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Hindutva 2.0 as a Variant of Indian Islamophobia: An Analysis of Praxis of Indian Society

Izzat Raazia	Doctoral Candidate, School of Integrated Social Sciences, University of Lahore, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: izzat.raazi@gmail.com (<i>Corresponding Author</i>)
Shahzad Akhtar	Assistant Professor, School of Integrated Social Sciences, University of Lahore, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.
Maryam Nawaz	PhD Student in International Relations, School of Integrated Social Sciences, University of Lahore, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

Abstract: *The resurgence of Hindutva as a political ideology aims to promote Hindu Rashtra in India. The revival of Hindutva, at the helm of Indian Premier Narendra Modi, seeks to promote and preserve the majoritarian cultural and pan-identity of Hindus in India. Hindutva is a term that refers to the ideology of Hindu nation-building aiming to transform the face of the Indian secular democratic republic into a Hindu Rashtra (state). The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), having many similarities with Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany, is a right-wing Hindu nationalist organization that is closely associated with the development and promotion of Hindutva ideology of political monotheism and Hindu nationalist ideas of Indian society and culture. This paper is an attempt to unveil the historical traces of Hindutva as a political ideology with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in office and its exclusionary impacts on Indian Muslims.*

Key Words: Hindutva 2.0, Right-wing Ideology, Islamophobia, Modi, RSS, Hindu Rashtra, Article 370, Gujrat Riots.

Introduction

The Hindu nationalistic movement in India is closely linked to the Hindutva ideology. It's an ideology grounded on several tiers, including religious, cultural, and political. Hindutva, at its core, promotes the idea that India is a Hindu nation and the domination of Hindu values and culture in the country. It is often associated with RSS, the right-wing group, BJP, the ruling party in India, and other like-minded groups and works to foster Hindu national unity in India (Reddy, 2006; Basu 2015).

RSS Mission is Reorganizing the Hindu society on the lines of its unique national genius which the Sangh has taken up is not only a great process of true national regeneration of Bharat but also the inevitable precondition to realize the dream of world unity and human welfare. Our one supreme goal is to bring to life the all-around glory and greatness of our Hindu Rashtra" (Howard, 2018).

To rally its Hindu vote base and promote its Hindu nationalist agenda, the BJP has been accused of employing Hindutva as a political tactic. The BJP has attempted to win over Hindu votes by tantalizing their sense of religion and culture. BJP attempted to establish Hindi as the official state language and revivification of Sanskrit. The political rhetoric used by Premier Modi is that Hindu identity is under attack and it's important to defend and advance Hindu values and traditions. The campaign slogans used by the BJP during the 2014 elections included "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" (Development for All) and "Acche Din Aane Wale Hain" (Good Times Are Coming). The BJP also employed Hindu-centric chants like "Har Har Modi, Ghar Ghar Modi" (Every household is Modi's) and "Jai Shri Ram" (Hail Lord Ram) to win over the religiously conservative

majority (Jaffrelot, 2015; Diwakar, 2015). Yogi Adityanath, a BJP MP, spearheaded a *ghar wapsi* (homecoming) campaign to convert Muslims and Christians to Hinduism by the use of force (George, 2022 Feb. 28). Sangh distributed stickers, calendars, and images related to Hindutva aspiring to attain political representation and mass support (Oza, 2013). The party played a pivotal role to win over Hindu voters in electoral campaigns and advocated a political ideology of defending and upholding Hindu values, ideals and customs within Indian society by emphasizing Hindus' cultural and religious identity.

On the other, Premier Modi presented himself as an administrator, who supports the well-being of all Indians, irrespective of their faiths. The administration under his leadership has implemented a variety of economic and social initiatives with the goals of lowering poverty levels and expanding access to quality healthcare and education. Moreover, India's modernization and economic progress during the BJP administration is visible (Tremblay, & Kapur, 2017).

The origins of Hindutva may be rooted back to the beginning of the twentieth century. In the 1920s, the writer and political activist Vinayak Damodar Savarkar popularized the term "Hindutva" to describe the belief that Hinduism is more than a religion and should be embraced by all Indians. It is a rigid ideology to preserve Hindu culture and identity from outside threats and to promote inclusivity and cohesion at the national level based on the concept of otherization that interiorizes the Muslims, Dalits and other castes. RSS founding ideological text titled, *Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu?* authored by Savarkar was published in 1923 that defines the nation based on geographical unity, racial features, and a common culture. He contends that the RSS works to establish Hindu traditions and values as the foundation for a powerful and prosperous India (Damodar, 1923; Jaffrelot, 1999, p. 26). With deep historical roots and far-reaching implications for Indian society and politics, the debate over Hindutva and the RSS is complicated and contentious.

Through constant interaction with fascist Italy and Nazi Germany ideologues, Hindutva is formed as a right-wing extremist ideology that has its roots in colonial India playing a significant role in its development. Nazis translated *Mein Kampf* into Indian languages, carried out furtive intelligence

manoeuvres and radio transmissions and propagated pro-Nazi material and Germany's Jewish policy to Indian newspapers. In exchange, Hindutva literature is published in German newspapers (Leidig, 2020).

RSS (a nationalistic organization) is established by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar in 1925 in response to what he saw as the decline of Hindu culture and the rise of Islamic and British influence in India. The RSS was modelled on European nationalist organizations and aimed to create a unified Hindu community that could resist these external influences. The RSS main objectives are to advance Hindutva and defend the rights of India's Hindu population. The group is renowned for its rigid rules. Its initial priorities were to encourage young Hindu men to engage in physical fitness, military training, and cultural education. But it quickly entered politics, started to push for the creation of Hindu nationalism in India and strictly adhered to Hinduism's tenets (Jaffrelot, 1999). However, according to some historians the most elite and powerful caste in Hinduism, the Brahmins, did not appear to be native to the country. Aryans (immigrants, invaders, conquerors or others) came to India as invaders from the north and introduced the language of the conquerors with higher civilizations rather than their native people (Ratnagar, 2007).

Supporters of the RSS and Hindutva aimed to promote an image of India that is rooted in its ancient Hindu heritage. The RSS participated in numerous anti-British protests and demonstrations and played a significant role in the Indian independence movement. Muslims, in particular, have come under fire for the RSS and its affiliated organizations' promotion of a limited or exclusive view of Hindu identity (Jaffrelot, 2010). However, Hindutva is different from Hinduism. Hinduism is diverse, with idolatrous and multi-theistic religious practices, with no founding father, no creed and no single caste and its cosmology covers a wide range of topics including religion, spirituality, and ethics but they are based on myths and tales. Bhagavad Gita, Manu Smriti, verified teachings of the four Vedas talk about establishing a strong, powerful and united government, hegemony, domination and subjugation of other countries and attack on the weaker neighbours (Tamimi, 2009).

After partition, this ideology helped nation-building in India by creating a majoritarian government in India. Hindutva considers Muslims are "invaders" of the "pure" Hindu nation therefore, they must be eliminated or "converted" back to Hinduism. Although Hinduism plays a vital role in Hindutva that is not centred on religion they manipulate religion to create belonging with ethnonationalism and restore cultural identity. Its objective is to restore *Akhand Bharat* (Undivided India) including the regaining of lost land in history (Leidig, 2020).

Gandhian ideals of ethnic diversity, pluralism and universality, as his call for "Hindu-Muslim unity" and relinquishing land that became part of Pakistan were rejected and detested by the RSS who believed in Indianization and assimilation of India's ethnic minorities further led to Gandhi's assassination by former RSS member Nathuram Godse in 1948. This act of assassination was justified by his cohorts. The RSS was outlawed shortly after partition as a result of Mahatma Gandhi's murder. However, the group continued to operate and remained marginalized but eventually became a significant player in Indian politics, especially under the direction of its second chief, Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar (Shankar, 2015).

Golwalkar's seminal work, *We or Our Nationhood Defined* (1939) emphasizes this view: The foreign races in Hindusthan (India) must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, learn to respect and hold the Hindu religion in reverence, entertain only ideas that glorify the Hindu race and culture, i.e., of the Hindu nation, and must lose their separate existence to merge in the Hindu race, or they may remain in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, much less any preferential treatment. There shouldn't be any other option for them to take. (Golwalkar, 1939)

Indian Premier Narendra Modi ascended to power after Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) by securing a single-party landslide victory in Lok Sabha (the Lower House) in the 2014 Elections. The BJP-led government at the national, state and local levels left no stone unturned to embolden Hindu-fundamentalist factions and promoted and implemented sectarian policies that overtly convert the secular foundation of India into a Hindu state that endangered its other religious minorities. In the next

election in 2019 BJP's landslide victory inculcated the policies of Hindu nationalism into public discourse and praxis from redrafting citizenship laws detrimental to Muslims in India and renaming cities and streets after Hindu deities and saints have contributed to the process of "saffronization," as has the marginalization of religious minorities like Muslims and Christians to manifest Hindu identity (Sircar, 2022).

The research is going to explore the following question how has the mainstreaming of Hindutva ideology occurred under the Modi Government and what is the impact of this on minorities in India, particularly Muslims? This paper provides the origin and evolution of Hindutva ideology by using qualitative descriptive analysis. The paper is categorized into four sections. The first section deals with the ideological orientations and historical traces that have given rise to Hindutva as a political ideology with BJP in office. The second section deals with the mainstreaming of the BJP in India and the role of media and education. The third section is based on right-wing extremism in India under Modi Rule including the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992, the Gujarat Riots in 2002, Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, the Revocation of Articles 370 & 35A and the Marginalization of religious minorities in India. The last section explores the future of Democracy in India with the rise of Hindutva and presents Hindutva's comparison with other right-wing extremist organizations in the world.

Mainstreaming of Hindutva

Hindutva refers to an ideology that embraces a variety of expressions, from organizations to paramilitary to violent fringe groups. The strict adherents of Hindutva emphasized the concept of Hindu *Rashtra* is rooted in pre-partition politics, Home for Hindus and Greater India, who consider India is their *Pitribhumi* (fatherland) and *Punyabhumi* (holy land) appeared to be among main agendas of BJP and RSS. They emphasized on past domination of Hindus by Christians and Muslims and intended to inverse the effect of these incursions (Rambachan, 2003; Leidig, 2020). Hindutva's geographical envisioning of India as a Hindu nation is established on the marginalization and menace of the religious Other mainly Muslims, which is augmented by their construction of a pre-colonial India that accentuates

the Muslim (Mughal) foray and by the post-colonial recognition of Indian Muslims with Pakistan (Desai, [2011](#)). Hindutva's proponents argue that the ideology must be recognized as an authentic expression of Indian culture and identity in order to counteract what they regard as the threat of Islamic extremism and separatism in India. Hindutva is quite successful in India, BJP's administration point to India's modernization and economic progress during their rule.

With the Sangh Parivar making an alliance with RSS and coming into the Hindutva fold, an increased mobilization during the decades of 1960 and 1970 has been observed. The Sangh-Privar affiliated organizations are a conglomeration of several like-minded organizations that include Bajrang Dal, a charity-based non-governmental organization (NGO). It also founded several affiliated groups, a powerful force in Indian politics (Bharatiya Janata Party), and cultural organizations, (Vishwa Hindu Parishad), student organizations (Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad), farmers and trade unions (such as Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, Kisan Sabha and Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh), educational network (Vidya Bharati), Tribal Welfare Organization (Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram) and Female organizations (such as Sadhvi Shakti Parishad and Rashtriya Sevika Samiti) (Anderson, & Longkumer, [2018](#); Nair, [2009](#); Palshikar, [2015](#)). These groups have advocated for the protection of cows, which are highly esteemed in Hinduism, a unified civil code based on Hindu law, and the construction of a Hindu temple in Ayodhya. With significant support from the Hindu populace, the RSS and its affiliated organizations are currently regarded as some of the most powerful and influential political forces in India. However, they are promoting religious intolerance and seeking to undermine India's secular democracy.

The mainstream faction of Sangh Parivar includes the RSS which employs 3000 full-time outfits to serve as the first rioters and carry out violent activities. The political offshoot of the RSS is the BJP, which supports and promotes its initiatives on national and state levels. The organization for Hindu priests known as the World Hindu Council (WHC) is notorious for using violence in riots and for demolishing memorials. The Bajrang Dal, also known as the Army of Hanuman or the foot soldiers of Hindutva, is regarded as the most violent group

within the Sangh Parivar and has been involved in riots, killings, public lynching and bombing (Syed, [2019](#) July 26). The Sangh Parivar's Hindutva ideology has its roots in the early-twentieth-century writings of D.V. Savarkar, who argued that the Aryans who settled in India had formed a nation and that this is today embodied in Hindu culture (Jaffrelot, 1996, p. 26).

Indian Premier Narendra Modi constructed Hindutva as a mainstream ideology during the 2014 election campaign that constructed Muslims as a threat and jotted the concept of Hindutva with Indian nationalism. Modi and the BJP made history by capturing majority seats in India's lower chamber of parliament (the Lok Sabha). BJP was re-elected in 2019 with an even wider majority than in the previous elections, signalling that Hindutva was no longer an up-and-coming political ideology but had already achieved mainstream status. Having a political profile and voluntary grassroots services is to embed the Hindutva across varied segments of society to consolidate the religious, political and cultural, aspects of Hindu identity.

Leaders of the BJP, such as Narendra Modi and L.K. Advani, capitalized on the construction of their version of the truth that their party is the defender of Hindu interests. The party's style of Hindu nationalism, called Hindutva, was framed as a way to protect Hindu values from the influence of other cultures. The Congress Party's fall from power in India is another factor fuelling the rise of Hindutva. The BJP filled the electoral void left by the Congress demise by advocating its own brand of Hindu nationalism.

Saffronization of Hindutva through Media & Education

Hindutva ideology, a conglomeration of Hindu nationalism and the Hindu way of life is the driving force behind saffronization or saffron terror. Critics refer to the policies of right-wing Hindu nationalists as "saffronization," an Indian political neologism named after the "saffron" robes worn by Hindu sanyasis. These policies aim to recall and glorify ancient Hindu cultural history (Syed, [2019](#) July 26). The BJP takes its name from the colour saffron, which has religious significance in Hinduism and appears on the party's flag.

The BJP's initiative to promote, disseminate and convey the party's message, official and informal education, public gatherings of its supporters and cultural identity development are efficiently organized through various means including Hindutva-friendly traditional and social media outlets such as television, newspapers, websites, Twitter and Facebook to a wider audience and mould the narrative in its favour. BJP remained successful in bringing Hinduism into the mainstream in which media greatly contributed to the spread of the BJP's Hindutva agenda. The proliferation of 24-hour news networks and social media sites provided the party with a greater platform. Hindutva's meteoric rise to power in India under the BJP is attributable to several interrelated causes, including the party's savvy media manipulation and smart coalitions with other Hindu nationalist organizations.

The BJP has also utilized educational institutions as a platform to spread Hindutva ideology. Saffronization has been put into effect in India through curriculum changes in schools. Many people feel that the current BJP government is propagating a biased and revisionist history of India, one that gives more credit to Hindu emperors and less to other religious and ethnic groups. The Hindu Right-Wing Party (HRP) has created its own schools to spread its ideology among young people. BJP routinely holds rallies and other public events for tens of thousands of people to spread the Hindu nationalist ideology. For cultural cohesiveness through the inculcation of public consciousness, movies labelling Muslims as rivals to the collective Hindu identity narrative were constructed.

Right-wing extremism in India under Modi Rule

Right-wing extremism in India is a complex and multifaceted issue that has been a source of tension and conflict in the country for many years that has aggravated during the government of Premier Narendra Modi. There have been several incidents of right-wing extremism and violence including mob violence, lynching and attacks on places of worship and discrimination against religious minorities, especially Muslims. The rise of Hindutva ideology is a contributing factor in right-wing extremism which aims to establish a Hindu state as well as passing the

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is proved to be discriminatory leading to polarization of society. Right-wing Hindu organizations have been spreading that Muslims allegedly pose a threat to Indian security and culture and fuel tensions and violence. Political and social issues in India including economic injustice, caste-based prejudice, and the rise of Hindu nationalism, frequently serve as a fuel for religious extremism that continues to be a major challenge for the nation and will require a multifaceted strategy to address the underlying causes of the issue, encourages tolerance and understanding, and safeguards the rights of all religious communities.

Babri Masjid demolition 1992

Religious extremism has caused many incidents in India, including riots, mob violence, and terrorist attacks. A group of Hindu fundamentalists turned the mosque into rubble on December 6, 1992, in the Indian city of Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh claiming it was built on top of an ancient temple to Ram. The Mughal Emperor Babur constructed the Babri Masjid in 1528 and was revered by both Hindus and Muslims. Shri Rama Krishna is one of the most worshipped deities in Hinduism. The Hindu fundamentalists have been pushing for a Ram temple to be built there for years. As a result of the Babri Masjid's obliteration, communal violence erupted across India, resulting in the deaths and injuries of thousands of people. The incident further aggravated tensions between Hindus and Muslims in India (Thakur, [1993](#)).

The Indian government established the Liberhan Committee to look into the circumstances following the demolition of the Babri mosque. Some high-profile politicians and heads of right-wing Hindu groups were singled out for blame in the Commission's 2009 findings (Zagardo, [2012](#)). After decades of tension, India's highest court 2019 rendered a final verdict on the contentious Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi dispute. The court made the controversial decision to allow the construction of the Ram Temple on the Babri Masjid site (Sahi, [2022](#)). The Indian government did not issue a direct decree for the demolition of the Babri Mosque to build Ram Temple but Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas, a trust, was set up to construct the Ram Temple. Currently, construction has begun (Zagardo, [2012](#)).

The Gujarat Riots in 2002

There was a string of communal violence in Gujarat, an Indian state, in February and March of 2002. No reason was provided by the authorities that what sparked violence. The immediate cause was the burning of the Godhra train on February 27, 2002, commuting Hindu pilgrimages killing approximately 60 persons allegedly by Muslims leading to fury and calls for revenge from the Muslim community in Gujarat. Muslims were specifically targeted. Official estimates put the death toll at approximately a thousand, with Muslims making up the vast majority of those slain, and over a hundred of thousands of displaced people. State officials, including then-Chief Minister Narendra Modi, came under fire for their response to the riots and their inability to stem the tide of violence. The state government and police were accused of not doing enough to safeguard Muslims and possibly aiding the violence. There have been multiple inquiries and judicial processes into the riots, both in India and internationally. Politicians and police officers both have been held responsible for sparking the unrest in discussion regarding the riots in Gujarat among politicians, academics, and the Indian press (Dhattiwala, & Biggs, 2012; Graff, & Galonnier, 2012).

The CAA 2019

The Citizenship Act in India is a law that regulates who is considered a citizen of India. The act's most recent iteration was passed in December 2019, and since then, there has been a lot of debate and opposition in India. The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is an envisioned national database that would ask its users to verify their citizenship. Concerns have been raised that Muslims may be excluded if they cannot provide adequate proof of citizenship.

The act updates the Citizenship Act of 1955 and offers non-Muslim immigrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh who arrived in India on or prior to December 31, 2014, a route to citizenship. The law has drawn fire for being anti-Muslim because it prevents Muslims from obtaining citizenship. Additionally, the act adds a new definition of "illegal migrants," those who entered India without a valid passport or other travel documents or who overstayed their visas. If an Overseas Citizenship of

India (OCI) cardholder breaks any laws, the act gives the government the right to revoke their registration (Javed, 2020). Many opposition parties, civil society organizations, and human rights organizations have criticized the act, which has been challenged in the Indian Supreme Court. It is contended that the act violates the secular nature of the Indian Constitution and may result in Muslim minorities in India being excluded and persecuted.

Revocation of Articles 370 & 35A

The Indian governments withdrawal of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution on 5th August 2019, granting special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, including the ability to have its constitution, flag, and autonomy over certain areas of governance and create its own set of laws in areas such as education and property ownership was enacted in 1949. Article 35A was added to the Constitution by Presidential Order in 1954, and it grants the Jammu and Kashmir legislature the power to establish the criteria for who is considered a permanent resident of the state, as well as the rights and privileges to which such individuals are entitled (including the right to own land, vote, and hold public office) represents the fulfilment of a Hindutva ambition to restore Hindu nationalism.

Hindutva is a longstanding ideological agenda of the BJP-inspired-RSS-ideology, which represents Hindu nationalism in India's government with Premier Narendra Modi at the helm. The bill was first discussed and passed by India's *Rajya Sabha* (upper house) and got the majority votes of 125 (67 per cent) in its favour and 61 (33 per cent) against it. On 6 August 2019, the bill was presented and passed by India's *Lok Sabha* (lower house) with 370 votes (86 per cent) in its favour and 70 votes (14 per cent) against it. Simultaneously, the Indian Parliament passed a J&K Reorganization Bill that split the region into two 'Union Territories', 1. Ladakh and 2. Jammu and Kashmir are under the veil of development, reconstruction and greater national integration (Verma, 2019).

Before abolishing Special Status to Kashmir, India granted permission for the mobilization of thousands of Security Personnel under the veil of maintaining law and order in the region. The government notified the tourists and *Yatris* (pilgrims)

to vacate the territory. Under Section 144, a curfew was imposed. 4000 people including 500 Kashmiri apex political and separatist leaders, lawyers, and journalists were detained by the Indian Occupying Forces (Korbel, 2021). Nearly 8 million Kashmiris were housebound and lived through a communication shutdown. Even the leader of the opposition, Rahul Gandhi, was not allowed to enter the valley. As per the government narrative, it was done to avoid casualties. But there were credible and grave reports of beatings and torture by security personnel (Pandow, 2021).

Mehbooba Mufti stated it was "the blackest day in Indian democracy" (SRJ News, August 6, 2019). Pakistan Foreign Office criticized the undemocratic unilateral action of the Government of India to change the disputed status of Kashmir as enshrined by UN Security Council. Pakistan halted all diplomatic relations, suspended bilateral trade with India and took the matter to UNSC. After almost 50 years, the UNSC in a meeting convened at the request of China in a closed consultation showed serious concern over India's unilateral action of revoking Kashmir's disputed status and gross human rights violations in the Vale.

This annexation of J&K state with India unilaterally and changing its demography is illegal as per international law, bilateral treaties and even India's state law. At least 10,000 protesters protested against the Indian Government's decision. They had responded using tear gas and direct firing from the pallet guns causing life-threatening injuries and blinding people's eye vision along with a large number of casualties. The question here arises if the beginning of reconstruction, development and greater national integration is this, what will be the end?

Many locals argued that their autonomy and rights had been taken away without their consent, which sparked significant protests and unrest in the area. The Indian government, on the other hand, argued that this decision would enhance economic development and security by integrating the region with the rest of India. Human rights organizations have strongly opposed the decision to revoke Article 370 and change the status of Jammu and Kashmir. They are concerned about the potential impact on the rights of Kashmiri citizens as well as the

likelihood of increased violence and instability in the area. With ongoing security measures and controlled internet access in the area, the situation in Kashmir continues to be tense. Many residents of the state-supported Article 35A are out of concern that they would lose their distinctive culture and identity to outsiders from other parts of India.

Moreover, the unilateral annexation and new domicile law have not only created unrest in Kashmir but separatist movements in other Indian states such as Maoists, Tripura, Mizoram and Nagaland are also simmering. India will have to take cognizance of the demands of the separatists.

Expanding Role of Hindutva and Marginalization of Minorities

The RSS and its affiliated organizations have been influential in Indian politics and society for decades. They advocate for a range of policies and practices that promote Hindu nationalism and cultural identity, including the promotion of Hinduism in public life, the protection of cows (considered sacred by many Hindus), and the establishment of a uniform civil code based on Hindu law and the perceived threat of Islam and British colonialism to Hindu culture and society. RSS and the ideology of Hindutva have gained more control in the Indian polity during Modi's rule, revocation of Jammu and Kashmir - Article 370, Gujarat riots, Citizenship Amendment Act and demolition of Babri Mosque. Modi's administration is actively pursuing the right-wing Hindu nationalists' agenda of saffronizing India, which is based on the Hindutva philosophy, as well as patronizing the actions of saffron terrorists. To achieve this, it has passed several pro-Hindutva laws. Cow slaughtering is strictly outlawed in 24 of the 29 states. The government has enacted legislation making the death penalty the punishment for cow slaughter in some states including Gujarat (Syed, 2019 July 26). Moreover, Hindu extremists renamed the roads, institutes, and streets after Hindu deities and saints, which have Muslim figures as their names. There have been reports of a boycott of Muslim-owned businesses and the arrest of Muslim community leaders on charges of inciting violence. Based on the idea of "otherization," denigrates several identities, including Dalits, liberals, Christians, feminists, and most significantly Muslims.

Critics of Hindutva and the RSS argue that these ideologies promote a narrow and exclusionary vision of Indian society that is hostile to religious minorities. Minorities in India, particularly Muslims are constantly in danger of losing their possessions, lives, honour, and freedom of religion due to their selective persecution, victimization and marginalization. They accuse the RSS of fomenting communal violence and seeking to establish a Hindu state in India, at the expense of the country's secular and pluralistic traditions. Muslims have been accused of being treated unfairly in a variety of institutional and community situations. They feel that Modi's reign has made life even more difficult for India's Muslim minority.

Rise of Hindutva and the Future of Democracy in India

India is the world's largest democracy founded on secular-federative lines, social cohesiveness and ethnic and cultural multiplicity. It is home to the world's largest and most diverse population after China (Huang & Khanna, 2003). As per the 2011 Census Data, around 80 per cent (1.3 billion people) of the population are adherents of Hinduism. Muslims are 14.2 per cent, Christians are 2.3 per cent, Sikhism followers are 1.7 per cent and Buddhists are less than 1 per cent (Sultana, 2021). The Constitution of India establishes the nation as a secular and democratic republic. According to Article 25 of the Constitution, all citizens are granted fundamental rights and freedoms; the right to practice, propagate and profess religion, equality, and freedom of conscience (Mahajan, 2002). Conversely to this, currently India, the biggest democracy in the world is governed by a right-wing Hindu extremist party.

Modifying history texts to promote a Hindu-centric perspective of Indian history, prompting fear in people, silencing free speech and denigrating democratic ideals have been met with widespread backlash. The future of India's secular democratic status has been seriously threatened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindutva-embracing government due to the growing intolerance and prejudice against the country's Muslim minority. Although India is still a democracy, the decline of democratic values and practices is a major obstacle to the country's future progress and security that will

lead to communal violence, marginalization of minorities and abrasion of freedom. The future of Indian democracy will depend on how Hindutva continues to secure political dominance in the years to come.

Comparison of Hindutva with Right-wing Groups in Other Countries

Right-wing extremism is a global phenomenon. In the context of India, Hindutva is a religious and nationalist ideology. The ideology of Hindutva is different from other right-wing groups operating in different parts of the world such as in France, Germany, the USA, Greece and Hungary due to the different cultural and religious contexts in which Hindutva operates. Numerous right-wing organizations in the world centred on ethnic and national identities, Hindutva is rooted in both Hindu culture and religious tradition meaning that it is not exclusively linked to politics but has a religious and cultural view. Another difference is the use of violence. Hindutva is linked to numerous high-profile violent activities including the Gujarat Muslim massacre in 2002. The extremism is fueled by a perceived threat perception. On the other, some of the right-wing groups around the world are moderate that advocate conservative economic and social policies without promoting extremism or violence.

Some right-wing groups are extreme to embrace intimidating fascist and racist ideologies with their exclusive nationalist and anti-immigrant viewpoints and got engaged in acts of violence including hate crimes and terrorism spreading Islamophobia and xenophobia. A few similarities have been drawn between Hindutva and Nazism and Fascism that emerged in the twentieth century in Europe. All of these ideologies are authoritarian and promote nationalism and use force to achieve their goals that have proven to be anti-minority including their marginalization and persecution. Therefore, it is difficult to compare Hindutva with other right-wing groups keeping in view their specific cultural context, goals and activities.

Conclusion

Hindutva's alleged link to violent extremism in India is a highly nuanced and debatable topic. Hindutva, on the one hand, is a political ideology that promotes

Hindu nationalism and works to consolidate Hindu culture, tradition and values in India. Violent extremism, on the other side, is the practice of resorting to physical force in order to further one's political or intellectual beliefs. However, some extremist groups in India that espouse the Hindutva ideology have been responsible for acts of violence. These groups have been blamed for inciting communal tensions and violence, as they frequently target religious minorities, notably Muslims. It's vital

to remember that not all Hindutva adherents endorse or practice violent extremism. Many Hindutva supporters insist that peaceful coexistence is the best way forward and condemn the use of violence to achieve political ends. Hindutva ideology has been linked to acts of violent extremism. The Indian society as a whole, regardless of its political or ideological composition, must work towards encouraging tolerance, understanding, and peaceful coexistence.

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