

In my thesis I have focused on Hindu women adhering to the principles of Hindu nationalist ideology which stems from the notion of Hindutva as described by V. D. Savarkar who has put forward some gender stereotypes of Hindu men and women depicted as substantially different from Muslim men and women. These assumptions were later further developed by the so called sangh parivar. I have suggested that Hindu nationalism has in the late eighties and early nineties succeeded in mobilising Hindu women for the cause of the Hindu Right and brought them into its fold on an unprecedented scale. The mobilisation was successful due largely to the Ramjanmbhumi Movement which was then at its height. Right-wing Hindu women participated in the movement, and communal riots which formed an integral part of it, either as political leaders or perpetrators of communal violence assaulting, among others, Muslim women. This thesis also presents a brief overview of some women's wings of the sangh parivar and their ideology which in certain aspects differs from that of their male counterparts. It also considers the question of female emancipation within these wings and draws a comparison between them and the feminist movement.