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RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

*Q: Politicization of Religious (Hindutva) Ideologies
Fostering Extremism & Anti Minority Sentiments ----- India
Under Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) Post 2014 General
Elections*

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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

As a philosophy, secularisation is characterised as an attitude of a political ideology that seeks to abolish religion from public and social life, or at least manage and control religion, limiting its impact on state politics. In other words, the theoretical component describing secularisation theory is a hypothesis postulating that, because of industrialization and increasing globalisation, religion would diminish as a paradigm throughout time and place. However, in the twenty-first century, the scenario seems to contradict the very notion of thesis of secularisation itself. Despite modernisation and globalisation being at the forefront of the society, religion still seems to be dominant and evolving concept in response to the expanding international relations. This might be noticed with the global development of religious nationalism.

Numerous democracies throughout the globe are seeing a surge in religious nationalism. This prevalence of religiously motivated political appeals is observable in Turkey, Latin America, western Europe, the United States of America, and post-Soviet nations. During the 2018 presidential elections in Costa Rica, fanatics supported populist candidate 'Fabricio Alvarado' purportedly gathered under the slogan 'if a man of God can't lead us, then no one can' (Booth, 2018). Jair Bolsonaro, a right-wing populist contender for the president of Brazil, ran on the slogan 'Brazil before everything, and God above everything' (Barros and Silva, 2020). Islamic nationalists teamed with anti-Chinese xenophobes and economic nationalists in Indonesia to depose and convict the Christian governor of Jakarta, 'Basuki Tjahaja Purnima', on Blasphemy charges (Juergensmeyer, 2019). In addition, the west, particularly Europe and the United States of America, has also experienced the growth of religious nationalism in the form of Christian nationalism, like in Hungary under Viktor Orban and the United States under Donald Trump. Thus, who dramatically politicised religious doctrines and used religious feelings as their primary campaign strategies to ascend to power. Even though religious nationalist groups are quite diverse, they seem to have many similar characteristics. Which is quite visible in the above-mentioned instances. To begin with, most religious nationalist parties are characterised with puritanical element that colour their political platforms and subsequent ways of attaining power. Furthermore, in many nations, religious nationalists argue for economic austerity or severe anti-corruption measures via moral appeals and rhetoric. Lastly, religious politics often

reveals a majoritarian nationalism that strives to redefine the foundation of national identity in a way that excludes or marginalises religious minorities.

In addition to the significant manifestations cited above, India merits a more in-depth examination due to its democratic orientation and size. India the largest democracy in the world and is home to one-sixth of the world's population and one-quarter of electoral voters. Consequently, political events in India have significant repercussions across south Asia and the democratic paradigm. The intersection between religion and politics in India is problematic. This connection started with the state's support of the Brahminical Vedic Tradition, which insured that religious leaders would in return defend the state. India's new constitution created during its independence in 1947 founded it as a secular republic that did not have a rigid church-state separation, as many western democracies. But rather a principled distinction between religion and the state. Which obligated the state to respect all religions and ethnicities and give freedom to every religion surviving in under its umbrella to practice and prosper. In the 1990s, however, the revival of the Bhartiya Janta Party (Henceforth BJP) brought religion back to the forefront of Indian politics. Although it remained static during the 2000s, it evolved and resuscitated under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Mod in the past two decades. Introducing an alternative nationalism that is not secular in character but rather founded on the idea that Indian and Hindu cultures are the same. Thus, giving birth to religious nationalism in the form of Hindu Nationalism. The Hindu Nationalist viewpoint asserts that secular nationalism is a foreign imposition that obscures India's authentic Hindu identity and cultural sensitivities. It believes that Hinduism is not just the balance of India's ethnic and religious groupings, but also the ultimate basis of the nation's identity. Consequently, known as Hindutva, the idea of Hindutva developed in 1932, as an ideology originating as a nationalist movement in response to the colonial British government and remained hidden for a considerable amount of time. Over time, however, it evolved under the leadership of the Sangh Parivar (Hindu Nationalist Family) and other organisations and leaders who institutionalised and transformed it into a right-wing ideology that sought to return the nation to its roots recognising its identity as a Hindu nation or the 'HINDU RASHTRA'. Today, and post-2014 under the BJP as the political wing of the Sangh Parivar, the Hindutva ideology mutated to the forefront of Indian politics. Providing it legitimacy and institutional framework it was craving since the nation's independence. Under the guise of development, the BJP government present day begun to politicise and execute these ideals with the goal of transforming India into a Hindu Rashtra. Therefore, discriminating, and marginalising other religious groups and minorities. Consequently, giving birth to radicalism and extremism. This thesis ought's to examines this

very notion and postulates the underlining question of the thesis for analysing; the impact of politicizing of religious ideologies under the BJP government post 2014 Parliamentary elections fermenting extremism and anti-minority sentiments. In doing so the thesis will argue by implementing the secularization thesis and its critical discourse as the theoretical concept and analyse the rise of Hindu nationalism throughout history. As well, explore its evolution from its birth to present day. Further to support the argument the thesis will examine the rise of BJP post-2014 parliamentary elections and analyse the politicisation of various Hindutva ideologies under its reign. Hence, examine the impact of politicisation, in terms to discrimination and marginalisation of minorities. Lastly to conclude the argument of the thesis, I will analyse and provide a differentiating truth about Hindutva. Which is fascist, authoritarian, and majoritarian in nature and is fermenting extremism and anti-minority sentiments with the majority Hindu population. Leading the Indian democracy towards right-wing and ethnic democracy.

Chapter 2 METHODOLOGY

To answer the research question posed in Chapter Five, this study employs the qualitative method of discourse analysis of secondary data in terms to various documents, news sites, government documents, and historical writings to establish an understanding of the rise of religious Hindu nationalism under the present BJP government post-2014. Furthermore, it will use the same methodology to also analyse the subsequent politicising of the Religious (Hindutva) ideologies it impacts on other religions and minority groups (social and cultural life).

The first section of the chapter will seek to explore the rise of Hindu Nationalism in the form of religious nationalism under the umbrella of various organisation throughout history (present day known as the Sangh Parivar (RSS+VHP+BJP and other present-day organizations). Furthermore, the section will also build on the understanding of its evolution as a right-wing ideology setting the basis of the thesis by exploring the core elements and important ideologues of the Hindutva.

The second section of the chapter will analyse the rise of BJP as the political wing of the Sangh Parivar Post 2014 Parliamentary elections and understand the various concepts and political ideologies implemented by the BJP. This section will further explore the politicisation of the Hindutva Ideologies under the BJP reign and its consequent impact.

Along with secondary data, qualitative research methods are employed to create a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Various case investigations are carried out to comprehend the rise of religious nationalism worldwide and in India. Documents and news articles relevant to the analysis of various reports, historical linchpins, and news stories revealing the rise of religious nationalism are analysed with the secularization theory and its critical discourse as the central focus. Since this is not a fixed phenomenon and continues to recur as the boom-and-bust cycles of Keynesian economics, the historical data reveals remarkable parallels between known past instances and the current situation. The patterns pertaining to the emergence of religious nationalism in India following the 2014 elections are evaluated through the lens of history. Due to limited resources for data collection and the lack of social scientific forensic tools for academics, the complexity of the cause and relations is not modelled; instead, trends are interpreted based on the evidence acquired during the research. As religious nationalism spreads like a wave over the globe, the situation in many nations is distinct.

Focusing on the current reality and the state of human rights across the country, the discourses and speech acts of the relevant players are analysed. The verbal acts and writings of the securitizing actors identify the subject that requires immediate protection as the referent object. After identifying the relevant item, I will demonstrate why the politicisation actions of the BJP government have led to rise of extremism and antiminority sentiments. Immediate actions are crucial for securitization because they underline the need to make and implement out-of-the-ordinary decisions to avert an existential threat to the pluralism and minorities within India. It may begin with a single law or investigation, but through the domino effect, it may expand to other countries or stricter regulations may be enacted inside the same country. This not only causes societal divisions and disputes, but also hinders the nation's development. The violation or degradation of some fundamental human rights while wearing religious attire exemplifies the harmful effects of religious nationalism's securitization. This study attempts to add to a very relevant and well-researched field by examining the struggle against the poisonous head of religion and state entwinement from a more tolerant stance.

Discourse has been used in studies of religious nationalism as an analytical and empirical tool, a theoretical framework, a realm of application, and even as a foundation for the policies created by Hindu nationalism itself. Despite the indispensability of discourse as a framework for examining religious nationalistic policies and their ramifications, the ways that rhetoric is defined or formalised in politicisation and religious nationalism research are frequently left ambiguous, obscuring connections between wider onto epistemological questions regarding how we construct findings from secondary data and the nature of the policy surrounding the relevant corpus. In this interpretation, we generate a data set of peer-reviewed journal articles, historical documents, and analyses of discursive from diverse theoretical and empirical perspectives to better understand the thoroughness and validity of how discourse is classified and systematised in research on religious nationalism, including classifications that are unreliable with authors stated epistemological and ontological orientations. After establishing the conceptual foundation for studies of speech actions in the sphere of religious nationalism and politicisation, we explain how discourse analysis is used in disputed narrative contexts in a flexible and irregular manner. In conclusion, we individually evaluated each publication and then review personal records and the fundamental publications cohesively in search of complexities and details that we may have omitted during initial periods when we had a lesser grasp of the textual data as a whole or the final analytic categories. We also analysed the three principal sections of each historical document and report for epistemological consistency, recognising the need to do so when several studies professed one discourse viewpoint in their

framing but operationalized a different one in their analysis. To do this, we pay careful attention to the following specifics: Deviation from the intended goal or objective of the study on religious nationalism, the theoretical and conceptual framing view of policy as language that moulds thinking and action options, and discrepancies between the actual application of the analysis and the conclusions. Further study is necessary to appreciate the audience's effects and brainwashing by the religion, as well as its negative effects on society.

Chapter 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on religious nationalism has been quite intensive in the recent years. Though the phenomenon is old it cropped to the centre stage in recent years and has been a point of attraction for various scholars and theorist of religious studies, secularization nationalism, modernist theorist and many more. Various Scholars and theorist have postulated to explain the rise of religious nationalism around the world. As well postulated various theoretical and ideological prospects explaining the growth and evolution of religious nationalism. One of the prominent ones is Marks Juergen Meyer a scholar specializing in global studies and religious studies. He, in his article worldwide rises of religious nationalism postulates that religious nationalism has been part of the international arena from the past many decades and is observable through many cases around the globe, from Palestine – Israel conflict to rise of Hindu nationalism in India. He further also sheds light on various types of religious nationalism such as ethnic and ideological nationalism. Also, claims that “politicised religious movements are responses of those who feel desperate and desolate in the current geo-political crisis”(Juergensmeyer, 1996). Another prominent scholar and author of the book the *‘power worshippers; inside the dangerous rise of religion nationalism*, Katherine Stewart explains the rise of religious nationalism in the form of Christian nationalism in USA and provides insights to history of right-wing evangelicals. She postulates that in the most modernised western hegemon like USA it is quite astonishing to see the rise of Christian Nationalism, which is not the involvement of religious values with political concepts but is a form of political organization with a goal to take over every element of the government from the presidency to the state legislatures and local governments. She further puts forward; that according to “Christian Nationalists their goals and aims had very little to do with religion of morality” (Stewart, 2020). Which is a perfect comparison to the rise of Hindutva Ideology in the form of Hindu Nationalism a core of this thesis. Similarly, the Hindutva Ideology in comparison to Hindu religion or Hinduism is totally opposite. Furthermore, in understanding religious nationalism in various nations around the globe. It is necessary to examine and explore the two concepts and approaches individually. In doing so ‘Roger Brubaker’ in his article religion and Nationalism analyses four approaches which explain religion and nationalism, treating religion and nationalism along lines of ethnicity and race as an analogous phenomenon. Further baker explains religion and its interpretation in resulting to nationalist (Brubaker, 2012). Another scholar ‘Barbara -Ann J. Rieffer,’ in this context criticises significant scholars of religious studies such as Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson for neglecting the role of religion in the

rise of nationalism and its direct, indirect influences of religion. She postulates “that religious nationalism, religion and nationalism are inseparable and national movements, religion plays a less dominant role, merely assisting the more prominent nationalist movement as a cohesive element”(Rieffer, 2003). Further her article explains that the “type of religious nationalism affects what type of nation state develops, stronger the religious influence on the national movement, the greater the likelihood that discrimination and human rights violations will occur” (Rieffer, 2003). Further moving into the case study of the thesis, India is explored by both local and international scholars of south Asia religious and political studies. To begin with, Ashutosh Kumar postulates “India has been experiencing a substantial departure from the earlier political norms and is observing the strong emergence of “Hindu” nationalism as a product of the late 19th-century colonial India, and its development until the independence of the country in 1947” (Kumar, 2020). While the Indian nationalist movement, organized under the aegis of the Indian National Congress, formed in 1885, to counter colonialism in India for independence, it advocated for a secular democratic state, two other important organizations such as the Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, consisting of many other groups of “Hindu” religious and social organizations) and Muslim League advocated in favour of a religion-based nation”(Kumar, 2020). Veer, Peter Van Der in his book ‘*Religion Nationalism; Hindu& Muslims in India*’, explains the current events in India and revival of religious nationalism under the BJP. He puts forward the idea of Hindu and Muslim Identities and the real clash of material and interests and social classes and transformation of these identities in the colonial and postcolonial periods and postulates that rise of nationalism is due the fact that; ‘religious identity is constructed in ritual discourse and practice’(Van der Veer, 1994). These identities are not primordial attachments, inculcated by unchanging traditions, but specific products of changing forms of religious organization and communication (Van der Veer, 1994). Thus, religious nationalism articulates discourse on the religious community and discourse on the nation, as Hindu and Muslim nationalisms is also developing along similar lines and that the one needs the other (Van der Veer, 1994). Further Christophe Jaffrelot in his book ‘*Hindu Nationalism; A Reader*’ analysis the rise of Hindutva and BJP through history till present day and provides a detailed insights to the Phenomenon of Hindu nationalism and its evolution through the lens identity politics, majoritarianism and authoritarianism (Jaffrelot, 2009). However, it is also essential to understand the Hindutva ideologies to understand the birth and its evolution as Hindu nationalist ideology in India. Which is necessary to examine its underlining element to its present evolution and its core objectives. In doing so we explore the literature of true text by Hindutva’s founding father V. D Savarkar who in his publication

Essentials of Hindutva and Hindutva: Who is a Hindu? postulates the core elements of the ideologies, according to V. D Savarkar; “ the Hindus are bound together not only by the tie of the love we bear to a common fatherland and by the common blood that courses through our veins and keeps our hearts throbbing and our affections warm, but also by the tie of the common homage we pay to our great civilization - our Hindu culture” (Savarkar, 2016). Further he put forward every aspect of Hindutva which evolved under other leaders such as M.S Golwalkar and Hegewar. Golwalkar in his true publication and book ‘*Bunch of thoughts*’ outlined the formation of RSS which gave birth to the Hinduness ideology of Hindu nationalism and is the parent umbrella of Hindutva and right-wing ideology of the BJP. He explains that the RSS is “based on a philosophy of national culture and envisages the whole of the nation” and will work on the philosophy of Hindutva to build India into a Hindu Rashtra (Golwalkar, 1996). Further his view claimed that ‘The national history of the Muslim period should be re-written giving the truth without varnish and all should appreciate the best values exemplified by the heroes of authentic history’(Golwalkar, 1996). Which set the basis for the identity politics played by the present BJP government to undermine minorities and other religious groups within India. However, with rise of Hindutva and understanding it through the literature of the above authors next section addresses the core question of rise of the Hindutva ideology to the centre stage of Indian politics and how the BJP has politicised it giving rise to an authoritarianism, majoritarianism and identity politics within India. Consequently, fostering a rise in extremism and antiminority sentiments. Labelling the Nation from a secular democracy or a liberal democracy into an ethnic democracy (Jaffrelot, 2021). Who in his publication provides insights to the transformation of India as a democracy(Jaffrelot, 2021).

Furthermore ,Angana P. Chatterji, Thomas Blom Hansen And Christophe Jaffrelot in the book ‘Majoritarian State; the Hindu nationalism changing India put forward that, ‘The 2014 elections witnessed the culmination of the Bhartiya Janata Party’s (BJP’s) longstanding efforts to rule India’ (Chatterji et al., 2019), along which the ideologies of Hindutva began to take centre stage and the process of legitimization of the ideology began with the BJP using state administration, military foreign services and every aspect under their control. Thus, saffronizing India into a Hindu Rashtra (Chatterji et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Christophe Jaffrelot’s in his book Modi’s India: Hindu Nationalism explains the rise of ethic democracy and explains how India under Modi is introducing various amendments such as CAA, NRC, Revocation of article 370, cow protection laws and so on under the Hindutva Umbrella using various political techniques and ways. Further to access the impact of politicisation, the rise of extremism, Radhika Desai claims, “Hindutva in India maintained

contact with fascist Italy and Nazi Germany throughout its emergence, and that Hindutva actors (Sangh Parivar) play a crucial role in nation-building extremism and the formation of a majoritarian identity(Desai, 2016).

Chapter 4 THEORETICAL CONCEPT

Religion and nationalism are both important and convincing identity builders. However, their interplay is a paradigm that may be debated. With the advent of secular modernity and nationalism, the majority of these claims indicate that religion's role as a fundamental identity transmitter has been supplanted (Mentzel, 2020). With the growth of industrialization and globalisation, national identity and its ideological paradigm, nationalism, superseded the self-identification of people as religion (Mentzel, 2020). Numerous historians and theorists of the study of religion hypothesised that the major concept of nationalism was a product of modernity, which has replaced religion as the primary identifier of human identity. In addition, it was assumed along similar lines that religious self-identification would give way to secularism, particularly nationalism (Barker, 2008).

Late in the nineteenth century, however, it became obvious that this is not the case. In certain instances, such as the United States, religion's significance as a part of identity has waned through time (Stewart, 2020). In addition, some researchers of religion and nationalism assert that the two conceptions may coexist or complement one another. Similarly, the idea of nationalism as a contemporary phenomenon adds religion back into the discourse, so complicating secular phenomena (Gorski and Altinordu, 2008). We employ the secularisation theory in this thesis to explain the growth of Hindu nationalism in India and the politicisation of the ideology to claim Hindu rashtra as a kind of dominating religion in India.

The understanding of the link between religion and nationalism and the secularisation thesis are strongly related (Mentzel, 2020). According to its definition, secularisation is one of the primary aspects of modernity that entails the privatisation of religion. This relationship gives lead to a secular concept of national and public identity (Eastwood and Prevalakis, 2010). This thesis observes the emergence of Hindutva right-wing ideology under the BJP leadership, which to construct a Hindu identity not only challenges the basic concept of secularism, but also depicts its progression in the creation of self, national identity in the shape of Hindu Rashtra.

The two pioneers of contemporary sociology, Emile Durkheim, and Max Webber might corroborate this claim. In his work rudimentary forms of religious activity, which takes secularisation as its central theme, Durkheim contends that contemporary secularisation would be intolerant in the absence of a system of ideas that provides meaning and purpose to humanity and a foundation for community life (Durkheim, 2011). In historical context, however, these

holes were filled by religion; hence, nationalism either substitutes religion or is religion itself now (Durkheim, 2011).

In addition, according to Max Webber, the concept of countries and nationalism evolves with time and may be inconsistent and ambiguous (Schroeder, 2016) . To bolster his point, he hypothesises, "Insofar as this ambiguous phrase has anything in common, it must pertain to politics(Breuilly, 2011). Probably, the term nation could only be defined as: an emotion-based community whose appropriate embodiment is a common state, and which thus strives to build just such a state (Grosby, 2013). Nevertheless, the roots of the causes that contributed to the formation of this national spirit may be rather various.

In addition, Webber emphasises to the country that the concept of nation has some relationship to Culture (Andreski, 2013). Thus, the significance of ‘country’ is founded on the predominance or, at the very least, irreplaceability of cultural values that must be safeguarded and promoted via the expansion of the group's individuality (Beetham, 2018). It is important to note that while Webber explored the relationship between national identity and nationalism through the prism of secular modernity, he did not connect the two as Durkheim did.

Other researchers and thinkers, such as John Breuilly and Ernest Geller, have supplied many important facts concerning nationalism. In their instance, they have proposed that, due to industrialization, nationalism is inextricably linked to secularism (Gellner, 2008).

In addition, this thesis will also employ the critical discourse of the secularisation hypothesis as the core base. Hindutva via its evolution and execution by Hindutva ideologies is the evolution of the nationalist attitude over time and geography. Moreover, post-2014 BJP is executing these policies by undermining India's founding concept of Nehruvian secularism. Also criticises the congress regime's use of pseudo-secularism to justify the implementation and politicisation of Hindutva ideologues.

In this context, several academics claim that nationalism and countries have existed since the mediaeval era and are not the result of industrialization. Thus, explicitly connect this phenomenon to religious identity (Hastings, 1997). In this sense, Adrian Hasting argues that national identity, rather than nationalism, arose (after its inception) amid the resurgence of several ethnoreligious groups (Hastings, 1997). Another religious studies scholar, Steven Groby, traces this concept to ancient history and relates it to religion (Breuilly, 1985). Furthermore, some Perennialists believe that countries emerged from pre-existing ethnic mixtures and that these identities are founded on mythologies of shared origin and are often religious at their heart (Hjelm, 2016). Thus, these problematic aspects of the thesis of secularisation have spawned several instances of religious identity (Verma, 2017). Such as the

emergence of Christian nationalism during Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign. Some understandings of religious identity include the terrible Yugoslavian conflicts of the 1990s and the typical instance of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as tensions in Northern Ireland, the current growth of right-wing Hindu nationalism in India, and the struggle between Hindus and Muslims in India. Using the secularization thesis and its critical discourse the thesis will further analyse the growth of Hindutva ideologies and its rise to centre stage of politics under the BJP post 2014 general elections.

Chapter 5 ANALYSIS

Section 1: Historical Background

(This section of the chapter is divided into two parts 1st section will focus on the birth, evolution of Hindu nationalism within India as well as observe the emergence of Hindutva as an ideology and explore its core elements through the lens of various nationalist leaders and organization in India pre- and post-independence. 2nd sections would Further, utilise section one as its basis to further prove the argument as well act as basis for the analysis).

A country with 29 distinct states, 29 distinct cultures, and 29 distinct languages is home to every existing religion in the world. The world's largest democracy and the fastest-growing economy. India was founded on the principle of secularism and since attaining independence in 1947, India flourished and made a mark on the global stage. India with its current population of 1.3 billion is one-sixth of the global population and one-third of the global electorate. Considering this, the development of political events in India undoubtedly has far-reaching consequences for South Asia and the democratic arena. However, in the 2014 parliamentary elections, the resurgence of BJP, sweeping a win with complete majority, presided over the expansion of right-wing Hindu nationalism in India. BJP, a by-product of the ideas and a political arm of the Sangh Parivar, (Hindu Nationalist family as described in the beginning), began to govern the nation based on the elements of RSS's religious ideologies of --- Hindutva (which will be discussed further in this chapter) a right-wing nationalist organisation whose roots were deep dug into the Indian political system during the nation's independence struggle. Today, due to politicization of these various ideologies of the RSS, the BJP has transformed the nation into an ethnic democracy which is a home to identity politics, majoritarianism and authoritarianism.

Consequently, sowing the seeded for the growth of radicalization, extremism, and anti-minority sentiments. Thus, challenging the very notion of secularism it was built on, further discriminating, and marginalising the minorities of the nation.

Like France and the United States, India has contended on two principles for more than a century (Upadhyaya, 1992). The first being universalist, whilst the second more ethnic (Smith, 2015). After achieving independence in 1947, the nation was primarily guided by democratic, federalist, and secularist principles (Jaffrelot, 2019). However, India remained unsecular for more than 20 years post-independence. But it strived on the notion, introduced by one of its founding fathers and the first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. He stated that Indian

secularism is not founded on the separation of religious and political domains (or even the secularisation of society), but rather on the public recognition that all religious groups have equal rights (Parekh, 1991). Jawaharlal Nehru, put forward that, "When we talk of a secular state in India, even finding a suitable Hindi phrase for 'secular' might be challenging, some feel it represents something antireligious, that is blatantly false, and it indicates that the state treats all faiths fairly and gives equal opportunities" (Bilgrami, 1994). At the same time, the president of the Indian republic, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, modified Nehru's ideas by noting, that 'When India is referred to be a secular state, it does not mean that we reject the presence of an unseen spirit or the relevance of religion to life, nor do we celebrate atheism, does not entail that secularism transforms into a positive religion or that the state assumes divine power and supreme being is central to Indian culture, the Indian State would neither identify with nor be guided by any religion' (Benegal, 2007).

However, the word secular was amended into the constitution of India in 1976, by then prime minister Indra Gandhi, making it an official and legal obligation (Benegal, 2007). Strengthening the very notion of secularism within the Indian federal system which has been prevailing from the past 75 years till date.

Present day, the Bhartiya Sam Vidhana (constitution of India) is the supreme law of India. The document lays down the framework that demarcates, fundamental political code, structure, procedure, and powers as well as the duties of the government institutions. Further, it also sets out fundamental rights, directive principles and duties of the citizens of the nation. This document post amendment entailed various articles which set the guideless for the nation to be secular. Article 15 prohibits religious discrimination; article 16 applies this prohibition to civil service standards and recruitments; and article 29 applies it to public school admissions and those receiving state subsidies (India, 1949). Furthermore, while the secular constitution prohibits religious instruction in public schools, it states that "all minorities, whether religious or linguistic, will have the right to create and run education institutions of their choosing" (India, 1949) (2020).

Satisfying Charles Tayler's main prerequisites for secularism: first, everyone is free to practise their religion (Maclure and Taylor, 2011). Two, all religions, whether dominant or minority, are treated equally in the public sphere, and three, every spiritual family must be heard (Maclure and Taylor, 2011).

Furthermore, the foundation of Indian secularism is a centuries-old civilization in which a variety of religions coexisted on Indian soil (Upadhyaya, 1992). Including, Ashoka, the first Buddhist king, Akbar the Great, the Mughal emperor who promoted a dialogue between Islam,

Hinduism, and Christianity, and contributed magnificently to the history of this civilization and most renowned political figure in contemporary history Mahatma Gandhi (Madan, 1987). His first (and only) book, *Hind Swaraj*, was published in 1909 advocated a conception of India that rejected religious identification while recognising other faiths on an equal footing: 'If Hindus believe that India should be inhabited only by Hindus, they are living in a dreamland' (Madan, 1987). Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, and Christians who have made India their home are fellow citizens who must, if for no other reason, coexist (Chandra, 2004).

Nonetheless, this idea of the Indian nation, which was not utopian but rather founded on the universalist notion of communities, collided with an alternative viewpoint that saw religious groupings as potentially independent nations (Bhargava and Srinivasan, 2007). This tactic spawned the myth of communalism (Bhargava and Srinivasan, 2007). During India's partition in 1947, this worldview promoted a separatist movement among Indian Muslims, resulting to the establishment of Pakistan (Juergensmeyer, 1993). In contrast, among the majority population, it gave rise to a form of ethnic nationalism that assimilated the into the Indian nation, claiming — like many other xenophobic "sons of the soil" movements in the world — that it was the first to occupy a territory that its ideologues considered — and continue to consider — 'sacred' till date (Juergensmeyer, 1993). Giving birth to the very idea of Hindu Nationalism.

BIRTH OF HINDU NATIONALISM IN INDIA

Hindu national identity and its concomitant politics arose in colonial India and developed along a course that mirrored and was distinct from the secular anti-colonial nationalism at the core of India's independence struggle movement (Anand, 2016). Hindu nationalism, which was centred on the concept of an organic Hindu unity, was community-oriented, urban-cantered, and led by middle-class individuals with socially conservative leanings source cite (Jaffrelot, 2009) .

Hindu nationalism proponents saw it as a culturally uniting force with a distinctive past (Jaffrelot, 2009). The doctrine and its organization focused on what they regarded as 'Hindu interests,' in contrast to 'Muslim interests,' which were always at the forefront (Jaffrelot, 2009). Hindu nationalism's anti-Muslim stance often overshadowed its sense of Hindu individuality, and its fundamentalist inclination rapidly grew, adopting a more communally aggressive language (Bhatt, 2020). After statehood and the separation of the Indian subcontinent into the independent republics of India and Pakistan, Hindu populist politics in India softened (Bhatt,

2020). The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi by a Hindu nationalist (a member of the RSS) makes this political citation ambiguous. It continues to advocate for Hindu cultural nationalism while lacking the people's support. Moreover, the movement maintained its vehement opposition to the secular nationalism that constituted the basis of India's post-independence constitutional republic (Flåten, 2016).

Hindu nationalism, however, started in 1915 with the founding of an all-India Hindu Sabha (assembly) in the northern parts (State of Punjab) with the aim of preserving the interests of the Hindu people across the entire (Anderson and Jaffrelot, 2018).

Instead of an emancipatory agenda, these regional Hindu conferences built their electoral campaigns on an anti-Muslimism agenda (Anderson and Jaffrelot, 2018). In consideration of their devotion to the British Empire, provincial Sabhas focused on furthering and preserving the economic and political interests of Hindus. Early Hindu nationalists cited political favour, career prospects, and educational progress as their key priorities (Gordon, 1975). These sabhas were often composed of elite and middle-caste Hindu men who believed that the introduction of Islam and Christianity would cause a fall in the Hindu population (Gordon, 1975, Bapu, 2012). The fundamental objectives of these events were different, but Hindu Unity was their central focus (Bapu, 2012). This covered the education of Hindus and the improvement of all Hindu social levels, the practise of safeguarding and supporting Hindu interests on a social, political, and religious level (Gordon, 1975).

Moreover, the INC—Indian national congress did not adequately advocate for Hindu welfare. The institutionalization of Muslim interests, such as the allocation of electoral reforms to Muslim communities under the Morley-Minto Political Reforms of 1909, presented a threat to Hindu interests, according to them (Meadowcroft, 1995). The Indian Councils Act indicates that the Morley-Minto Reforms were passed into law in 1909, as shown by the enactment of the Morley-Minto Reforms (Lewis, 1968). The rising significance of the Councils ensured that Indian parliamentarians could voice their thoughts. The British also acknowledged Muslims' right to a distinct electorate. This congressional action resulted in the foundation of the Akhil Bhartiya Hindu Mahasabha because of a political shift among the delegates.

AKHIL BHARTIYA HINDU MAHASABHA (ABHM): FIRST POLITICAL WING OF HINDU NATIONALISM

In 1921, the Hindu Sabha transformed its name to Akhil Bhartiya Hindu Mahasabha (henceforth referred to as ABHM) and altered its political agenda toward a unified and autonomous Indian nation-state (Gould, 2004). However, the group lacked significant political

and social power, since its presence was weak and dispersed. As a national organisation, it was mostly affiliated with Hindu movements in Punjab and the united provinces. (United Provinces (1937-1950), a former province of British India – now northern India, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh states(Gould, 2004). Moreover, anti-nationalists and those opposed to extreme non-cooperation with the British empire/government, like as Lajpat Rai, Madan Mohan Malaviya, and B. S. Moonje, emerged as staunch proponents of the growing Hindu nationalism, giving it a right-wing ideological orientation(Gould, 2004). Moreover, the Hindu Mahasabha became a prominent anticolonial political group amid religious violence between Hindus and Muslims in 1921-23, which halted the non-cooperation campaign (Bhatt, 2020). Numerous notable congress leaders, such as Swami Shradha Anand, abandoned the party and joined the Hindu Mahasabha. As Shradha Anand was a former Arya Samaj member and a staunch proponent of Shudhikaran (purification rituals for admission into Hindu faiths), Sangathan (the organisation of Hindus as a brotherhood), and Gurukul teachings, he was a follower of the Arya Samaj (a traditional form of teaching organised around a local teacher) (Hardiman, 2007). These philosophies became important objectives for the Hindu organisation leading to subsequent radicalization of these leaders and the Hindu Mahasabha.

In addition, throughout the latter half of the 1930s, particularly under the direction of B.S. Moonje, Hindu Mahasabha started to chart its own route (Gordon, 1975). Becoming increasingly combative, politically ingrained, and aggressively as they pursued a strategy that directly challenged the congress party (Bapu, 2012). In 1934, the congress prohibited the participation of opponents of secular nationalism. Consequently, several members of the Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, and Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh oppose the BJP (Henceforth mentioned as RSS) (Rai and Sharma, 1967). As secular nationalism strengthened its fight against the British administration, both Hindu-centric and Muslim politics shifted from an interest-driven to an ideology-driven orientation(Rai and Sharma, 1967). Both parties pursued a sectarian path, bolstering the notion that Hindus and Muslims comprise two different nations inside India.

However, with the nomination of V.D. Savarkar as president of the Hindu Mahasabha in 1937, the organization underwent a radical transformation, creating more complex notions of who was to be regarded a Hindu and establishing the criterion for Hindu nationhood in India(Copland, 2002). His leadership provided the Hindu Mahasabha with a well-defined political stance. His theory of cultural nationalism or ideology of HINDUTVA (Hinduism — which is now the main intellectual framework for the functioning of the BJP in contemporary India) lay the groundwork for Hindu nationalism in independent India (Copland, 2002).

Savarkar considered the Hindus to be a unique race since they had a similar ancestry and a distinct history (Chaturvedi, 2013). According to him, this people had a culture and civilisation known as Sanskriti (customs). Who is a Hindu? He questions in his book Hindutva. Savarkar hypothesized, “that throughout their battle against the Mohammedan Invaders, the Hindus were fused into a nation in an unprecedented manner”(Chaturvedi, 2013).According to him, ‘Satanists, Satnamis, Sikhs, Arya’s, Anarya’s, Marathas and Madrasis, Brahmans and Panchamas (other ethnic groups) all suffered and triumphed as Hindus’ (Savarkar, 2016). Meaning that all of the above-mentioned faiths are part of the Hindu religion and developed from the one religion that is Hinduism, and that both friends and adversaries contributed equally to the terms Hindu and Hinduism supplanting all other destinations of our country and our people(Savarkar, 2016). According to him, Muslims and Christians did not belong to the Indian country but rather to the Middle East and the West (JOHN, 2020). Even if Muslims and Christians were fresh converts who had not forgotten that ‘they inherit Hindu blood in their veins,’ Savarkar believed that they could not be considered Hindus(JOHN, 2020). As Hindus were bound together not only by their love for a common fatherland and by the common blood that flowed through their veins and kept their hearts beating and their affections warm, but also by the common homage they paid to the great civilization—the Hindu culture, which could not be more accurately described than by the term Sanskriti (Savarkar, 2021). Savarkar said that Indian Muslims and Christians should view other geographical places as their holy land and other cultures as their own (Savarkar, 2021). This rendered them distinctively non-Hindu, regardless of whether they were born into or converted to the Hindu faith (Veer, 1966). In response to the challenge presented by Indian Muslims, he believed that the Hindu national identity must be politicized and militarized (Veer, 1966). This national distinction was religiously defined, comparable to the Muslim League’s emphasis on religiously defined individuals and a religiously defined state.

Under Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha became more concerned with the condition of Hindus in Muslim-ruled princely territories (Veer, 1966). In 1938, during its assembly in Nagpur, the Hindu Mahasabha established the ‘Nizam Civil Resistance Movement’ with centers in Poona, Nagpur, and Akola (Joglekar, 2006). Some themes linked with Savarkar’s life and philosophy were Hindu militancy, national honour, the battle against British colonialism, and hostility against Indian Muslims(Joglekar, 2006). He served as president of the Hindu Mahasabha until 1944, when he was succeeded by Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji, who eventually founded the Hindu nationalist political group Bhartiya Jana Sangh (Jhangiani, 1967).

However, the ABHM never achieved its goal of becoming a powerful political force and had limited effect on the subsequent talks for Indian independence. Despite participating in the first three legislative elections in independent India, the party struggled to make an impression on Indian modern politics. It remained powerful on the level of thoughts, with Hindutva becoming a highly politicized and energizing concept in the years after independence.

THE RISE OF RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH AKA RSS --- AN ORGANIZATIONAL PATRONAGE

The RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH (Henceforth RSS) was an additional entity that held the Hindu Nationalist Legacy. Which evolved because of a strong response to the growing political awareness among Muslims, differences with M.K. Gandhi, and the topic of religious unity and the use of pacifism as a revolutionary approach(Hansen, 1993).

After the 1920s, however, the RSS expanded under the leadership of K.B. Hedgewar (Sharma, 2007). Keeping the Hindu principles intact, Hedgewar expanded the organization into all elements of Indian society. The RSS started distributing Hindu Nationalist ideologies and Hindutva and Savarkar's ideologies to many segments of Indian society. Under the pretext of culture, it advocated for its political goal of transforming India into a Hindu Rashtra (Sharma, 2007).

In addition, RSS was originally founded as a militant right-wing volunteer organization (Andersen, 1972a). Which was dedicated to developing a personality that was channelled towards solidifying an identity of Hindu political identity and Hindu nationalism(Andersen, 1972a). Hedgewar believed that only Hindus could liberate Hindustan (India) and safeguard Hindu culture (Smith). Believing that only Hindu power could preserve the country and that Hindu youngsters had to be organized rather than radicalized on the basis of their individual character and unwavering devotion for their homeland (Smith).

Further after the death of Hedgewar, RSS gained form under its second Sarsanghchalak (Chief Leader), M.S. Golwalkar, who favoured a clandestine strategy and hid the organization's activities from public view. Golwalkar believed that with the passage of time, awareness of the one Hindu National would become superfluous and the Hindu race would become susceptible to external threats (Golwalkar, 1996). Golwalkar claimed that the Hindus were at war and needed to fight for their independence (Sharma, 2007). This conflict was both religious and cultural in character. In his 1939 book, "A Bunch of Thoughts," Golwalkar posited a variety of Hindu nationalist beliefs and presented diverse perspectives on Muslims, Christians, and the

liberation movement (Golwalkar, 1996). His fundamental perspective on the liberation fight was that "we have almost entirely lost sight of our genuine Hindu nationalism in our pursuit of the illusion of establishing a "really" democratic "state" in the country (Golwalkar, 1996). Golwalkar considered the Congress intellectuals as 'deculturized' and 'denationalized'; he also identified some Hindus who had become English slaves (Western Culture)(Golwalkar, 1996). In addition, his ideology saw Muslims as invaders and Hindus as enemies of Islam and Christianity(Curran, 1950). He added, 'Ever since that awful day, when Muslims first came in Hindustan, the Hindu Nation has been battling valiantly to expel the plunderers...the conflict continues and has not yet been settled'(Golwalkar, 1996). In other words, the Hindus were engaged in a two-pronged conflict, first with the Muslims and then with Britain (Christianity). In addition, post-independence, he contested the very concept of Sawraj (Self-Rule) and viewed it as a defeat at the hands of the Muslims, stating that 'Sawraj, which was achieved in 1947, was based on the concept of Hindu-Muslim unity, which he viewed as the greatest betrayal of Indian civilization, resulting in Hindus being defeated by Muslims in 1947'(Golwalkar, 1939). With Golwalkar as its principal ideologue, the RSS worked toward the objective of Hindu Rashtra, and this simple concept that avoided complications boosted the RSS's popularity among the general public (Andersen, 1972a). It had political ambitions while not becoming a political party. It regularly expressed its political views in its publications, and many of its Swayamsevaks and Pracharaks ultimately became national leaders as members of its political arm, the Bhartiya Janata Party. Over time and place, the RSS institutionalized the Hindu nationalist ideology and evolved into a cult or armed force consisting of a distinctive uniform, a constitution, and an RSS flag(Andersen, 1972b). However, at the heart of this idea was the dissemination of Hindutva beliefs or RSS viewpoints via their daily Shakhas or military exercises, which were the RSS's smallest units. They were intended to be a brotherly meeting of volunteer Hindu males (Sahai, 1958).

According to RSS sources, the number of Shakhas has increased dramatically throughout the years. From 1931 to 1933, the number of Shakhas increased from 60 to 125. In India, there were 500 Shakhas in 1939, and according to the most recent estimates, there were 51,335 daily Shakhas in 2012(Jaffrelot, 2005).

In addition, several historians have referred to the RSS as a fascist group since it has been repeatedly outlawed by the Indian government since its inception(Islam, 2018). The first prohibition was enacted in 1948, after M. K. Gandhi was assassinated. The second ban was issued by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during the Emergency in 1975, along with other dissident organizations and parties. The third prohibition occurred in 1992, when Hindu

nationalist rioters razed the Babri mosque in what seemed to be a coordinated effort (Islam, 2018). As a result of institutionalization and growing popularity, the RSS established their political branch and armed the BJP.

THE BIRTH OF BHARTIYA JANTA PARTY (BJP): FROM BJS TO BJP A POLITICAL PATRONAGE

Present day in postcolonial India, the Hindu nationalist-supporting political forces is increasingly channelled via the Bhartiya Jana Sangh party. The party, founded in 1951, changed its name to the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) from the Bhartiya Jana Sangh (Flåten, 2016). As a political branch of the RSS, the party expanded significantly.

Former Hindu Mahasabha president Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee formed the Bhartiya Jana Sangh (Gould, 1994). Based on Hindu nationalist ideology and resistance to encompassing secular ideology, the party presented its vision for constructing India on a different basis than the Congress and Communists (Jaffrelot, 1999). It highlighted Hindu principles as the foundation for India's development, as opposed to Marxism, socialism, and liberal ideas (Jaffrelot, 1999). Dr. Mookerjee believed that the Congress, under the leadership of Nehru, was pandering Pakistan and India's Muslims at the expense of Hindu interests(Jaffrelot, 1999).

At the time of its founding, the Jana Sangh adopted integral humanism as the basis for its political activities, a notion proposed by one of the most prominent RSS cadres, Deendayal Upadhyaya(Jaffrelot, 1999). Integral humanism emphasized Bhartiya (Hindu) values and culture as the foundation for nation - building and relied on Gandhian concepts of self-reliance to disassociate itself from the independence movement (Jaffrelot, 2005). On Western ideals not established in Indian soil by the 100 years of British rule, the importance of 'national identity' was underlined (primarily understood as Hindu) (Jaffrelot, 2005). According to Upadhyaya, in independent India, westernization had become associated with development, and western social, economic, and political ideas had become models to be imitated (Jaffrelot, 2009). He advised that mindless imitation of the West be strictly avoided, and the BJP has kept these beliefs as its core pillars. After Mookerjee's death in 1953, the party, influenced by the RSS's organizational structure, progressively favoured a more disciplined and centrally controlled mode of operation, rather than gaining complete independence from the RSS (Jaffrelot, 2005). Electioneering portrayal of the secular-oriented Congress as a non-religious party. It portrayed itself as a party defending Hinduism, which the Congress was destroying (Jaffrelot, 2005). It

depended on Muslims to establish its Hindu identity, and on the Congress to define its political identity (Chakrabarty and Jha, 2019). The Jana Sangh was barred from Indian politics until the elections of 1967. However, after the 1967 election, Jana Sangh joined coalition administrations in numerous North Indian states. It gained momentum in the northern states of India in 1977, founding the Janata Party, an anti-Congress and anti-Indira Gandhi political party (Chakrabarty and Jha, 2019). In 1980, the Bhartiya Jana Sangh rebranded itself as the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) to separate itself from scandals (DAVEY JR, 1969). Despite its relegation to the background, the RSS remained a quiet game player for the BJP. The BJP has consistently claimed that secularism and tolerance, which are inherent to Hindu culture and society, have no place as national constitutional ideals. The BJP saw these as nothing more than minority appeasement and claimed that India should be a Hindu Rashtra (DAVEY JR, 1969).

Late 20th century L. K. Advani, a staunch defender of RSS beliefs and well-known Hindu thinker, was elected president of the BJP in 1986 (Van der Veer, 1994). This shift in leadership resulted in more pronounced fissures within Gandhian socialism and refocused the party on a Hindu nationalist course, which revitalized the party membership (Van der Veer, 1994). Advani emphasized topics like as cow slaughter, the demolition of Hindu temples in Jammu and Kashmir, and secularism as minority appeasement, bringing Hindu animosity at Muslims to the forefront (Bhushan and Katyal, 2002). Under Advani, the BJP presented itself more assertively as a Hindu party and ran its campaign for the 1991 parliamentary elections on the platform of building a Ram temple in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh (Swamy, 2003). It also ran campaigns against rival political parties by branding them as pseudo-secular and unduly appeasing Muslims (Swamy, 2003). In the 1991 elections, the party gained 120 parliamentary seats with an excellent showing, and never looked back. Despite its electoral success, it became evident that the party's electoral appeal was constrained by its weak position in South India and its identity as a party of the middle class and upper caste (Van der Veer, 1994). To survive inside the political system, it formed coalitions with regional parties like as the TDP and AIADMK in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and emphasized Hindu–Muslim and Hindu–Christian fault lines in the South Indian states (Dwivedi, 2019). In addition, the party resorted to social engineering by preserving positive discrimination and expanding membership and candidacy to those from lower castes (one can Dalits, Other Backward Castes and tribal members in the Indian society) (Dwivedi, 2019). Economically, it adopted more pro-liberalization stances, putting it into conflict with the swadeshi or the RSS's more indigenous

economic posture (Thakurta, 2002). Thus, stepping carefully so as not to offend the economic populism of several Hindu nationalists.

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition government, which the BJP brought to office in 1999, lasted the whole five-year tenure. During this period, the party avoided basic Hindutva topics, including as the building of a Ram temple in Ayodhya and a Uniform Civil Code that did not distinguish between religious minorities (Jaffrelot, 2005). On the eve of the 2004 legislative elections, a Vision Document released in 2004 reaffirmed the party's pledge to Integral Humanism, cultural nationalism, and a Ram temple in Ayodhya (Bharatiya Janata Party, 2004). The manifesto declared, 'We think that Cultural Nationalism, for which Indianness (Bhartiya and Hindutva are synonyms) should serve as the foundation for India's national identity' (Bharatiya Janata Party, 2004). Thus, it reiterated its commitment to building a Ram temple in Ayodhya. The declaration also recognized 'Maryada (meaning Limit), Purushottam (meaning the greater than the bigger man), and Ram to be an inspirational cultural emblem of India, with his birthplace in Ayodhya connected with the religious sensibilities of billions of Hindus' (Bharatiya Janata Party, 2004)

Despite losing the 2004 and 2009 elections, the BJP has become a formidable political force (Jaffrelot, 2009). The expansion of the BJP's social base allowed it to position itself as a national alternative to the Congress (Jaffrelot, 2009). It evolved into a party that united Congress's right-wing opponents. In 2014, the BJP regained power under the leadership of Narendra Modi, who was a state chief minister of Gujrat for 13 years and a former member of the RSS, an RSS ideologue and values hardliner, and a Hindutva ideology propagandist (Torri, 2015). The BJP achieved an absolute majority in legislative elections and established a government with 282 seats and a 31% vote share, the lowest vote share in an absolute majority central administration (Jaffrelot, 2015). Sabka saath sabka vikas (which translates to "collective effort, inclusive progress") was the centrepiece of the BJP's election campaign and development platform (Chhibber and Verma, 2014). This event rekindled the Hindutva agenda of restoring the Ram temple in Ayodhya, protecting cows, instituting a uniform civil code, and removing article 370 from Kashmir (Chhibber and Verma, 2014). Once again, Hindu nationalism seized control of the federal government. This win of the BJP was celebrated by business owners, supporters of development, younger voters, and the middle class (Sen, 2016). In addition, the elections demonstrated that the party was able to increase its popularity among Dalits and Other Backward Castes (Sen, 2016). This win gave unparalleled rise to Hindu

nationalism, popularly known as Hindutva. Present-day and post-2014 Hindu nationalism was once a phenomenon of middle-class upper castes, but progressively gained support from marginal castes as well. Its impact is no longer restricted to cities alone, and its message is now spreading throughout the country rather than the world (Torri, 2015). Hindu nationalism, like other ethno-nationalisms, requires a strong feeling of individual nationalism, a basic attachment to Hindu religious symbols, and an affirmation of the imagined history of the Hindu country. The movement, which is now at the centre of political power in India, aspires to institutionalize and develop its religious, intellectual, and political agenda.

***Section 2:** This section will argue the core question of the thesis, by exploring the rise of BJP in 2014 elections under the leadership of Narendra Modi. Further, it will also analyse the politicisation of the ideologues of Hindutva or known as the saffronization of India explained in the previous sections and analyse the impact. In terms of rising extremism and anti-minority sentiments.*

BJP ELECTORAL RISE; 2014 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The 2014 Lok Sabha elections are particular for three reasons. One, it witnessed the highest ever voter turnout in Indian electoral history. Two out of every three Indians voted, and the gender gap was negligible. Second, the Bhartiya Janta party (BJP) scripted one of the most spectacular electoral triumphs in the history of independent India. For the first time since the 1984 elections and Rajiv Gandhi's win, a non-congress party had a majority on its own in the parliament, and no party had won a single-handed majority since then (Wallace, 2015). Finally, the congress party had performed very poorly and was reduced to its lowest vote share and seat tally for the first time in the last 75 years.

In the 2014 Parliamentary elections, the BJP put together an unprecedented social coalition (Wallace, 2015). The party won two out of every three seats it contested or to say 282 of the 428 seats for which it put up candidates. The BJP won 31.1 % of the votes, and the vote share was close to 40% in the parliamentary constituencies (Jaffrelot, 2021). This landslide victory by the BJP in 2014 electoral had many significant factors, both ideological and nationalistic. First, there was the manly character of Narendra Modi, the prime ministerial candidate of the BJP. Through media discussions, marketing, and journalism, the BJP placed a gendered emphasis on an essential part of Narendra Modi's masculine depiction. From his political tactics to his popular discourses encompassing his pre-prime ministerial persona, a great deal of emphasis was placed on his 'Manly' leadership style, which was efficient, energetic, and

capable of leading the Indian nation and of overcoming all policy barriers through sheer power of personality (Price, 2015). In contrast to Dr. Manmohan Singh, his 'impotent' predecessor, who was unable to strike hard against both foreign foes (Pakistan and China, in the BJP's view) and internal dangers (Muslims, Islam, and terrorists, according to the BJP), Narendra Modi is able to do so (Price, 2015). Frequent references were made to his '56-inch chest' (chatis inch ki chaati) to demonstrate that he could bear the heaviest weight in the interests of the Hindu Nation (Srivastava, 2015).

As explained by Sanjay Srivastava who defines 'masculinity as to a socially produced but embodied way of being male (Srivastava, 2012). Its manifestation includes manners of speech, behaviour gesture, social interaction a division of tasks proper to men and women and an overall narrative that position it as superior to its perceived antithesis, femininity (Srivastava, 2012). Further he states that discourses of masculinity as a dominant and superior gender position is produced at number of sites and has specific consequences for all. Even for the men who don't fit into the dominant and valorised models of masculinity (Srivastava, 2012). The 2014 general elections where a similar case were traditional masculinity played a significant role in the electoral strategy, under the unprecedentedly role of the media and Narendra Modi was advertised as a traditional corporeal man strong enough to stand and built the Indian nation (Srivastava, 2015) . Despite his membership of RSS and his hard-line ideas favouring Hindutva.

Another significant factor contributing to the rise of BJP in 2014 was the Gujrat model of Narendra Modi (Chatterjee, 2022). Under this model the BJP advertised economics developing as its wining ideological slogan. To this, Arvind Panagariya, the chairman of Niti Aayog, now the head of India's planning commission described the Gujrat model's success in acquiring high levels of economic growth under the Modi as miraculous (Jaffrelot, 2015). This was due to as the state had registered its own growth rates. Over the years under Modi as its chief minister i.e., from 2001-02 the growth rate was the significant among other major states. 7.41% above than the states of Maharashtra and Panjab (Jaffrelot, 2015). Furthermore, Ashok kotwal and Chaudry reports also claimed that the state did every well in terms to economic growth in every sector and Gujrat topped the Indian economic statistics in terms to development (Ghate, 2012). But as Jaffrelot explains that economic growth means to an end and end is or should have and development should be understood as improving quality of life for the people (Jaffrelot, 2021). The maze about this model was that despite being successful in terms to economic growth it didn't not translate into comparable improvements with respect to human development (Jaffrelot, 2021). Over the years the state was successful by comparison with

other in context to extent of poverty and female literacy but remained in the middle of the list out of the 29 states (Sud, 2022). It did show improvements but slipped from positions to position.

The states performance also concealed wide disparities, one third of the society didn't benefit from the model, with rising inequalities, among those who didn't, where the minority Muslims, the Dalits and the Adivasis (Sud, 2022). Their socio-economic situation was poor as compared to the level achieved by other states (Sud, 2022). However, these reasons still didn't affect his electoral prospects, due to the size of the local middle class and crystallisation of neo middle class. Furthermore, in terms of the disparities the Sachar committee reports based on the data of 200s showed, that Muslims of Gujrat continued to be discriminated as compared to the non-minority groups and Muslims remained poor than the Hindus and poorer than the most Indian states (Jaffrelot and Verniers, 2020). Moreover, the Muslims of Gujrat remained living below the poverty line and the community were victims of discrimination since funds and schemes of the state government of Gujrat denied them financial compensations and ghettoization the communities(Sud, 2022). Despite various laws by the previous governments of congress the decline fostered communal riots and resulted in exodus of Muslims from old cities and industrial belts (Sud, 2022). However, this didn't affect his rise to the centre stage of politics during 2014 elections and due to media control and domination of business families of Gujrati communities supporting Modi's rise in 2014.

Furthermore, another factor leading to BJP's win in 2014 was the social forces of the Sangh Parivar (Narayan, 2014). The combination of RSS + VHP; Bajrang Dal and many more. The RSS being on the backstage played an important role, but the significant role of VHP was turning point of the 2014 electoral win for BJP (Narayan, 2014). Vishwa Hindu Parishad (Henceforth VHP) is an organisation created under the RSS umbrella in 90s. VHP acted as force to reinvent the society by implementing the RSS Hindutva ideologies at grass root levels (Wallace, 2015). The VHP worked on consolidating the Hindu vote by campaigning for BJP for creating a Hindu Rashtra. The organisation aimed at implement ideologies such as the Ram Janam Bhoomi, revocation of article 370n, the introduction Uniform civil code, protection of the cow and the relocation of Kashmiri pandits back to Kashmir and devised a roadmap for the BJP to be seen as a protector or the Hindu Nation (Gittinger, 2020). The VHP consolidated the votes of the backward classes and tribal regions by the Movement of Ghar Wapsi (coming back home) (Katju, 2015). Which meant the reconversion of Hindus who had converted to Islam and Christianity. The VHP further introduced Narendra Modi as the saviour of the Nation by advertising him as a Hindu Icon (Mofidi, 2014). In doing so they utilised the tool of identity

politics, within which the VHP worked among the groups considered as margins of the Hindu society, or one can say untouchables during pre-partition times. Strengthening a sense of Hindu identity, making them resistant to what was seen as three alien ideologies: Christianity, Islam, and communism (Katju, 2015). Furthermore, the VHP promoted the movement of construction of Ram Mandir, a holy site for the Hindu in Ajothya Uttar parades. Consequently, polarising votes banks of the social conservatives of the Indian society, which in return contributed to Hindu communalism being pushed to the centre stage of Indian politics (Datta, 1991). The VHP further campaigned for the curbing of immigration from the state of Bangladesh (a Muslim-Majority country). In this view it campaigned in viewing the 'other' the Muslims and their immigration to India as a threat to the Indian society and economic development (Van Der Veer, 1992).

Moreover, the BJP used the tools of identity politics and fear to polarize the Hindu population of the country (Singh, 2013). This remained one of the sole campaign's agendas of the BJP in 2014 elections. Terrorism here is not used as it appears in the main stream's media and political discourses. It is instead used as a discursive strategy and political language with its elaborate system of assumptions, symbolic systems and rhetorical mode and narrative meaning.

In 2014 the BJP used terrorism as a mainstream agenda. It sought to project BJP as a sole protector or one political party which is uncompromising in issues of national security and the only one that is capable of rebuffing forces of terrorist violence (Jaffrelot, 2015). In other words, literal meaning the threat from 'Islamic' nations and that the Hindu nation needed protection from them.

In this sense BJP drew upon the traditional stance. Emphasizing on masculine image and history as a Narendra Modi as the chief minister of Gujrat as one who ruthless crushed the terrorist conspiracies and delivered punishment to infiltrators and interna enemies.

His image as the Hindu Hridhay Samrat (meaning Emperor of the Hindu Hearts) rested on the mass violence of Muslims in the Gujrat 2002 and the low tolerance he exemplified towards the Islamist terrorism during his tenure (Sethi, 2018). This celebratory narrative of his remained up till the 2014 elections. In analysing this narrative Manisha Sethi in her article expanded on how terrorism invoked by BJP and Modi embedded fear among the citizens of India to vote and promote the Hindu nationalist agendas of the party (Sethi, 2018). She builds her narrative which describes a process which constructed a produced a sharp fence between us-friends and them enemies (Sethi, 2018). Meaning us Hindus and them Muslims, she defines that political speeches and rhetoric around terrorisms addressed to voters during elections or more generally

to citizens directed to produce feeling of anger and righteous indignations or alternatively a climate of fear and anxiety (Shahzad et al., 2021).

Furthermore, at the core of these appeals are the relations themes of danger and threat. Statements that construct imagines of an evil and dangerous other tough ample used of words such as terrible and cruel (Shahzad et al., 2021). Thus, raising alarms about the inability to cope with the threat; a threat which is shown to have changed established rules and required regimes and control (Chidambaram, 2020). Similarly, 2014 election campaign agenda revolved around development, but the undertone and alongside development was the deliberate and unrelenting invocation of vote banks, and code words such as biryani, Pakistan, pink revolution were used in raising the issue of Islamic terrorism (Balaji). These where at instances even observed directly referred to the Modi's speeches and other BJP candidates (Narain). Rather didn't imply case any major or significant violent event, but to register an emotion around terrorism to appeal and militarize the muscular nationalism embodied by the BJP as well as ideas of citizenship and exclusion (Narain). In addition to the abovementioned factors and electoral agendas of the BJP. There were other factors which included, incumbency vote against the congress which was in power from the past decade. However, the congress party had introduced many schemes and financial aides for the people of India. They could not fulfil them due to corruption and inefficacy in implementation these agendas.

Furthermore, the congress, along with its party's historic character of acting as MAI-BAAP (mother-father), played a cataleptic role in the emergence of anti-statism as an electoral force. Lastly, the voting of the young generation, as India's 30% population is youth and they wanted economic development for their better futures within the nation. However, despite positives and negatives, the BJP was able to produce their narrative of Hindu nationalism and consolidate their vote bank. This rise of BJP led to rise of Hindutva ideologies to the centre stage of Indian politics. It gave the way for nationalist organization or say the Sangh Parivar to institutionalise their ideologies and built India into a Hindu rashtra.

The next subsection will explore the Hindutva ideologies and analyse the politization of these ideologies by the BJP post 2014.

SAFFRONIZATION OF INDIA; POLITICISATION OF HINDUTVA IDEOLOGIES

Indians are not unfamiliar with the idea of saffronisation in fact, it has permeated the national consciousness (Bhatia, 2020). Since Narendra Modi's administration took office in 2014, the

Bhartiya Janata Party's majority at the centre has been often criticised for its fascist tendencies (Bhatia,2020).

The Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), whose founders idealised protecting and fostering Hindu training to build a Hindu Rashtra (Hindu country), is seen as a driving factor behind the BJP's political philosophy (KHAN, & ABBASI,). Through administrative control, constitutionalism, citizenship determination, acceptance of international law, and neoliberal economic policies, the BJP, which had a majority in the central government, embarked covertly to promote, institutionalise, and legitimise its Hindutva ideology (Jaffrelot 2021).

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP government established laws and policies that advanced its Hindutva goal by eroding the democratic rights and political participation of Indian Muslims and other minority groups deemed incompatible with Hindutva philosophy (Jaffrelot, 2021). For instance, the BJP administration restricted the sale and purchase of cattle for slaughter (the "beef ban"), which led to the targeted lynching of Muslims and Dalits across the nation (Ilaiah, 1996). They followed a deliberate agenda to erect a Hindu temple on the disputed Babri Mosque property, which ended in a Supreme Court ruling granting the temple trust ownership of the disputed ground (Jaffrelot 2021). The BJP administration unilaterally approved the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, which criminalises Muslim males for some kinds of divorce, while neglecting the grassroots effort and non-carceral changes advocated by Muslim women's organisations (Van Der Veer, 1994).

Furthermore, the BJP leverages human rights frameworks, which resemble the metaphor of the savage-victim-saviour, to accomplish its political goals (Borah, 2020). The CAA was a move into this direction and another example of the BJP strategy. In 2019, the BJP changed the Indian Constitution to abolish the special status provided to Kashmir, a majority-Muslim state with which India and Pakistan have been in territorial dispute since independence (Borah,2020). It was followed by the incarceration of Kashmiri political leaders, the deployment of tens of thousands of Indian army personnel in Kashmir, the installation of curfews, and the implementation of phone and internet blackouts. Thus, sanforising the Indian system along Hindutva Ideologies.

Introduction of Citizen Amendment Act

The first move of the BJP in favouring and moving along Hindutva ideologues is observed with the amendment of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1955 with the CAA, also known as the Citizen

Amendment Act of 2019 (also known as the citizen amendment act of 2019) (Borah, 2020). This amendment within the Hindutva philosophy was laid down by Mohan Bhagwat, the current leader of the Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), along three 'fundamentals': 'patriotism, reverence for our ancestors, and respect for culture (Choithar,2020.). According to Bhagwat, the ideals underlying Hindutva derive from the faiths (sampraday) that arose from the totality of India. The Hindutva movement not only wants to homogenise the many faiths and religious subcultures of India, including Dalit and other non-dominant caste cultures, but also include a central principle of exclusion of Muslims and Christians on the grounds that they adhere to a foreign religion (Choithar, 2020.). Nonetheless, this movement is cautious to ground itself in the contemporary, constitutional state by not calling for a Hindu state per se, but rather a constitutional state [for a] Hindutva country in which the constitution reflects a Hindutva perspective (Aiyar & Tillin 2020). This Hindutva vision of Indian citizenship, which the BJP leadership accepted, disregards India's dynamic and heterogeneous past, which has been characterised by migration and syncretism (Aiyar & Tillin 2020).

In 2003, the BJP-led coalition government changed the Indian Citizenship Act of 1955 to identify for the first time an 'illegal immigrant' in India, to promote the objective of the RSS or the Hindutva ideology (Aiyar & Tillin2020). In doing so the BJP set the amendments in way, setting out, illegal immigrant as an outsider or a foreigner who entered India without a passport and travel document or who remained over the permissible duration (Bhat, 2019). This individual may seek for Indian citizenship via registration or naturalisation. In addition, the previous laws stipulated that anybody born after December 30, 2004, was ineligible for birth right citizenship if either parent was an illegal immigrant (Bhat, 2019). Moreover, provided that the government might require registration of all Indian citizens and issue national identification cards. However, since the government was a coalition, the BJP was unable to fully execute this policy but was radically altered with the BJP's return to office in 2014 (Bhat, 2019). The party's increased majority in 2019 the BJP followed its 2003 reforms with the 2019 Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) (Bhat, 2019). Which exempted Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians from three Muslim-majority nations, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, but not Muslims, from the category of unlawful migrants (Nagarwal, N., 2019). The current bill, introduced in 2016, marks a significant divergence from the law's and Constitution's religion-neutral notion of citizenship (Nagarwal, 2019). As indicated historically, significant components of religious diversity have already been slipped in discreetly and this measure intends to do so officially. It explicitly states that Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis (Zoroastrians), and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and

Pakistan, who are recognised to be persons belonging to minority communities, shall not be treated as illegal migrants for the purposes of this Act and as a result, will be eligible for citizenship after six years of residence in India, as opposed to the previous requirement of twelve years (Nagarwal, 2019). In other words, individuals of six faiths from three nations are no longer considered illegal immigrants and are thus eligible for expedited citizenship. Muslims from these nations would remain to be classified as illegal immigrants and hence would not be eligible for the same exemption.

This statute precisely describes the Hindutva ideology, preventing Indian Muslims from acquiring Indian citizenship. The legislation invites Jain, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, and Parsi non-Muslims from adjacent nations (mostly India). Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh) who have faced religious persecution persecutions (Bidner, 2020). Moreover, the CAA threatens to bring the worst calamity to the nation. Furthermore, with the enactment of CAA, it was coupled with the National Population of Register (hereinafter NPR) and National Register of Citizen (hereinafter NRC) (Bidner, 2020). The National Register of Citizens is a register maintained by the Government of India containing names & certain relevant information for the identification of Indian citizens.

Through this limited and indicative introduction to the citizenship environment in contemporary India, I have attempted to show that the legality of equal citizenship is threatened by the BJP government amendment act that intends to introduce explicitly religious differences into the religious doctrine of citizenship law. The rights of democracy are being degraded by the move from a constitutional protection to a concomitant approach to welfare, as well as the enforcement of punitive requirements on welfare beneficiaries, which in turn provokes the rights of political identity.

Furthermore, BJP countered the only Muslim majority state of Jammu & Kashmir by manifesting its domination and undermining minorities through the ----

Revocation of Article 370, for the state of Jammu & Kashmir

On 6th August 2019, the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, abrogated Article 370 of the Indian Constitution and submitted a redistribution bill in the Rajya Sabha. Under the provisions of this law, Jammu and Kashmir would cease to exist as a state, instead, the state would split into two union territories: Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir (Mohyidin, 2021). Article 370 was a clause of the state's constitution that allowed it to have a

distinct constitution, flag, and administrative autonomy (Mohyidin, 2021). However, the article of the Indian constitution designated it as a transitory, transitional, and exceptional provision. The state was authorised to suggest the degree to which the constitution applied to the state (Pokhariyal & Kotwal 2022). Article 370 of the constitution of India stated as follows:

The power of Parliament to make laws for the said State sh'll be limited to

1. "those matters in the Union List and the Concurrent List which, in consultation with the Government of the State, are declared by the President to correspond to matters specified in the Instrument of Accession governing the State's accession to the Dominion of India as the matters with respect to which the Dominion Legislative Assembly shall have exclusive legislative competence" (Noorani 2014)
2. "any other things in such Lists that the President, with the approval of the Government of the State, may designate by order Explanation. For the purposes of this article, "Government of the State" refers to the person currently recognised by the President as the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, acting on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, according to the Maharajas Proclamation of March 5, 1948". (Noorani, 2014)

Background of the law, after the sectarian partition of India on 20 October 1947, the country was split into Muslim-majority Pakistan and Hindu-dominated India, and Article 370 was subsequently enforced in the state of Kashmir (Bhat 2019). As the kingdom was under the autonomous sovereignty of the Sikh monarch of the time, Hari Singh, under the British empire (Bhat 2019). The king had the choice to pick which side he wished to join. During this era, however, a huge number of armed tribesmen assaulted the state (forces from Pakistani rebels) (Lalwani, S. and Gayner, G., 2020). In retaliation Hari Singh sent a letter to Governor General Lord Mountbatten requesting military assistance including the document of admission to India (Lalwani & Gayner 2020).

The J&K constitution act of 1939 stipulated that only defence, foreign affairs, and communication would be transferred to the Indian government, while the monarch would maintain responsibility over all other areas (Noorani, 2014). These conditions were unique to Kashmir's accession to India, in contrast to the 565 indigenous states that had decided to completely merge with India (Noorani, 2014). Therefore, article 370 was added to the constitution to maintain the precise parameters under which Kashmir had to consent to join India (Bhat, 2017). Nonetheless, since its admission 75 years ago, the state has been home to domestic terrorism and insurgencies and the two nations till date go to war over the states legitimacy and the Kashmiri citizens have been craving for their existence since then.

In contrast, the Hindutva view as described in section one, held that there was no Muslim majority in Kashmir, since it was an integral part of Akhand Bharat (Unbroken India or Entire India), which could only have a Hindu majority (Jaffrelot 2005). Kashmir is considered the home of Hindu gods and goddesses that must be reclaimed from Islamic conquerors by the RSS and Hindutva ideology (Jaffrelot 2005). This story fails to account for Kashmir's progressive Islamization from the thirteenth century A.D (Jaffrelot 2005). In colonial India, the BJS, the forerunner of the BJP, agitated against Article 370 shortly after India's independence in 1951 (Jaffrelot 2009). Syama Prasad Mukherjee, the founder of BJS who died demonstrating against Article 370, was hailed as a martyr who led the struggle for the ultimate unification of Jammu and Kashmir (Noorani, 2014). Consequently, revocation of Kashmir is one of the primary objectives of the BJP under the RSS and the Hindutva philosophy. In addition, the way in which the decision was adopted or carried out indicates that the BJP is reluctant to adhere to democratic standards and constitution niceties in its plan to convert India into a highly centralised Hindu Rashtra (Noorani 2014).

In addition to the above-mentioned cases of politicization, of Hindutva ideologies by the BJP centrally. The BJP is advancing the ideologues under the Narendra Modi and Amit shah (president of BJP) and introduce new ideologies under the Hindutva banner and did further institutional changes to the system within India both at state and centre levels.

Politicization of Beef and Meat

The cattle are a sacred animal for the Hindus in India or even one can say has a special status in the Indian society and culture. But beef has been consumed by some sectors of the society. As a matter of fact, the slaughtering of cattle's and eating bovine meat has never been homogenously prohibited throughout the subcontinent. With BJP's rise to power the beef ban has become the priorities of its communal agenda. The Holy Cow and the meat eaters in India have been expression of deep-rooted structures of feeling and have resulted in political mobilization of voters around the defence of the Hindutva identity (Jakobsen & Nielsen 2022). In doing so, the BJP under Modi along the Sangh Parivar is creating a sense of fear among farmers and the Muslim and Christian minorities (Jakobsen & Nielsen 2022). Today, sell of unproductive cattle to traders, they are realised into the public space generating social, economic, and ecological threat. Thus, constructing a sacredness of the cow as a political construct (Jakobsen & Nielsen 2022). The Hindus have built up a specific economic and symbolic relationship with this bovine and cow is seen as a mother or as a deity. Because of

these dimensions the animal not only reflects Hindu reality but also embodies and defines it (Kesava 2022). Hindu Nationalist use this symbol to polarise the communities drawing a line between 'good Indians' that would worship and refrain from eating its flesh and 'bad Indians' that would recklessly kill it and devour it (Kesava 2022). In this sense the BJP is equating Indian-ness within high caste Hindu, depicting Islam as a factor of civilizational decadence and Muslims as enemies whose beef consumption marks their relative barbarity and allegiance to foreign powers (Gorringer & Karthikeyan 2014). This could be seen in the case of the state of Uttar Pradesh where the extremist God Man or the chief Minister of the state Yogi Aditya Nath has activated the VHP wing to punish the Muslim population for butchering cattle's and have introduced strict state laws giving free hand to the Hindu nationalists to keep checks and do regular investigations into beef slaughtering (Kesava Chandra 2022). Thus, forcing the Muslim community or any community from consuming of beef and butchering cattle.

Other states with a majority BJP Party are adopting similar laws and regulations to restrict beef consumption. Thus, a significant number of cow vigilantes led to clashes between the two groups and the murder of several Muslims in the name of cow protection. Consequently, the politicisation of beef has bolstered the BJP's identity politics and enabled the minority Muslim and Christian populations to be portrayed as outsiders and opponents of the Hindu religion.

Rewriting History---Politicising the Other (Muslims)

In his piece titled "outsider as enemy: the politics of rewriting India's past," K.N. Panikkar Explains that the rewriting of history is an evolving process in which historians utilise new methodology and philosophies and a new conceptual model based on unknown data (Hasan 2002). For instance, the historians' craft, as exemplified by the French historian Marc Bloch, whose work on feudal society is regarded as a classic and reminds us of an approach unique to history as a rigour, the majority of which develops via philosophical collaborations and empirical investigation over the course of several centuries, is based on philosophical engagements and empirical investigation (Hasan 2002). In addition, he emphasises that no approach used by historians to gain knowledge of the past is acceptable unless it adheres to the ideology's method (Hasan 2002). Thus, despite their differences, these principles have some common ground that comprises the sphere of historical practise (Hegde, 2018.). Nonetheless,

all generally acknowledged kinds of synthesis between myth and history strictly conform to the approach of the subject. Since its 2014 victory in India's general election, this has been the objective of the Hindu-rightist BJP (Chakravarti 2009). The history of India is seen via a succession of religious-identity-based prejudices cite. This theological perspective encompasses every facet of society and politics, including social difficulties, political conflicts, and cultural differences (Chakravarti 2009). Such a historical interpretation has been included in textbooks for decades, shaping the historical awareness of society. However, in Hindutva view and politics the religious interpretation of history has an entirely different import, even if it shares much of the colonial assumptions. In contrast to colonial history which mainly interprets social division, despite invoking the tranny of Hindus and the Muslims it further concentrates more on social antagonism and political hostility (Westerfield 2019). The antagonism and hostility are encoded in the interpretative structure of the Muslims, which identifies them as 'outsiders' as enemies, which in turns the history into an ideology of communalism (Westerfield 2019). Example the politics of Ram Janmabhoomi temple is the perfect mediation of such history in the making of popular historical conscious. In which, the BJP's principle of politics was not only the privileging of faith over reason but also the identification of an enemy who acted against the religious interests of the Hindu (Lefèvre .2020)

The consolidation and mobilisation of Hindus is the main objectives of the Hindutva Moment laid down by the RSS and the BJP and towards this political end a systematic attempt, embracing both the academic and popular histories is on a rise since the 2014 BJP victory (Westerfield 2019).

In doing so BJP has withdrawn the history books published by the National council of educational research and training (NCERT) on the ground that they were not sufficiently Hindu in their orientation (Leidig, 2016). Similarly, within state government of the BJP rule such as Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh even the capital Delhi have revised their textbooks to introduce a communal view of the past, highlighting the achievements and contribution of Hindus and undermining or misrepresenting the role of others (Leidig 2016). The BJP in majority with the centre government have further lend support to this effort and as well as saffronised research institutions like the Indian Council for Historical Research, Indian council for social science research, centre for advanced studies and so on (Westerfield, 2019).

Furthermore, the BJP is appointing RSS members to key position within institutions to legitimise these changes (Westerfield, 2019). Thus, these changes have also faced resistance from the fraternity of professional historians, as they have realised the danger of communal

mythification which possess a threat to the discipline of history. Simultaneously several other initiatives have been taken to transform the popular historical conscious in the favour of the communal. Among them is the setting up of Bhartiya Itihas Sankalan Samiti, with four hundred branches all around the nation (Westerfield, 2019). Moreover, with the aiming to prepare the history of all districts within various states, the BJP is refereeing to the ideal history written by P.N Oak whose main contribution is identification of every medieval monument as a Hindu structure (Leidig, 2016). The BJP has further provided in collaboration to Sangh Parivar Archaeologists is identifying all the Mughal dynasty monuments and changing their prevalence to Hindu History (Leidig 2016). In doing so, the Delhi BJP Aadesh Gupta suggested renaming dozens of streets with Mughal (Muslim Names) and rename them to influential Hindu figures from the past and present such as Maharishi Valmiki, Maharana Pratap (Leidig 2016). Thus, the Sangh Parivar with the support of the BJP Government is engaging in the reconstruction and disseminating of myth field histories which instigating religious politics to the core of the Indian political system (Rubdy, 2021). The most instructive instances of such mythification are the histories of Ayodhya that disseminated throughout the Ram Janmabhoomi campaign via political and religious networks, including audio, video, and print materials (Rubdy 2021). Mythified histories of Ayodhya contributed significantly to the campaign's success. However, the rewriting of history in which the BJP along with the Sangh Parivar is engaged is not internal to the movement of Hindutva within the field of history (Rubdy 2021). Rather is a larger and long term projected aiming to reorder the secular character that informs the educational and cultural policies of independent India. In terms to this the BJP has already taken several initiatives. Significantly, are the changes in the context of School education, the organisation of parallels school system and control over cultural institutions.

The University Grant commission (UGC) and the (NCERT) is pursuing communal agenda. The UGC working on a uniform syllabus for the country as a part of its two post graduate level courses, one with the Vedic studies and another on astrology (Westerfieldm2019). Furthermore, the UGC is also insisting all universities and institutions under them (Most of the Indian Institutions) to be subjected to the recognition of the National accreditation council (Westerfield 2019). Hence, bringing every state university under the Centre government which is feared that such standardisation will undermine the autonomy of universities and facilitate the introduction of national curriculum.

Moreover, the BJP has engaged with the NCERT to prepare national curriculum framework for school education (Lall 2007). Which underlines a change from secular to religious education. Thus, showing evidence of revivalist and chauvinistic nature. It advocates an

aboriginal curriculum which celebrates the ideas of native things among which the non-Hindus are prominent by absence (Lall 2007). The aim of such a curriculum is to instil and maintain a perception of pride in being an Indian in which the external influences on the shaping of the Indian civilisation are overlooked. The concept of secularism is given a Hindu Religious meaning suggesting 'Sarvadharmā Samābhava' in the view that religion in its basic form (devoid of dogma, myth, and ritual) would influence younger generation to basic moral and spiritual values (Panikkar 2001). In doing so under the BJP both UGC and NCERT seem to be prepared by the RSS education Outfit the Vidhya Bharati which is introduced by the education minister Smriti Irani in 2016. Furthermore, English and Hindi are the common languages of the Nation. But under BJP Sanskrit was proposed as a compulsory Subject and Language for schools to understand the Hindu Vedas and Upanishads (Panikkar, 2001).. Therefore, the government and the Sangh Parivar are now promoting the rewriting of history for the purpose of defining and demarcating the country as Hindu, which lends it a fundamentally political nature (Panikkar, 2001). The historical validation of the stigmatisation of the outsider as an adversary justifies the community policy of marginalising, if not externalising, the members of other faiths (Guichard 2010). Additionally, it legitimises the indigenous claim to the country. Therefore, the otherness of outsider signifies internal consolidation and homogenization. For early communist ideologues like as V.D. Savarkar and M.S. Golwalkar, religious interpretation of history was the required conceptual foundation for reclaiming the Hindu nation (Guichard 2010).

In addition, the BJP took steps to polarise the Hindu populace. In doing so, the BJP mobilised the VHP and launched the reconversion efforts for the Hinduization of the people.

Ghar Wapsi Movement; Reconversion to Hinduism

The execution of the Ghar Wapsi Movement by the VHP is an additional endeavour by the BJP to safeguard and politicise Hindutva principles (Gittinger, 2020). 'Ghar Wapsi' is a Hindi phrase meaning 'homecoming or the coming home' that aims to depict the allegedly forced mass conversions of Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and other Indians to Hinduism by the Hindu Nationalist organisation or the Sangh Parivar (Basu 1996). In Vedic Hinduism this movement's underlying concept is that Hinduism and similar conversions are only a return to one's roots, i.e., a return to one's ancestral religion (Basu, 1996). This development is crucial for comprehending the citizen body as a social and legal entity in the context of secularism and

varied religious beliefs (Jaffrelot, 2005). As a result, with the BJP's victory in the 2014 election, this argument has taken centre stage in relation to the government's politicisation of Hindutva ideology.

J. Zavos, a researcher on the relationship between religion, identity, and politics in South Asia, explains the birth and growth of the Arya Samaj movement. He contends that the “Arya Samaj doctrines of a single God, the Vedas as the ultimate truth, and the Vedic Age as the Golden Age kept its presence inside the wide framework of established Hinduism... preserving its potential viability as an alternative framework’ (Zavos 1999). Thus, opposing the activities of Christian proselytising missionaries, asserting a strong relationship with the pursuit of dharma (Zavos 1999). By this standard, all Hindus might be returned to their true faith the Arya Samaj movement served as the foundation for what subsequently became the political nationalist movement (Zavos 1999). The Samaj predominantly accepting the Orientalist notion of India as a country of spiritual supremacy, civilizational splendour, and other similar self-aggrandizing claims, a fundamental distinction between the Hindu and the Muslim Other was postulated (Blom Hansen 1996). Thus, the Hindu nationalist movement expanded due to what T.B. Hansen, an expert on religious and political violence in India, describes as a very appropriate system of cultural empowerment of Hindus against the purported peril of Muslim conversion (Blom Hansen 1996). Furthermore, with rise of BJP in 2014, all the conversion programmes kicked started with the same objective of Hindu Rashtra. This clarifies the earlier-posed basic definitional question: who is a Hindu? This conception was (and still) mainly founded on antipathy to Muslims; what T.B. Hansen further refers to as the operational Other which is presented as the rationale India has struggled to properly develop and assume its proper role in the world (Blom Hansen 1996). The solution to this issue is again traced back to the Hindutva ideals proposed by V.D. Savarkar, as described in section 1 of this chapter. Consequently, proving that the Hindutva ideology is not only socio-religious dominance, but also power and influence (Blom Hansen 1996).

Furthermore, the Ghar Wapsi has its origins in the Arya Samaj and Sangh movements. Such as the Shuddhi (purification) and Parivartan (turning back), which gathered pace over time. Shuddhi is best described as a purification method; a ritual by which outcast individuals or groups may be returned to their caste position, so enabling them to carry out their dharma (Jaffrelot 2011). However, under these narratives of Shuddhi and Parivartan, the VHP is aiming at the reconversion of the Hindu populations that had converted to Islam and Christianity (Jaffrelot, 2011).

In addition, mass celebrations are held to get negative coverage in Christian and non-Christian newspapers, journals, websites, and academic writings that question both the rites and the populations being converted (Jaffrelot 2011). They see Christians, Muslims of Hindu descent, as outcasts and problematic Shuddhi candidates.

In a similar manner, Parivartan has been criticised for 'awakening' and subsequently identifying as Hindus tribals in remote locations (Jaffrelot 2011). In the context of Parivartan, however, is unimportant to the RSS whether one is Muslim or Christian by birth or through conversion or neither, so long as Christian, and Muslim conversion can be prevented and reversed (Vandeveldt 2011). It is obvious now that the fundamental incentive for reconversion to Hinduism is to fight Muslim and Christian conversions. However, post-independence enthusiasm waned owing to successive revisions to anti-conversion legislation by different administrations. With the BJP's election victory in 2014, Ghar-Wapsi returned to the forefront of public discourse.

The Ghar Wapsi movement of the VHP was a response to Christian missionaries' proselytising operations (Vandeveldt 2011). Various academics and theorists have proposed different explanations for these narratives. In their article on this topic, Sarah Claerhout and Jakob De Roover demonstrate how the debate over the appropriateness of a restriction on conversion crystallises, Hindu nationalists and more moderate Hindus (Gandhians, for instance) favour a ban, whereas their opponents—mostly Christians and secularists—strive to protect the freedom to convert. However, it is problematic since Article 25 of the Indian Constitution defines freedom of religion as encompassing the promotion of religion, a stance applauded by advocates of conversion (Rajeshwar & Amore 2019).

In his 2012 analysis of the national debate on conversion generated by the Hindu Right, Sebastian Kim found several instances of misunderstanding between the two groups (Katju, 2015). Hindu nationalists, for example, emphasise that conversion is something done to others, but Christians emphasise conversion as an inward process (Katju 2015).

Despite the criticism, once the BJP came to power in 2014, the government is executing the movement on a grassroots level through the VHP and is protecting it via majority of power through dominating the bureaucracy and the judiciary (Rajeshwar, Y. and Amore, R.C., 2019).. In 2014, VHP leader Pravin Togadia declared in an interview with Mumbai Mirror Magazine that the VHP is "dedicated to ensuring that the Hindu population in the nation does not slip below the existing level of 82%.... We will not allow their population to decrease from 82% to 42% because their property and women would no longer be secure. He said that the whole planet is occupied by Hindus and that the VHP would work to boost the Hindu population in

India from 82% to 100% (Katju 2015) He claimed that the VHP alone had reconverted more than five lakh Christians and two and a half lakh Muslims.

In addition, on his visit to a Hindu temple in Vancouver, Canada, Prime Minister Narendra Modi remarked in his address that. 'The Supreme Court has ruled that Hindu Dharma is not a religion, but rather a way of life... I believe the SC's definition points the way,' which is cited in many newspapers and magazines in relation to Hindutva ideologies of reconversion and how the movement is legitimised by stating that returning to Hinduism is not conversion, but rather adopting a way of life (Ramaseshan, 2014).

In addition, the VHP, under the auspices of the RSS, and the BJP, the party in power, developed several organisations to conduct the Ghar Wapsi drive. The Dharma Raksha Samiti (committee for the protection of Dharma), the Hindu Jagran Manch (forum for Hindu Awakening), and the Dharma Jagran Vibhag are the most notable organisations (Department of Dharma Awareness). Under the Ghar Wapsi Movement, these groups conducted large reconversion rituals (Jaffrelot, C., 2011). The first was three thousand converts to Islam in 2010 and 2012, respectively. In addition, the VHP revised the recommendations of its 1999 guidebook on reconversion, *PARVATAN; WHY AND HOW*, which urged every Hindu to convert at least five Christians or Muslims throughout his lifetime (Jaffrelot 2011). Based on this, the number of reconversion ceremonies has grown since 2014, with an average of 200 converts each ceremony and an occasional amount of 2,000 or more.

In addition, the VHP's policy shift to include long-term reconversion projects. These initiatives target families and individuals, as well as whole castes and tribes. When, for instance, a Christian priest or Muslim imam chooses to become a Hindu again, the whole town or caste often follows suit. In doing so, the VHP has waged a campaign against Christianity by portraying it as a 'sweet and slow poison' and has seized every chance to marginalise minority populations. The VHP has targeted backward groups and tribal areas, resulting in ideological polarisation during the 2014 Indian elections (Jaffrelot, 2011).

Evidently, this homecoming is a multi-layered process, involving the transformation of the citizen-body from a subject to an artefact of the law, the shift in emphasis from the average person to the congregation as the primary actor, and the transformation of conversion from a transient identity shift to a prolonged transforming process. When these practises and ambiguous regions are cultivated by those in positions of power, religious conversion may be regarded as a return to one's roots.

Chapter 6 HINDUTVA AND EXTREMISM; IMPACT OF POLITICISATION OF HINDUTVA IDEOLOGIES

Under the umbrella of pluralism, India was established so that all religious and ethnic minorities would have equal legal rights. Nonetheless, shortly after attaining independence, India resorted to violence and persecution against Muslims residing in and around India (Leidig 2020).

In 2014, the Bhartiya Janata Party came to power and Narendra Modi was elected prime minister, which led to the growth of Hindu nationalism and Hindutva ideology. The RSS is conducting a vicious campaign against Muslims and other minorities. During the first term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, from 2014 to 2019, the BJP passed a number of anti-minority policies aimed at erasing minority identities (Leidig, 2020). The politicisation of Hindutva ideology has contributed to the rise of extremism (Ramachandran, 2020). The overwhelming Hindu population has used the presence of the Hindu nationalist BJP in power in every imaginable manner. From the passage of citizenship amendments to the VHP's Ghar Wapsi campaign, cow protection legislation, anti-conversion laws, the restoration of the Ram temple, and the repeal of article 370 and the redistribution bill for the sole Muslim majority state (Leidig, 2020). All have given the Hindu people the confidence to discriminate in some way against minority groups. Due to the prominence of cow vigilantism, forced reconversion to Hinduism, and beef consumption-related killings, extremism has escalated (Leidig, 2020)..

However, right-wing extremism in India is not a new issue; extremism within the Hindu nationalist movement has existed from the beginning of time. The assassination of India's founding father Mahatma Gandhi by a member of the RSS was the first incident that drew attention to the radical Hindutva ideology and its connection to extremism (Bidwai, P., 2008). Nonetheless, the Indian government has ignored several severe ideological incidents throughout history. This is shown by the alarming 1992 assaults on Ayodhya and the 2002 sectarian riots in Gujrat, both of which occurred during Narendra Modi's tenure as chief minister. The selection of Yogi Adityanath as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state in India and the site of the Babari mosque riots, reveals the extremism of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) within the context of radical Hindu theology (Rashid, Abbas, and Bilal, 2022). Yogi Adityanath's services as the major founder of the Hindu extremist organisation Yuva Vahini have made him very popular and well-known among Hindu extremists (Malji, 2018).

In addition, in an effort to turn India into a Hindu Rashtra, the BJP government has authorised its social organisation and the Sangh Parivar to use force or even violence to capture and kill its ideologues (Malji, 2018). In addition to multiple other states, the BJP continues to brutally occupy unlawfully seized Kashmir. Thus, India's national secularism is weakening, and religious intolerance and Hindu nationalism is rising, worsening the situation for minority religions and groups.

Aparna Devare explains this phenomenon by stating, 'In the post-Cold War era, the growth of extreme religious ideologies such as Islamic fundamentalism, Hindu nationalism, and the Christian Right has frequently been portrayed as manifestations of chauvinism and guardians of backward, archaic cultures that lie beyond the reach of modernity' (Devare, 2009). In addition, she argues that Hindu nationalism and extremism are intertwined, and that the danger of Hindu nationalism stems from its failure to maintain itself in the public domain, while the separation of religion and politics permits contemporary political behaviour and the modern state (Devare, 2009).. Hindu extremists, on the other hand, characterise their beliefs in nativist terms by asserting traditional Hinduism against the modern west and minorities or the bad other (Presence of Islam) . Hindu extremism is frequently portrayed by both its critics and its supporters as a reaction to westernization/globalization and as providing an alternative cultural worldview and philosophy of the religion (Devare, 2009)..

furthermore, religious extremism and modernity have been investigated by several researchers during the last decade. Olivier Roy's work has shown how deeply current ideas and behaviours are interwoven with Islamic terrorism (Herck, W.V. and Drigo, A., 2019). According to Roy (2005), Islamic fundamentalism is not a return to traditional culture, but is inextricably linked to the westernisation and globalisation happening in the Islamic world (Herck & Drigo 2019). He says that Islam has become more privatised and individualised, especially among many Muslim migrants living in non-Muslim countries, who are more likely to desire a purist and de-territorialized definition of Islam or a global ummah (Herck & Drigo 2019). In the instance of Hindu fanaticism, Madan and Nandy have analysed significant linkages between contemporary secular philosophy and Hindu nationalism in relation to its modernist foundations. Others have highlighted the secularisation of Hinduism that underpins many efforts to create a Hindu nation beginning in the eighteenth century. Basu, states the modernising objective of nationalism was only feasible via the political application of religion as ideology (Basu 1996). In doing so, the BJP reflected Savarkar's Hindutva by secularising Hinduism with an emphasis on modern conceptions of science, the state, history, masculinity, and a cohesive national identity.

In addition, another scholar, Eviane Leidig, examines Hindutva as a variant of right-wing extremism by comparing it to fascism in Europe. She argues that Hindutva in India maintained contact with fascist Italy and Nazi Germany throughout its emergence, and that Hindutva actors (Sangh Parivar) play a crucial role in nation-building extremism and the formation of a majoritarian identity (Leidig 2020). In this regard, she asserts that the intellectual conversations of the nineteenth century that led to the formulation and promotion of fascist theory are the source of right-wing extremism in Europe (Leidig 2020). This is best shown by the philosopher Jakob Fries, who said, "When a nation is ruled by a common spirit, sufficient life will spring from the people to fulfil all civic tasks (Leidig 2020)." Moreover, he asserts that the Germans who participated in Burschenschaften allegedly committed xenophobic acts in the interest of German nationalism (Paxton, R.O., 2007). Which was regarded as the emergence of fanaticism on the right. Anti-rationalism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, intolerance, and fanaticism are the same diseases that the Nazis institutionalised under different circumstances (Paxton, 2007). This evolution spread into the majority of European fascism, leaning on radical and populist ideas inspired by anarchist and socialist movements of the early 20th century (Paxton, 2007). However, since 1947 fascism has fragmented into several groups in reaction to shifting political conditions. Thus, academics have moved their focus to diverse far-right groups, including the emergence of Hindu nationalism in south Asia, India (Desai 2016). As a kind of nationalism, Hindutva has been misunderstood as predominantly religious, as opposed to ethnonationalist. Robert Paxton, for instance, argues that for Hindu extremists, religion is at the centre of a deep relationship that the secular and multicultural Indian state cannot satisfy (Paxton, 2007). Additionally, he acknowledges the feasibility of religion-based fascism in regions with a diverse religious presence, such as India, and that two fascisms using the local patriotic repertoire do not need to have similar symbols and language (Paxton, 2007). Religious identity takes precedence over national identification in India when examining the rise of Hindutva as an ideology that wants to construct an ethnonationalist state (Desai, 2016). The effect of fascism on Hindutva is evident in Savarkar's ideological work *Hindutva; Who is a Hindu?* which "incorporates local cultural characteristics into a concept of nationalism that emphasises the ethnic and racial component of the Hindu country (Savarkar 2016)." In addition, during Hegewar's mentor Balakrishna Moonie's travel to Italy in 1931, he met Mussolini and witnessed how young Italian youngsters were recruited to attend weekly meetings that included exercises, which became known as the RSS's mode of operation (Sen, S., 2015). The RSS continues to operate Shakhas or cells, which volunteers join or are recruited for by their local chapter. Which teaches them old Hindu scriptures and militarises them (Sen, S., 2015). Thus,

exposing them to the Hindutva goal, which is now being executed and practised by the ruling BJP. After the Hindu nationalist BJP came to power in 2014, these fascist origins and the desire to construct a Hindu Rashtra manifested themselves in the development of extremism (Sen, S., 2015). For more comparison, please refer to figure 1.1.

Fascism	Hindutva
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State should have absolute power with an authoritarian leader • Nationalism should be leading narrative and in its ultimate form. • A clear laid down social order that is mandatory to be followed by entire nation • No sympathies for those people who are critics of either the government or given social order • Unflinching sense of national pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BJP also believes in absolute power with Modi at its helm of affairs as an authoritarian leader. • Hindutva has to be a leading narrative and it has worked very successfully in 2014 and 2019 elections in India. In elections of 2019, BJP was able to secure 303 seats as a party and 353 seats along with its coalition partners as National Democratic alliance (Dale, 2019). • Anyone living in India has to follow Hindutva in all its forms and manifestation. • Majority Hindus are not willing to listen anything either against Narendra Modi or policies of BJP (manifestation of teaching of M.S. Golwaker and Savarkar) • Hindus are trying to gain an unflinching national pride by lynching, declaring minorities as non-citizen, attacking religious sites of Muslims and partially Christians in an effort to restore confidence of Hindus and revenge centuries old inferiority complex.

Fig 1.1 Contrasting Similarities Between Hindutva & Fascism

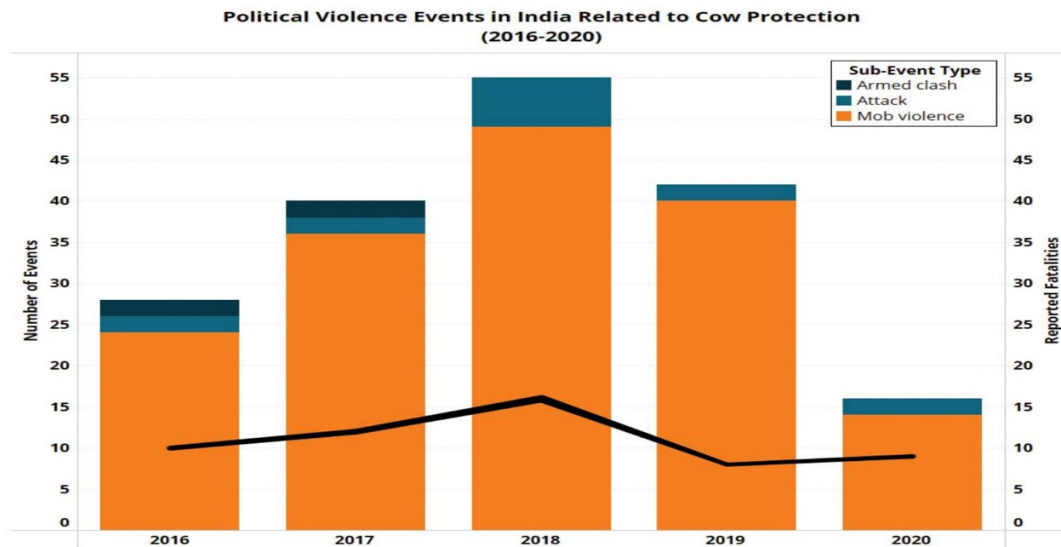
The administrative reforms commission (ARC) is a significant development in terms to understanding extremism under the BJP post 2014. The report distinguishes religious extremism from intellectual extremism. The research concludes that religious fanaticism is more harmful and pervasive than other types and it justifies a ‘divine obligation or sacramental deed’ (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008). In contrast, ideological extremism was inspired by left-wing or right-wing politics. Left-wing extremism was caused by capitalist society, is exploitative in character, and is susceptible to violent overthrow, while right-wing extremism seeks to maintain or restore the dominance of certain ethnic/racial groupings (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2008).

In this section, the growth of right-wing extremism is analysed as the Hindu Terror or saffron terror (Bidwai, P., 2008). The spate of explosions targeting Muslim minority that happened

between 2010 and 2013 in India because of Hindu nationalism gave rise to this popular use. It was suspected that Hindu right-wing organisations carried out these assaults (RWGs—right-wing gangs) (Bidwai 2008). The Gujarat communal riots of 2002, which is a premeditated genocide of Muslims and was sponsored by the State under Narendra Modi's leadership, The Babri Mosque Demolition case, and other riots that murdered many hundreds of Muslims are examples of right-wing extremism instances from the past (Gittinger, 2020). However, these Hindu Nationalist assaults did not occur during the BJP administration, but rather under the UPA government, and they were intended to destabilise governance and foment political unrest in India. However, this trend is shifting after 2014. Data through the India Send, a news website that tracks lynching's, reports an exponential increase in the number of mob lynching's of Muslims and Dalits who were believed to be carrying cows illegally (Gittinger, 2020). More than 80 percent of the victims killed between 2010 and 2017 were Muslims, while the remainder were Dalits. Notably, one of the recorded incidences occurred shortly before to the BJP's rise to power in 2014 (Swami, P., 2002). Which revealed that lynching was closely tied to the governing of the central government by the BJP. Under the current administration's leadership, lynching exemplifies the broader category of an increase in extremism in terms of hate crimes. According to Hate Crime Watch, a website devoted to documenting instances of hate crime, 91 percent of the hate crimes documented over the past decade have occurred since the Modi administration came to power, including 99 deaths and 703 injuries in crimes motivated by religious hatred between May 2014 and April 2019 (2022). (Mostly of Muslims). Across the entire political spectrum, the bulk of these crimes were exacerbated by hate speech (2022). Further according to self-reported statistics, over four hundred political candidates nominated by various political parties were the subject of hate speech, during election seasons, instances of hate speech aimed against opposing parties often increase (Maria Agnes Sasitha, J., 2021). During the elections in Delhi in February 2020, for instance, gunmen radicalised by candidates' anti-government rhetoric spent a week shooting at protesters (Maria Agnes Sasitha, J., 2021). In addition, as soon as the right wing sustained power, the current government's failure to imprison or even prosecute those guilty for anti-minority crimes or hate speech contributed to the proliferation of extremism (Maria Agnes Sasitha, J., 2021). Shambulal, a Hindu fanatic who beheaded a Muslim and broadcast a video of the murder, stood for municipal government in Rajasthan in 2018 (Anon, 2022). In a separate 2018 event, a minister from the BJP government praised five persons who were cleared of lynching charges for lack of evidence (Gupta, 2020). In response to these incidents, Prime Minister Modi, who is typically a talkative politician with weekly podcasts aimed at his followers, issued just a few ambiguous and

ineffective reprimands, and took few significant actions (Gupta, 2020). Yogi Adityanath, the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh is showing more hesitancy with regard to these topics (Bhatt, & Naqvi 2020). Yogi Adityanath characterised the 2018 lynching of a police officer by crowds protesting cow slaughters as an incident and issued severe orders to arrest anybody involved in cow slaughter (Pal, B., 2021). In 2020, the Uttar Pradesh regime, led by Yogi Adityanath, frequently criminalised protestors and passed legislation to punish interreligious marriages based on accusations of love jihad, the ambiguous term describing Muslim men marrying Hindu women in an effort to convert and funnel credible women into terrorism (Pal, B., 2021). In this regard Elcheroth and Reicher argue that politicians can facilitate violence in three ways by vocally promoting violence, by remaining silent on acts of violence, thereby emboldening violent groups, and by invoking previous conflicts between two communities, thereby perpetuating the perception that these populations have been at odds for decades (Elcheroth, G. and Reicher, S., 2017)

Furthermore, post-2014 amendments to Strick laws prohibiting cows' slaughter have contributed to an increase in violent vigilante violence tendencies (Ahuja & Prakash 2017). According to Human Rights Watch, these revisions add severe penalties for cow slaughter and, in certain circumstances, criminalise the transit, ownership, and sale of cattle or meat (Anon, 2022). The Rastriya Kamdhenu Aayog (henceforth RKA), which was founded in February 2019, aims to address several issues relating to the conservation and preservation of cows (Pratap 2020.). Establishing the RKA was one of several measures done by the BJP government to fulfil the protection of cows promises stated in their 2014 election platform (Pratap 2020.). From 2016 until the end of 2020, more than 50 fatalities have been ascribed to murder or mob violence after the suspected slaughter or trade of cows (Bepari 2020). Moreover, according to 2018 ACLED statistics, the number of incidents of political violence in India related to the protection of cows increased dramatically. In 2017 and 2018, the number of political violent events related to cow protection increased by almost 40 percent compared to 2016 levels (Trends , 2021). The development of right-wing Hindu nationalist BJP-led administrations in a few states, including Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Jharkhand, has also coincided with similar violent upsurges (Maskara, 2021). This number fell in 202 because to the growth of covid-19 because of stringent lockdowns, however despite the lockdowns, sixteen incidents of political violence were reported in 2020 (Maskara, S., 2021). For complete statistics, please refer to Fig. 1.2. below (World Report 2022)



In addition, eighty percent of the violence observed in connection to previous instances of cow vigilantism was directed at humans (World Report 2022). According to the 2017 global report of a minority rights organisation, the growth in stringent restrictions throughout the country has allowed the targeting of minority groups, many of whom are already particularly vulnerable to hostile activities (World Report 2022). Muslims and Hindus from lower castes (Dalits) have often been the victim of hate speech, attacks, and violence since the BJP came to power.

Furthermore, with the repeal of article 370 for the state of Jammu and Kashmir, modifications to the 2019 distribution bill partitioning the state into union territories, under the direct administration of the central BJP government. Extremism is on an all-time high (Ahlawat, & Izarali 2020). However, the state of J&K is not new to extremism, radicalization, terrorism, and militancy, since its incorporation into India, the state has been in disarray (Ahlawat & Izarali 2020).

Despite calm, because of increased counter-terrorism operations, border monitoring, and a decline in cross-border incursions along the line of control (LOC). The state is experiencing an increase in extremism among both Hindu and Muslim populations. One as an act to develop its claim under the Hindutva Akhand Bharat ideologues of the RSS and the BJP, and the other in response to the movement and in response to the BJP's policies and legislation (Jaffrelot, 2005). In this regard, the area saw a string of targeted executions. Srinagar, a portion of Kashmir, was worst impacted by hit-and-run incidents in 2021 (Begum, 2019). One of the largest incidents was the ambush of a police bus carrying government workers by militants, in which 23 police and civil administration officers were murdered and an equal number were wounded (The Economic Time). In addition, the valley is seen many clashes between security troops and

insurgents. In response to the newly enacted legislation, militants altered their strategies and scope of operations, including the recruitment of difficult-to-identify hybrid militants (The Economic Time). Consequently, hybrid militancy spread across the region. This move led to the formation of indigenous militant groups and local recruiting (Wani, 2020). The United Liberation Front of Kashmir (ULFK), The Resistance Force (TRF), the Kashmir Tigers, and the People's Anti-Fascist Force were among the most notable (PAFF) (Wani, 2020). Similarly, to the 1990s, when extremist Islamists pressured Kashmiri Pandits to convert to Islam or flee, some observers think the recent spate of killings was meant to deter the community from returning to the valley and to urge those who had already left to depart (Majid, Z., 2022). However, research indicates that political tranquilly and stability in the Kashmir valley is often temporary and fleeting (Majid 2022). The acts of the Indian government continue to aggravate Kashmiris and encourage them to join terrorist groups (Anon, 2022). Despite the likelihood of a violent response from security forces, minor occurrences may generate enormous rallies. It is likely that Kashmiris would continue to prioritise their political objectives above socioeconomic incentives and assurances of good governance (Anon, 2022). Campaigns for peacebuilding, education, and social cohesion are unlikely to be seen as altruistic activities. Thus, extremist organisations continue to utilise social media platforms to spread propaganda and exploit local issues and extremism is rising with every day passing. The BJP's Strick bent towards the Hindutva ideologies is causing the Indian nation into a turmoil and is pitching for another Hindu Muslim divide along religious lines.

Chapter 7 CONCLUSION

Centuries of philosophers and academics have argued that as the global arena and the globe become more contemporary, religion would dwindle and decline through time and distance. Given this perspective, the secularization thesis became the pillars of national development and nation-building. Nations throughout the world started to grow as a result of this idea. In the twenty-first century, however, the mere existence of secularism came under scrutiny. Currently, the world is seeing the return of religion to the center of every paradigm. In turn, this has created new avenues and boundaries for future discussions and study. Analysis of religion's metamorphosis, predominance, and development is more fascinating nowadays. Which is the essential concept in proposing this piece of literature for examination and supporting the offered argument?

Modern religion has evolved into several paradigms, one of which is its blending with nationalism and nation-building. The development of this phenomenon of religious nationalism is a difficult one. As religion and nationalism have been conflicting notions at times and developed along parallel lines at other times. Therefore, it becomes a difficult framework to analyze and evaluate. As religion is a single notion whose meaning varies with every changing dynamic, many academics have attempted to establish a definition but have been unable to do so. As far as I'm concerned, religion is an acquired attribute that contributes to the formation of an individual's personality and character. In other words, religion is a source of strong emotions, ego, and retribution. If accepted positively, it produces a pleasant personality, but if abused, it becomes aggressive. This comparable feature may be seen in several societies throughout the globe, where the introduction of religion led to dire consequences. For instance, the 9/11 attacks, the Palestine-Israel conflict, or the Bosnia and Herzegovina war. All have had violent religion as their central aspect. Similarly, the spread of religious nationalism around the globe is another characteristic of religion and nationalism coexistence. Thus, providing religion with a valid platform to enter and ascend inside the many paradigms it had previously occupied or was attempted to reduce. Many contemporary political movements, such as the growth of Christian nationalism in the United States, Latin America, and eastern Europe, may be attributed to religion. Similarly, religious nationalism in India in the form of Hindu nationalism represents a considerable change of religious ideas into increasingly dominating, radical, and fascistic attitudes and features.

India, the world's biggest democracy and home to every existent religion, is dominated by Hindu nationalism and Hinduism. Consequently, its prevalence is rather evident. Nonetheless, the manner in which it is illustrated and depicted is truly astounding and enlightening.

Hindu nationalism is on the rise in India along the lines of Hindutva, an ideology constructed by nationalist groups known as the Sangh Parivar (currently) and the BJP administration. The ideologues of Hindutva were formulated by the nationalist founding fathers of the Sangh Parivar, V.D. Savarkar, Hegewar, and M.S. Golwalkar, who were all inspired and captivated by fascism in Europe and loved the fascist movements of Adolf Hitler's Germany and Benito Mussolini's Italy. Which gave it not just an extreme personality but also a violent right-wing ideology. This prompted the Hindu community to safeguard its culture and identity by establishing a clear distinction from all other faiths and cultures that want to form a Hindu Rashtra in India. Thus, attacking the fundamental concept of secularism upon which India was founded. Hindutva as an ideology been dormant for many decades, but with the resurrection of BJP, a Hindu nationalist, after the 2014 general elections, Hindu religion as a kind of nationalism moved to the center of Indian politics. Providing credibility and institutional consolidation for the ideology. The BJP is now adopting this authoritarian, majoritarian, and fascist approach on India's culture, society, and political system. With the assistance of several organizations, or the Sangh Parivar, its growth is phenomenal.

In transforming India into a Hindu Rashtra, the BJP is discriminating against and marginalizing minorities and other minority faiths inside the country. In doing so, they are using every administrative and political authority at their disposal. They have adopted policies that only benefit the Hindu minority at the expense of other minorities. In 2019, the BJP administration amended the citizen act to accommodate all ethnicities except Muslims as citizens of the nation. The law was established as a direct assault on the country's constitution, which guarantees protection and equal rights to every person. By law, they are no longer citizens and may be attacked by Hindu extremist organizations; without citizenship rights, they must either leave the country or convert to Hinduism. In addition, this weakens the fundamental human rights convention. In legitimizing legislation like as those described above, the BJP administration has employed coercion in every conceivable manner, either by compelling administrative agencies to comply or by bending the Judiciary to its position.

In addition, the repeal of Article 370 for the state of Kashmir is a step in the right direction, but according to Hindutva ideology, it is intended to destabilize the majority-Muslim state and begin the relocation of the Hindu population in the area. Moreover, the rewriting of history, the protection of cows and cow protection laws, the renaming of heritage sites to reflect Hindu

cultures, and the introduction of curriculums based on mythical history rather than actual history are all steps towards the fascist ideologies of the BJP under the Hindutva Umbrella.

In addition to this, the placement of religious leaders to key administrative and political positions in order to legitimate their Hindutva claims is another step in the direction of authority. In order to disseminate its Hindutva ideals on the world stage, the BJP has also saffronized the foreign service. To manage the Indian military, the BJP has also recruited military chiefs who are former Sangh Parivar members and staunch Hindutva adherents.

However, since assuming power, the execution and politicization of these principles have been the BJP's central focus. In the shadow of growth, this trend of politicization and institutionalization of Hindutva beliefs has led to an increase in extremism and radicalization among the 72% majority Hindu population. Consequently, this led to prejudice against minorities by the Hindu community. Observing the spike in mortality rates during the BJP's rule made it easy to assume that extremism was on the rise. Instances of cow vigilantism, rape, and murder are alarmingly on the rise. The media and the international community do not recognize or report fifty percent of them. The source of extremism's violence is the Hindutva doctrine, whose primary goal is to convert a secular Indian state into a Hindu one. Which leads to militancy and bigotry in society and was recorded in several incidents around the state, creating insecurity among the state's minorities. This radical goal is not confined to the borders of India but has produced tensions with the surrounding nations.

In addition, militancy and terrorism have exacerbated the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. To combat the fascist attitude of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar, a new organization is being formed, and new types of militancy, such as hybrid militancy and sleeper cells, are being implemented. Since the rise to power of the BJP, the recruitment of young by extreme organizations has intensified.

All of these causes led to the increase in extremism in India after the BJP's 2014 return to power. Since then, minority populations have lived in constant fear of being attacked or slaughtered by Hindu radicals. The adoption of new laws and amendments has restricted the rights of minority populations, as opposed to providing them with equal rights. If this is not fascism, then what is it when human beings are denied equal rights and slaughtered in the name of religion in order to achieve a majority Hindu nation? Maintaining an identity just to demonstrate its existence. This is not the concept upon which India was founded; rather, it is a concept that is troubling and undermines the fundamental strength of India as a country. In conclusion, In India, Hindutva ideology is a significant source of conflict. It is the primary driver behind the escalating anti-Muslim violence in the nation in recent years. The anti-

Muslim brutality has expressed itself not only in an increase in physical assaults against Muslims, but also in more subtle and no less harmful ways, such as via vitriolic inciting hatred and the demonization of Muslims and their approach to life. The policies of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) from 2014 to 2019 were very devastating for culture, as the party employed the Hindutva ideology for electoral purposes and repressed minorities via its fascist ideology. During this time, the reasons of terrorist attacks and extremism rose, despite the surrounding nations' opposition to the policies of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). The primary objective of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) was to turn secular India into a Hindu state by means of its Hindutva ideology.

Equally ominous are continuing legislative initiatives that undermine the rights and character of Muslims and potentially possibly deprive millions of Muslims of their nationality. Hindus, as well as Muslims and Christians, should be concerned about the quick inroads Hindutva is making into India's Constitution, the way in which it prejudices people's perspectives and colors human engagement and politics, and the way in which it colors social interaction and politics. I would argue that the ascent of the BJP to power has brought to the fore an ideology that is fascist, does not belong to authentic Hinduism, and is antithetical to what true Hinduism teaches and values. The implications of the BJP's actions will reverberate across the world community, since they will exacerbate the Hindu-Muslim divide, which in turn might exacerbate tensions between India and Pakistan, two nuclear powers. Religious and political fanaticism have constrained room for the country's largest minority, and the unlawful annexation of the sole state with a Muslim majority is a clear illustration of religious extremism.

When it comes to New Delhi's policy toward Nepal, Kashmir, and Pakistan, the shadows of a strong ideological lean toward Hindu nationalism are much too apparent. As the emergence of saffron extremism results in conservative transnational Wahhabism in India, one cannot anticipate a sensible response from Modi's government; rather, it will gain by associating any such event with Pakistan. This would not only bolster the development of Hindutva, but also isolate Pakistan globally. Pakistani policymakers believe that New Delhi will continue to defend and encourage saffron extremism as a state policy, which will have far-reaching effects on South Asia as a whole and Pakistan in especially. Further more, If the mistreatment of Muslims by Hindu extremists in India continues unabated, this might generate a Muslim migrant tsunami towards Pakistan and Bangladesh. Considering the geographical implications of this occurrence, this topic should be added to the itinerary of any potential high global summit.

Therefore, vigorous resistance is essential to restrain and temper the transition of this radical Hindutva ideology. In doing so first, there is a need to increase local understanding of the Hindutva problem. Consider building databanks with up-to-date information on all events connected to the emergence of Hindutva in India's surrounding countries. This database will also contribute to national and worldwide awareness-raising efforts.

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