burma as it was then called) in the east and Afghanistan in the west. It also did not include places like Pondicherry (which was a French colony), and Goa (which was a Portuguese colony), but which subsequently became parts of modern India. Furthermore, these different territorial formations have all had different names at different times - ‘Bharat’, ‘Hindustan’, ‘India’ - but which are now all in use, often interchangeably, with reference to the contemporary Indian nation-state. The question that arises then is, how do we understand the emergence of this contemporary Indian nation-state? What are the discourses of nationalism that have shaped it, and how have these discourses, in turn, emerged? Let us try to respond to these questions with the help of a historical perspective.
2.3.1 The Colonial Period

One of the defining moments in the formation of the contemporary Indian nation-state was the battle of 1857, or the first war of independence. Although it was treated as a mutiny and brutally crushed by the British, this momentous event served to bring together and consolidate the various anti-colonial movements and sentiments that had begun taking shape across the subcontinent. These movements and sentiments emerged primarily as a result of upper caste and elite disaffection and unhappiness, amongst both Hindus and Muslims, with the policies and actions of the British East India Company. This disaffection and unhappiness was not confined to the elite, and was generally quite widespread, but it integrated into a widespread revolt against the British only when the elites of the different communities decided on concerted and coordinated action. In other words, the origins of a contemporary sense of an Indian nation - i.e., of contemporary Indian nationalist discourses lay in the consolidation of anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist sentiments in the nineteenth century (Zavos, 2000, p.34).

Of course, the battle of 1857 was not the only factor in this consolidation. Even before this, social and religious reform movements (such as those initiated by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Periyar E. V. Ramasamy, Mahatma Phule had begun redefining the sense of community amongst Hindus and Muslims respectively. Much of this redefinition occurred in response to criticism of India's social and religious practices by the European colonizer. While a lot of this criticism derived from Orientalist and racist prejudices, there were also substantive issues like untouchability, sati, the treatment of women in general, child marriage, etc. - practices which the Indian subjects of British imperialism found impossible to defend. It is of particular significance that a large number of these issues centred on the treatment of women as a register of civilizational sophistication - we will return to this particular point shortly. Apart from these issues, the British found the sheer diversity of customs, traditions, rituals, etc. baffling, especially since, although the caste system was supposed to be pervasively present throughout the subcontinent, it appeared to be practised differently in different regions. The reform movements sought to remove such practices that were perceived to be negative, but simultaneously also treated them as corruptions and degradations that had set in over the centuries, into social and religious traditions that had 'originally' been far superior.

This sense of a 'golden past', uncorrupted by the flaws of the present, is evident for instance, in the writings of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay; but it was also substantially supported by European scholars like James Mill (1817) , who made similar arguments in his book, A History of British India the reform movements not only drew inspiration from such understandings
of India’s past, but also sought to integrate the diversity of customs, etc., specifically of the ‘Hindu’ communities, into a more homogeneous whole. This was to serve not only as a counter to the criticism about the contemporary spiritual and cultural poverty of the ‘Hindus’ (as contrasted with their ‘golden past’), but also as a means to integrate the diverse communities of the subcontinent into a single community. As Zavos (2000) argues, this was true of the other communities as well, because reform movements also took place in the Muslim, Buddhist, Jain and Sikh communities. Effectively, it was responsible for the close connection in the Indian case between nationalism and communalism.

A third factor in the emergence of a nationalist spirit under colonialism was the new political and administrative policies that came into effect after 1858. After the suppression of the revolt, the British ensured that the resistance to colonial power was blunted substantially, by introducing a system of seemingly participatory governance, which was constituted through representation (Kaviraj, 1997, p.231). By introducing the rationalistic idea of equality before the law, the perception of collective identities as constituted on religious lines, as well as the principle of collective representation in and for governance, the British fundamentally transformed the socio-polity. These measures, along with the Orientalist perception that contemporary ‘Hinduism’ was corrupted and degenerate, were instrumental in the multiplicity of reform and social-work organizations that sprouted in this period. These were in fact often in ideological and philosophical disagreement with each other (e.g., the Arya Samaj versus the Sanatana Dharma Sabha), often caste-based (e.g., the Satyashodak Samaj) and often region specific (e.g., the Arya Samaj in Punjab, the Sanatana Dharma Sabha in the Uttar Pradesh region). It would be helpful for you to review some of these ideas introduced earlier in MWG-001, Block 1, Unit 2 and all Units of Block 2. Nevertheless, they all projected the idea of a common Hinduism, even if each one of them interpreted that commonality differently. In almost all these cases, at least one purpose of the organizations was to organize their perceived communities and become their representative voices under the new imperial policy of representation (Zavos, 2000).

According to Mrinalini Sinha (1995) the reinvention of Hinduism undertaken by Gandhi was of particular significance in this regard: it directly addressed the colonial and Orientalist perception of ‘Hindu’ civilization as degenerate, of the ‘Hindu’ male as ‘effeminate’, and of the caste-system as barbaric, by inverting them. Gandhi sought to redefine the perception of degeneration as a rejection of materialism; the perception of effeminacy as a disposition toward spiritualism and non-violence; and the barbarism of the caste system as the corruption of a rational and just labour-distribution mechanism (Mohan, 2008). Gandhi’s ideas were strenuously opposed in various quarters: the modernists in the Indian National Congress (INC), led by Nehru, argued
insistently on the need for industrial and economic growth, and not just the minimalist, agricultural, village-based economy propounded by Gandhi; the Hindu nationalists were vocally opposed to Gandhi’s propagation of non-violence, arguing that it was effectively emasculating the community and the country; and lower-caste leaders like B.R. Ambedkar categorically rejected the defence of the caste-system offered by Gandhi, as being an essentially exploitative and oppressive system (Bilgrami, 2003). We will come back to the implications of these debates for the imagination of the nation shortly.

Taking the three factors noted above together, it is clear that the resultant sense of community and identity that emerged was thus shaped by

- the fact of imperial conquest;
- a sense of inferiority, humiliation and the desire to reform; and
- the new political and administrative structure of representative participation in governance.

The Indian elites were thus sharply aware of being economically and technologically ‘behind’ the European colonizer, and desired the power that was evidently a consequence of being economically and technologically ‘advanced’ (Seth, 1999). Keeping in mind the sense of humiliation and inferiority in comparison with the colonial power, it is not surprising that the nationalism that emerged - under colonialism and after - was not only dominated by a sense of religious majoritarianism but was also strongly masculinist in nature. The evolution of the personal law system, which effectively allowed individual communities to maintain separate, faith-based legal systems to oversee matters relating to marriage, inheritance, adoption, etc. ensured that the patriarchal interests of individual communities was protected. Even where it sought to present itself as favourable to women, before and after independence, it was registering, not the dismantling of existing patriarchal structures but their transformation into what has been referred to as the ‘new patriarchy’ (Chatterjee, 1993, p.128). These factors are crucial to understanding the nature of the nationalism that emerged as the gradual consolidation of these senses of community and identity, because it is from these factors that the ‘two-nation theory’ was born, that eventually led to the partition of India (Larson, 1997, p. 127).

2.3.2 Partition

The mainstream Indian nationalist movement - as represented by the Indian National Congress (INC) under Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohandas Gandhi - explicitly professed itself to be secular. However, the fact that Pakistan was carved out of what was perceived to be a Hindu majoritarian country, by implication meant that the nationalism of the INC would also be perceived to be ‘Hindu’ in many quarters. Thus, even though the explicitly Hindu
nationalist organizations that emerged in the last few decades of colonial rule, like the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, were relatively small and ineffectual as compared to the INC, the INC itself was often seen to be dominated by Hindu upper castes, and its imagination of the nation as similarly coloured (Gould, 2004). It is for this reason that, despite the influence and popularity of the INC across the country, the number of incidents of communal violence and riots began to escalate in the early decades of the twentieth century, to eventually culminate in the formation of Pakistan.

We have already noted how the carving out of communal blocs along religious lines was accompanied by an intensification of regulation over women, women’s bodies and sexuality - even in the case of almost all the reform movements too. In effect, as we noted above, patriarchal forms changed, patriarchy itself did not. But the direct association of community delineation with ‘the woman question’ under the colonial regime did mean that community patriarchates and their engagements with this question became more visibly masculinist. The terms of that masculinism could differ from community to community, patriarchate to patriarchate: but there was no doubting its common expression as the control over women. These different hegemonic masculinities were thus characterized by protectionism, deriving from each community’s perception of the ‘other’ community as predatory, and therefore of the community as in need of protection. This is one of the ways in which women and community become synonymous: women became bearers of the religious and cultural identity of the community precisely because personal laws and customary practices that served to differentiate one community from the other, were mostly oriented around women; and women’s bodies and sexuality were reduced to serving as the means for the biological reproduction of the community - a phenomenon that is common to the dynamics of nationalism around the world (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Apart from the restrictions this imposed on women’s mobility and use of space - and the concomitant gendering of ‘public’ and ‘private’ spaces into ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ respectively .It is important to note here that these were neither actual nor very clear distinctions and separations and perhaps most significantly, they were applicable mostly to upper-caste, upper-class spaces, if at all.

This patriarchal regime (and this is true of the patriarchies of all communities) also began to characterize women in terms of sexual purity and sexual profligacy. The community’s ‘own’ women were seen as, and expected to be, sexually ‘pure’, untainted by desire, wishing only to serve as the ideological and biological reproducers of the community. At the same time, women of the ‘other’ communities were represented variously as ‘impure’, sexually desiring, sexually available and promiscuous, and crucially, in need
of ‘rescuing’ from the oppressive gender regimes of their own community (Bhasin and Menon, 1998). Women were also routinely demonized as fecund reproduction machines whose sole objective was to procreate and multiply the numbers of the ‘other’ community as rapidly as possible and such women are often represented as predatory and rapacious themselves. (The film series Species I, II and III is a good example of the representation of this anxiety.)

You will have the opportunity to explore these issues in greater detail in subsequent Units. For now, let us focus on the consequences of such understandings for women during the partition of India. Arguably one of the most massive forced migrations in human history, involving the movement of between 12 to 14 million people from one side of the border to the other, Partition was accompanied by an unprecedented scale and intensity of violence, with at least half a million people killed and much of it committed on and experienced by women, irrespective of community. David Lester notes that “about 75,000 women were abducted and raped by men of other religions and sometimes by men of their own religion” (Lester, 2010, p.2). Thousands of other women committed suicide, often in anticipation of the rape, to avoid the ‘shame’ and trauma of not being accepted by either community after being raped and/or mutilated. There are no precise figures available for this violence: but even the conservative estimates give an indication of the extent to which women, their bodies and their sexualities were rendered into objects of possession and exchange, and became the site for the brutal articulation of communal and nationalistic sentiments. This is particularly revealing in the international agreement between the governments of India and Pakistan, to exchange abducted women:

“Having agreed to an apportioning of assets and a division of the armed forces, civil services and the CID, India and Pakistan entered into an inter-dominion agreement on December 6, 1947, to recover all women and girls who had been abducted in either country and restore them to their families: Hindu and Sikh women from Pakistan, Muslim women from India. In four years, 30,000 women were recovered”.

(Ritu Menon & Kamla Bhasin, 1997)

An even more telling indicator of the extent to which the discourses of communalism and nationalism instrumentalize women lies in the fact that any children borne by these women during the period of abduction were not allowed to ‘return’ with their mothers: they were deemed as belonging to the paternal community. These are issues that you will revisit in other Units in greater detail: for now, it is sufficient to note that the highly patriarchal lines along which communities had come to be defined, thus
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had a profound impact on the nature of the nationalism that evolved, on the women of these nationalistic communities, as well as on the set of gendered social relations that came under state regulation after Independence, in the form of the Hindu Code Bill.

2.3.3 The Post-Independence Period

We must now return to the point we had made earlier, about the significance of the fact that much of the reformism of the nineteenth century was woman-centric. The sense that ‘Hindu civilization’ was mistreating its women was also evident in the protracted debates around the Hindu Code Bill in the 1950s (Williams, 2005). However, as Williams makes clear, the debate focused less on how women would benefit and more on the argument that if there was no uniform code for Hindus, the community (and the sense of the nation arising out of it) would fall apart. The opponents of the bill demanded a similar code for all other religious communities, besides arguing that it was state interference in matters that ought to remain in the purview of individual communities. The bill was eventually passed, albeit in a highly diluted form. But what is clear from this debate is

a) that the imagination of the ‘national community’, even amongst apparently secular formations like the INC, was dominantly Hindu;

b) that even though there were multiple discourses on the ‘Hindu’ identity, and consequently multiple nationalist visions of the nation, they were all, without exception, strongly patriarchal imaginations; and

c) they were competitive imaginations of the claims of the patriarchal community, in terms of the apprehension that only the Hindu community’s laws were being interfered with, while the others were given free reign.

An additional theme in this debate was the importance of being ‘modern’. Modernity was understood not just in terms of industrial and economic advancement, but in terms of the political, administrative and judicial structures that were adopted, with the Preamble to the Constitution emphasizing that India was a ‘sovereign democratic republic’. The two ‘modern’ terms there, ‘democratic’ and ‘republic’, were later complemented by two more ‘modern’ terms, ‘socialist’ and ‘secular’, in 1976, through the 42nd Amendment. The imagination of the nation that was emerging, because of the investment in wanting to be a ‘modern’ nation, had to grapple with a problem. It had to ensure that the patriarchal privileges of the nation’s various communities were not affected, even as women and other marginalized members (lower-castes, tribal communities, minority religions and sects, etc) were at least seen to have equal opportunities under the law. The pressure to protect patriarchal privileges came in particular from the conservatives within the INC and from the Hindu nationalists inside and
outside the INC. But there were also modernist voices pressing for change - albeit not because they were pro-women as much as because they were keen to sustain the reformist agenda of the nineteenth century, which was to erase the impression of Hinduism as a degenerate religion. The assassination of Gandhi allowed these contradictory tendencies to resolve, albeit partially and somewhat uncertainly:

i) the presence and influence of the Hindu nationalists reduced dramatically (albeit temporarily) with the banning of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh;

ii) the opposition to Nehru’s modernisation agenda also fell sharply, permitting the re-imagination of the ‘temples of modern India’ as its dams and industrial plants; and

iii) the caste question was sought to be resolved through the reservation policy, thereby acknowledging the system’s inequality as well as implementing a corrective.

The resultant discourse of the nation was a complex amalgam of these developments.

Check Your Progress:

i) Discuss the colonial period in India with regard to nationalism.

ii) Narrate the partition debate with the help of any film/s you have seen on partition.
2.4 RECENT TENDENCIES IN NATIONALISM IN INDIA

In the previous Unit, you have read about the narrating of nations and the importance of such narratives to the understanding of nationalism. In the case of this particular amalgam, the narratives that constituted it did not always appear as a homogeneous narrative - expectedly, since the communities covered by that discourse are not homogeneous. Post-independence, two processes were mainly instrumental in the shaping of this narrative. Let us look at each one of these below:

2.4.1 From Periphery to Centre

The growth and proliferation of non-Congress political parties, especially along caste, linguistic and regional lines played a significant role in this narrative. Linguistic (e.g. Tamil) and regional (e.g. Marathi) chauvinisms multiplied and grew, some of them (e.g. in Nagaland) unresolved from pre-independence times, and others (e.g. Kashmir) complicated by developments after independence. Although the communist parties formed the main opposition to the Congress in the first decade after independence, and although the RSS had been banned for a year in 1948, the gendered imagination of the nation that had shaped the politics of both, the INC and the Hindu nationalists continued in many respects to retain sway. Nevertheless or perhaps precisely because of the replication of the exclusivism that was so central to Hindu nationalism - the other kinds of political formations noted above, taken together, soon became politically powerful enough to challenge the Congress. The earlier pan-Indian dominance of the Congress gradually began getting eroded, first at the peripheries, as they lost control of state governments in the south and east in particular, and then later, even in the traditional strongholds of the Congress, in the Hindi heartlands of the north. Alongside this was the gradual but steady dissemination of the effects of the reservation policy, which led to greater visibility and participation in the public sphere, by the lower castes. These developments led eventually to the declaration of Emergency, and its subsequent overthrow in 1977. By the time of the Emergency in 1975, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, which was the Hindu nationalist precursor to today’s Bharatiya Janata Party, was a respectable - and respectably visible - presence on the political stage. In fact, by the end of the nineteen eighties, it had grown enough to provide crucial support to minority non-Congress governments, but, it had to wait till the nineteen nineties before it could actually try to form a government itself.
2.4.2 Liberalization, Privatization, Globalization

Although the various regional and caste-based parties could not match the strength of the Congress, either singly or even in alliances, for any sustained period of time, they (perhaps inadvertently) played an important role in fostering the politics of exclusivism that had been the defining characteristic of Hindu nationalism. But this exclusivism also had another dimension, one that the re-emerging Hindu nationalist forces shared with the Congress: this was the economic exclusivism that was born out of the steady move towards liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG) that marked the period after the Emergency, especially from the middle of the nineteen eighties. This had a very complex effect on the gendering of social spaces, as well as on the gendering of nationalist discourses. It is important to remember that through the seventies, the women’s movement in India had also grown steadily, but had remained dominated by urban, upper-caste women (Subramaniam, 2004). After the Emergency was lifted, a larger number of non-urban, lower-caste oriented women’s organizations began to become visible. But this is also the period when the Hindu right began to expand the activities of its own women’s organizations such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevika Samiti and the Durga Vahini. In sum, the earlier easy association of women’s bodies with, and as, the bodies of communities, for instance, was no longer so easily possible. Furthermore, LPG brought with it its own mechanisms of gendering and sexualizing - for instance, through a suddenly expanded exposure to American films and television, the demands of the advertising industry, beauty pageants, etc., on the one hand; and, on the other, by bringing more women into the public sphere, through a sudden expansion in the demand for skilled and semi-skilled female labour, in the new kinds of service industries. The transforming political economy made it difficult to maintain women as segregated, de-sexualized and ‘pure’; at the same time, perhaps for this very reason, the discourse of the woman-as-national-honour grew even more strident in the Hindu right. Two incidents that indexed the Hindu right’s communalized approach to women that occurred at this time, were the Shah Bano case and the Deorala Sati incident. You have read about the Shah Bano case in MWG -002, Block III, Unit 3. It would be helpful for you to review our previous discussion on this case. In the former, the Hindu right vehemently opposed the Congress decision to overturn the Supreme Court’s judgement, which effectively favoured Muslim women, because they saw in it a vindication of their perception of the Muslim woman as oppressed within her community (Cossman and Kapur, 1996). In the latter case, they vehemently opposed any attempt to intervene in or prevent cases of sati, or widow self-immolation, because they saw it as an infringement of the right to worship (Abraham, 1997).
2.4.3 Debates on Mandal versus Masjid

In 1989, the V P Singh government implemented the recommendations of the Mandal Commission on reservation for Other Backward Castes. The controversy that surrounded this decision polarized the polity along lines of caste. The Mandal recommendations directly addressed the nature of caste-based inequality, and questioned the privilege of caste hindus over the state and the economy. It was at this time that serialized adaptations of the two Indian epics, the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat* (in that order), appeared on television, in the late nineteen eighties. The Hindutva forces deployed such cultural productions as an antidote to the Mandal commission (Rajagopal, 2001). According to Arvind Rajagopal, the *Ramayan* was also used to circulate their ideology in the context of the *Ram Janmabhoomi* campaign, after the Shah Bano case. The Muslim patriarchate and the Hindu patriarchate were appeased through the Shah Bano Judgement and the opening of the *Ram Janmabhoomi* shrine at Ayodhya for worship (Subrahmaniam, 2003).

During this time Congress government and other organizations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal took the lead in the campaign to build the Ram temple in Ayodhya. Reactionary forces among Hindus and Muslims politicized the religion through their claims related to *Ram Janmabhoomi* shrine and Babri mosque.

India witnessed the demolition of Babri mosque in 1992 and consequential communal riots. These became the central concern for a spate of films like Bombay, Hey! Ram and Black Friday. These films strove to reconcile the explicitly Hindu nationalist agenda that was now dominant, with the official, state-maintained position of secularism (Gabriel, 2010). The conclusion of the decade saw the Kargil war, and the rise to governance of the Hindu nationalists. Significantly, all of these developments were marked by a hyper-masculinist, aggressive and blatantly sexist rhetoric that has now become characteristic of such right-wing nationalism.

2.5 NATIONALISM IN INDIA TODAY

Arguably the nature of nationalism today is changing, but not substantially so. Indian democracy is constantly questioned by the communal forces. It has challenged the secular fabric of the nation. It also revealed the ways in which issues of religion and secularism are contested by prominent political groups. Simultaneously, economic nationalism has also emerged through the projection of sheer economic independence. This sort of economic nationalism is totally detached from the harsh Indian realities. Indeed, the disparities and inequalities continue to grow, and, as always, women continue to bear the worst effects of those inequalities. Issues like the terribly skewed sex-ratio, which led Amartya Sen to speak of ‘missing
women’, and the continued imbalance between men and women in almost all indices of Human Development - literacy, education, employment, health, mortality - remain poorly addressed. Instead, the issues that dominate the political stage continue to orient around the failed ideologies of nationalism.

2.6 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have engaged specifically with the question of nationalism in India. We have explored some of the circumstances in which it arose and evolved under colonialism. We noted the factors that played a significant role in that evolution, e.g., the uprising of 1857, the Orientalist perception of Indian religions, the reform movements, the administrative policies of the British, etc. We outlined the ways in which the nationalism that emerged was therefore strongly communal, patriarchal and masculinist, and spelt out some of the ways in which women, women’s bodies and their sexualities in particular were regulated and given meanings by these patriarchal nationalisms. We then traced the consequences of this communal nationalism in and for the partition of India, and the ways in which this event was inscribed on the bodies of women. This was followed by a brief discussion of the relationship between gender and nationalism in the post-colonial period. We saw how ideas of modernity came together and also conflicted with nationalist sensibilities on the ‘woman question’, and how this was resolved. The subsequent trajectories of nationalism were also explored, in relation to the changing political economy, as well as the events leading up to the Emergency of 1975. We then studied the factors that permitted the gradual weakening of the Congress, and the re-assertion of Hindu nationalism, and the violence this unleashed in the country through the nineteen nineties. Finally, we commented on the state of nationalism in India today. The purpose of this Unit was, in that sense, to give you a historical-theoretical grasp of the issues involved in understanding a phenomenon like nationalism specifically in the Indian context. In the Units that follow, you will have more opportunity to engage with these and other issues pertaining to gender and nationalism, and to do so with a more specifically literary or film text based process of analysis.

2.7 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1) What were some of the factors that shaped the evolution of nationalism in the Indian context, under colonialism? Discuss each of these individually.

2) How did Gandhi tackle the Orientalist criticism of Hinduism? How did this in turn affect his understanding of nationalism? Discuss in your own words.
3) What were some of the ways in which women and women’s bodies were shaped and regulated by nationalist understandings? Critically analyse.

4) Outline the main trajectories of nationalism in India after independence.

5) Write a short note on the power of television to shape the imagination of the nation in gendered ways.

2.8 REFERENCES


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### 2.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

