The Rise of Hindutva in Contemporary India and its Implications for Hindu-Muslim Relations

1. Dr Nasir Majeed Malik Postdoctoral Fellow, IRI, IIUI Islamabad (nasirmajeed484@gmail.com)
2. Dr. Waleed Khan Institute of Arabic & Islamic Studies GC Women University Sialkot (waleedkhan764110.wk@gmail.com)
3. Sana Maryam, PhD Scholar Muslim Youth University Islamabad. (Sana799@gmail.com)

Abstract

India, a constitutionally secular state, is nearly 80% Hindu, 14.2% Muslim and includes Christian 2-3%, Sikh less than 2%, Buddhist less than 1% and Jain less than 1% minorities. As Narendra Modi assumed his office in 2014 as an Indian prime minister, there has been abundant media reports, scholarly works which claim that the Muslim minority in India, mistreated, persecuted and discriminated against, giving an overall impression as if Muslims are alienated from the main social stream everywhere in India and the government and public at large is responsible for their miseries. The atrocities against minorities have increased, and the concept of 'Hindutva' has emerged as a frightening danger to the country's minorities. This research project has examined the evolution of Hindutva ideology which took place in Indian society and has considered the recent government of Narendra Modi as a staunch supporter of Hindutva. This post-Doctoral thesis examines the rise of Hindutva in contemporary India and its impact on Hindu-Muslim relations. Utilizing interdisciplinary methods, this study investigates the ideological roots and political ascendancy of Hindutva, tracing its evolution from early Hindu revivalist movements to its development into a dominant force in Indian politics.The research delves into the ideological foundations of key Hindu nationalist organizations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and their role in shaping India's sociopolitical landscape. It analyzes how Hindutva has influenced electoral dynamics, policymaking, and societal attitudes, emphasizing the interplay between economic disparities, regional divides, and political strategies in fostering communal polarization.A significant focus is placed on understanding the socio-economic factors driving Hindutva's growth and its impact on Muslim communities. Through ethnographic studies, this research explores the challenges faced by Muslims, highlighting discrimination, marginalization, and gendered experiences within the broader context of Hindutva-driven societal shifts.The conclusion offers recommendations for policymakers and suggests future research directions.

Keywords: Hindutva ideology, Hindu-Muslim relations, Socio-economic factors

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Hindutva ideology, which presents itself as the ultimate protector of Hindu beliefs, has been connected to significant events in Hinduism such as the Babri Masjid and Godhra incidents, influencing political institutions. The rise in communal violence in the past thirty years has been attributed to the Hindu nationalist movement in India. This research project has examined the evolution of Hindutva ideology which took place in Indian society and has considered the recent government of Narendra Modi as a staunch supporter of Hindutva. In the kaleidoscope of India's history, the emergence of Hindutva, a political ideology advocating Hindu nationalism as a potent force marks a paradigm shift that resonates far beyond its political implications and stands as a complex and contentious phenomenon. In recent years, this ideology has gained momentum, influencing both the sociopolitical fabric and the interfaith dynamics of the nation. Understanding its implications, particularly concerning Hindu-Muslim relations, it has become a pivotal focus of academic inquiry.

India, a country known for its rich cultural tapestry and religious pluralism, is a home to the world's second-largest Muslim population, constituting around 14.2% of the nation's total populace. However, the harmonious coexistence between Hindus and Muslims, which has been a hallmark of India's heritage, is now facing challenges due to the increasing prominence of Hindutva.

The roots of Hindutva can be traced back to the early 20th century, but its contemporary rise gained significant momentum with the ascendancy of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its affiliated organizations, such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). This ascent led to the propagation of Hindutva ideology, aiming to establish India as a Hindu nation. This ideological shift has not only influenced the political landscape but also permeated societal attitudes, giving rise to concerns about the erosion of India's secular ethos.

The Muslim community in India faces multifaceted challenges due to the rise of Hindutva. Communal violence, exemplified by incidents like the Gujarat riots of 2002, has instilled fear and insecurity among Muslims. Furthermore, the politicization of religion has led to Muslims being perceived merely as a vote bank, eroding trust between communities. Socio-economic disparities and limited access to education exacerbated the sense of marginalization and alienation experienced by the Muslim population.

Scholars and activists have extensively analyzed the implications of Hindutva for India's social fabric. The works of prominent academics such as Noor Ul Qamar, Eviane Leidig, Milan Vaishnav,

Xie Chao, and M Nazmuz Sakibhave shed ample light on the historical, sociopolitical, and economic dimensions of the Muslim identity crisis in India. These scholars have emphasized the need for interfaith dialogue, inclusive policies, and educational empowerment as essential avenues to counter the crisis.

As India navigates this complex terrain, a pressing need arises to critically analyze the rise of Hindutva and its implications for the foundational principles of coexistence. This research endeavors to embark on a creative odyssey, weaving together historical analyses, cultural insights, and contemporary socio-political realities. Doing so aims to unravel the intricacies of Hindutva's ascendancy.

1.2. Research Gaps and Scholarly Contributions

While existing research provides valuable insights, there remains a need for a comprehensive exploration of the intricacies surrounding the rise of Hindutva and its impact on Hindu-Muslim relations. This research endeavors to bridge these gaps by delving into nuanced aspects such as the role of media, the influence of global politics, and the grassroots movements shaping this phenomenon. This study aims to contribute significantly to the discourse on communal relations in India by amalgamating historical analyses with contemporary socio-political realities.

In this backdrop of shifting sociopolitical paradigms, the rise of Hindutva and its implications on Hindu-Muslim relations demand rigorous academic scrutiny. Drawing from extensive research, this thesis aims to provide an in-depth analysis of this intricate interplay, examining historical antecedents and contemporary manifestations. Through a careful exploration of these themes, this research seeks to offer insights, not only to academia but also to policymakers, fostering a more inclusive and harmonious coexistence among India's diverse religious communities.

1.3. Problem Statement

For the last 2200 years of the world's history, there has been no Hindu rule in the Indian subcontinent. In the 1871 census, the British government added an article on 'Religion' in the constitution. Jang-e-Azadi (1857) is considered the turning point where the ways of Hindus and Muslims were separated. History is replete with scholarly talk about Hindutva. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Keshav Beliram Hedgwar, and Madhav Sadhashiv Golwalkar are prominent scholars who wrote about Hindutva. In 1923, Hindutva ideology was first articulated by Vinayak Damodar

Savarkar[1]in his pamphlet, "Essentials of Hindutva". In this framework, Hindus are cast as a racial group. Early Hindutva leaders focused on Muslims as their primary opponent, and Savarkar and his followers drew on models of ethnonationalist movements in early 20th-century Europe, including those from Italy and Germany. Savarkar wrote about India as the 'Fatherland'[2] and conceived of Hindus as a race[3]. united by shared blood. He encouraged his followers to use violence to achieve dominance over other communities. In a key speech on India's foreign policy in 1938, Savarkar explicitly defended Nazism[4]. At the 21st session of the Hindu Mahasabha in 1939, he compared India's Muslims to Germany's Jews at the time. B.S. Moonje, who led the Hindu Mahasabha alongside Savarkar, visited Italy in 1931[5] where he met Mussolini and reported back on Italian fascist organizations. He wrote admiringly of these organizations, arguing that fascism was important to bring national unity and Hindu India needed similar institutions for military regeneration. The group's second and longest-serving head, M.S. Golwalkar, described Indian Muslims as "like the Jews in Germany." An open admirer of Hitler, Golwalkar recommended the fascist leader's "purging the country of the semitic Race-the Jews" as "a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by." Hindu nationalists also target other Indian religious minorities, including Christians and tribal groups, whom they consider to be less Indian and less deserving of rights.

In 1947, as a result of 'Two Nation Theory' Hindu declared as a nation and got in the power. Till the beginnings of 1980's 'Secular Card' has been used by the mainstream Indian government. In 1985 elections, Congress used religion as winning tool. BJP took leads from congress in using Hinduism as card and started enhancing its power. BJP was able to quench only two seats on the basis of their religious identity. Babri Mosque incident added fuel to its movement and due to 'Rath Yatra' event in 1990 reached to its pinnacle.

---

[1]Vinay Lal, Veer Savarkar: Ideologue of Hindutva, UCLA Social Sciences, Manas. Accessed on 21 March,2024.

[2] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. German Military Oaths. Holocaust Encyclopedia. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/ German Military Oaths.". Accessed on 21 March,2024.

[3] Vinayak Chaturvedi (2020), Violence as Civility: V.D. Savarkar and the Mahatma's Assassination, South Asian History and Culture, 11:3, 239-253: https://doi.org/10.1080/19472498.2020.1797363

[4] Marzia Casolari (2000), Hindutva's Foreign Tie-up in1930s Archival Evidence, Economic & Political weekly, p 218-228

[5] Marzia Casolari (2000), Hindutva's Foreign Tie-up in1930s Archival Evidence, Economic& Political weekly, p 219

Under BJP's government, Hindutva has become a rising ideology in modern India entirely focused on Hindu fundamentalism and is completed by RSS agenda professed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. BJP came into the limelight after its victory in Gujarat in 1996, and subsequently, in 2014. BJP secured a second landslide victory in 2019 on a purely communal and ultra-nationalist agenda known as "Hindutva" and form a national government under Prime Minister Modi, who is one of the main proponents of Hindutva. With a motto of Hindu, Hindi, and Hindustan, the ideology focuses on Indians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains, while Muslims and Christians are under continuous wrath of Hindu fanatism. Likewise, RSS is working day-in and day-out to spread Hindutva across the length and breadth of India, which supports fanaticism and radicalism. Rise of Hindutva has impacted India in many ways; economically, socially, and politically. Religious minorities and even low caste Hindus are considered unholy. While Modi administration is projecting Hindutva world widely, it has far-reaching consequences for both the region and at global levels. Muslim population inside India will choke under Hindu fanatism. The research paper throws light on the 'Rise of Hindutva' in historical context with contemporary manifestation and will discuss the implication of Hindutva on Indian which has caused severe Muslim identity crisis, other related questions would also be answered.

India, known for its cultural diversity and religious pluralism, is undergoing a disturbing transformation catalyzed by the rise of Hindutva ideology. The Muslim community, constituting a significant portion of India's populace, finds itself ensnared in an unprecedented crisis of identity and security. The advent of political parties like the BJP, espousing Hindutva principles, has amplified religious tensions, leading to severe repercussions for non-Hindu citizens, particularly Muslims.

Hindutva, rooted in radical interpretations of Hindu nationalism, has created an atmosphere of hostility and fear for religious minorities, especially Muslims. Incidents such as the burning of a train carrying Muslims, the Gujarat riots under the leadership of Narendra Modi, and recent targeted attacks on Muslims have not only resulted in countless deaths but have also left an indelible mark on the community's collective psyche. These events reflect a pattern of communal violence, where religious identity becomes a catalyst for aggression, leading to severe implications for inter-community relations.

The crisis worsens as the Muslim community faces a relentless assault on their religious and cultural practices. From the controversial issue of 'Hijab' worn by Muslim women to the politicization of cow slaughter and Adha'an (call to prayer), every aspect of their faith is under

scrutiny. The rise of extremist organizations further intensifies this situation, fostering an environment where religious intolerance prevails.

Economic disparity and social exclusion worsen the plight of underprivileged Muslims. As per the majority of papers I gone through in this research, Rampant discrimination is depriving them of educational and employment opportunities, perpetuating a cycle of poverty. The community, already grappling with socioeconomic challenges, faces an additional burden due to religious persecution, hindering their overall progress.

Of significant concern is the rise of state-sponsored attackers who operate with impunity. Reports indicate an increase in incidents of communal violence, often led by radical Hindu mobs. Critical evidence of this are the Gujarat riots and the inquiries that followed, highlighting the state-sponsored attacks. Such acts, fueled by religious animosity, are not just isolated events but symptoms of a larger crisis that questions the very essence of India's secular fabric.

Amidst these challenges, the Muslim community grapples with an existential threat. Their religious, moral, and cultural identity faces erosion, compelling individuals to either abandon their faith or contemplate leaving their ancestral land. This crisis raises fundamental questions about the democratic principles of religious freedom and minority rights in India.

1.4. Research Gap and Academic Significance

S. M. Hali comments on democracy and secularism in his book 'Rising Hindutva & its Impact on the Region: "India claims that it is the largest democracy in the world and boasts of its secular credential. On the grounds, both are bogus claims because democracy is a sham while secularism is a myth. Human rights activists in India and abroad have been exposing the roughshod treatment meted by the upper caste Hindu Brahmins to India's minorities as well as lower caste Hindus, the Dalits."[6]

The Rajinder Sachar Committee was commissioned in 2005 by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to report on Indian social, economic and educational conditions of the Muslim community of India. The committee headed by former Chief of Justice of Delhi High Court Rajinder prepared a 403-page report and presented it to the Lok Sabha, the lower house of Indian Parliament, on 30 November 2006, twenty months after obtaining the terms of references from the Prime Minister's office. This report highlighted the issues facing the Muslim community and their representation in Indian public life, concluding that while Muslims constitute 14.2% of the Indian population, they comprise only 2.5% of Indian bureaucracy. The Sachar Committee concluded that

---

[6]S. M. Hali (2020), Rising Hindutva & its impact on the region, I.N. Printers, Edition 2, Peshawar

the conditions facing Indian Muslims were even below those of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.[7]

While sporadic reports documented these events (and the papers used mentioned that there is a need for more comprehensive study allowing us to understand the complexities of this topic), there exists a gap in comprehensive scholarly analysis especially in the domain of the role of Media (Indian & International) played to cover this core burning issue. A nuanced understanding of the historical context, the political forces at play, and the societal implications of this crisis. This research endeavors to bridge this gap, offering an in-depth exploration of the multifaceted challenges faced by the Muslim community in contemporary India. By dissecting the roots of Hindutva, studying its impact on social structures, and delving into the narratives of affected individuals, this study aims to contribute valuable insights to the discourse on religious intolerance and minority rights in India.

1.5. Questions Discussed Include:

1. What are the Historical Roots and Ideological Foundations of Hindutva, and how have they evolved in Contemporary Indian Politics?

2. How has the Rise of Hindutva Ideology Affected Interfaith Relations, Particularly Hindu-Muslim Relations, in India?

3. What are the Socio-political Implications of Hindutva-Influenced Policies and Legislation on Minority Rights in India?

4. What Role Does the Media Play in Shaping Public Perceptions and Attitudes Regarding Hindutva and Its Implications for Hindu-Muslim Relations?

These research areas are explored to address the complexities and nuances of Hindutva ideology and its implications for Hindu-Muslim relations in India.

2. Analysis of Various Dimensions of Hindutva

In examining the multifaceted dimensions of Hindutva ideology and its implications for Hindu-Muslim relations in contemporary India, the scope of this study encompasses an analysis of historical contexts, political ideologies, socio-cultural dynamics, legal frameworks, media influences, and international comparative perspectives. I aim to dissect the intricacies of Hindutva,

---

[7]http://www.prsindia.org/administrator/uploads/general/1242304423-Summary%20 of %20 Sachar%20 Committee%20Report.pdf

going beyond the surface-level analysis and delving deep into its historical roots, ideological foundations, and contemporary political manifestations.

2.1. Dimension of the Analysis:

This study ambitiously spans several critical areas:

i. Historical analysis of Hindutva ideology, tracing its evolution from ancient philosophies to contemporary political strategies using insights from esteemed publications and scholarly sources.

ii. Investigation into the interplay between Hindutva ideology and political dynamics, specifically focusing on how parties like the BJP leverage Hindutva for electoral gains, supported by governmental reports and political analyses.

iii. Examination of the societal ramifications of Hindutva on communal relations and societal attitudes, analyzing its influence on everyday interactions and communal harmony through sociological studies and first-hand accounts.

iv. Evaluation of the implementation of legal frameworks influenced by Hindutva, critically assessing the implications on minority rights and religious practices using legal analyses and reports.

v. Exploration of media narratives surrounding Hindutva and their impact on public opinion and interfaith perceptions, studying media influence through media studies and reports.

2.2 Critical Analysis

A look at the quantitative literature and scholarly publications, such as book reviews and research papers, from 2013 to 2023 can shed light on the topic at hand. Thus, in what follows, the present study attempts to develop a line of argument through a survey of the publications during the ten years mentioned above. This literature evaluation included studies published in respectable peer-reviewed journals and books.

Researchers embarking on an empirical expedition into the nuanced terrain of Hindu-Muslim relations in contemporary India require a synthesis of diverse sources and scholarly perspectives to coalesce to create a comprehensive panorama. Drawing from the wealth of information and insights curated within this dialogue, this section delves into empirical reviews encapsulating the multifaceted dimensions of this intricate tapestry.

The rise of Hindu nationalism, epitomized by the ideology of Hindutva, has indeed reshaped the sociopolitical landscape of India in profound and intricate ways. By dissecting the nuances of this ideology, the given study sheds light on its multifaceted impact on India's future prospects. In the

same context, we can review Chalcraft's work that emphasizes the significance of recognizing and comprehending these potential trends in India. By delving into the socio-political landscape, the report underscores the importance of vigilant observation, critical analysis, and contextual understanding to address the challenges and implications associated with such shifts[8].

In recent decades, India has experienced a seismic transformation marked by the ascendancy of Hindutva ideology, an ethnonationalist interpretation of Hinduism. This shift has reverberated across the country's religious fabric, particularly affecting Hindu-Muslim relations. Moreover, Global times published an article in 2020 that critically evaluates the potential path India might traverse if these ultra-nationalistic tendencies persist, highlighting the risks of isolationism in an increasingly interconnected global landscape. It underlines the necessity for a balanced approach to navigating nationalism while maintaining constructive international relations.[9] The 2014 general elections in India marked a significant turning point in Indian politics, with Narendra Modi emerging as the prime ministerial candidate for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), challenging Rahul Gandhi from the Indian National Congress (INC) [10]. Modi's controversial tenure as Gujarat's chief minister, particularly the 2002 Hindu-Muslim violence, became a focal point of debate[11]. Despite this, Modi adeptly portrayed himself as a catalyst for national economic development, capitalizing on the perceived success of the Gujarat model[12]. The historical backdrop against which this phenomenon unfolds is intricate and influenced by centuries-old cultural and religious dynamics. With roots deeply embedded in Indian history, the rise of Hindutva signifies a departure from the secular ideals envisioned by the framers of India's constitution. This ideological shift has

[8]Chalcraft, J. (2020). India Developing Fascistic Undertones? University of York. https://www.york.ac.uk/igdc/news/news/india-developing--fascistic-undertones/

Harriss, John. "Hindu nationalism in action: The Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian politics." South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, vol. 38, no. 4, 2 Oct. 2015, pp. 712–718, https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1089826.

[9]Global Times. (2020). India's Ultra-nationalism Will Only Lead to Its Isolation. Global Times. https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1192865.shtml

[10]Global Times. (2020). India's Ultra-nationalism Will Only Lead to Its Isolation. Global Times. https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1192865.shtml

[11]Global Times. (2020). India's Ultra-nationalism Will Only Lead to Its Isolation. Global Times. https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1192865.shtml

[12]Harriss, John. "Hindu nationalism in action: The Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian politics." South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, vol. 38, no. 4, 2 Oct. 2015, pp. 712–718, https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1089826.

manifested in various political and social spheres, affecting how Indians perceive their national identity and how they engage with religious diversity.

Ahmed delves into this matrix of ideologies, examining the historical trajectory that has culminated in the manifestation of Hinduness during Modi's tenure since 2014. The paper scrutinizes the BJP's ideological framework through this exploration, shedding light on its historical roots and contemporary manifestations.[13] Organizations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) propagated Hindutva, an ideology emphasizing Hindu identity and supremacy. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with its foundation in Hindu nationalism, gained political prominence, challenging the long-standing dominance of the INC. Leaders like Narendra Modi, with RSS affiliations, furthered the agenda of Hindu nationalism, despite controversies surrounding their roles in events like the 2002 Gujarat riots.

The advocates of India's secularism argue that its unique approach recognizes and accommodates religious diversity while addressing social inequalities[14]. However, critics raise concerns about the unequal approach of India's secularism, pointing to the state's intervention primarily in Hindu traditions and the allowance of separate personal laws for other religious groups [15]. This criticism highlights debates around the state's role in reforming religious practices and its impartiality across different faiths.[16] Vishnav Milan in his paper argues that the fusion of Hindutva with the Western radical right occurs across various scales and platforms. This transnational merger creates a hybrid ideological framework, synthesizing exclusionary elements inherent in both ideologies. Notably, the Indian diaspora acts as a bridge, facilitating the amalgamation of ideologies across geographical boundaries[17]. The findings suggest that this convergence leads to the

---

[13]Ghani, M. (2018). Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan in Modi's India. Margalla Papers, 3(1). https://margallapapers.ndu.edu.pk/site/article/view/36

[14]Vaishnav, Milan. (2019, April 04). Religious Nationalism and India's Future. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/04/04/religious-nationalism-and-india-s-future-pub-78703 \\

[15]Vaishnav, Milan. (2019, April 04). Religious Nationalism and India's Future. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/04/04/religious-nationalism-and-india-s-future-pub-78703 \\

[16]Vaishnav, Milan. (2019, April 04). Religious Nationalism and India's Future. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/04/04/religious-nationalism-and-india-s-future-pub-78703 \\

[17]ibid., Vaishnav, Milan. (2019, April 04).

emergence of novel ideological hybridity, reshaping nationalist constructs.[18]Moreover, the review critically examines the social consequences of this rise in Hindu nationalism, shedding light on how it has influenced societal attitudes, cultural expressions, and everyday interactions between Hindus and Muslims. The rise of Hindu nationalism has palpable social consequences, influencing cultural expressions, societal norms, and daily interactions between Hindus and Muslims. These tensions challenge India's historically celebrated coexistence, prompting a reassessment of the nation's religious diversity and its role in shaping India's identity. Despite public attempts by Modi to distance himself from radical Hindu groups, the BJP's governance highlighted a departure from secular values. The appointment of Yogi Adityanath, associated with extremist militant groups, as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 2017, further underscored the BJP's alignment with radical Hindu ideologies[19]. The rise of leaders like Modi, projecting a 'strong man' image, resonated with similar trends in Asia and other parts of the world, revealing inherent tensions between substantive democratic representation and a move towards technocratic leadership.[20]

Drawing parallels to historical fascist movements like Nazi Germany or Mussolini's Fascist Party, the review presents the RSS's foundation and its revival through political extensions like the BJP. Under Modi's leadership, the BJP has undergone an ideological shift, moving away from a secular stance to embracing Hindutva ideology more overtly[21]. This transformation significantly impacts India's social and political dynamics, particularly affecting minority communities, such as the Indian Muslim population.[22]Hindutva's rise has been accompanied by an alarming increase in communal violence, with Muslims often bearing the brunt. Documenting major incidents, such as the Gujarat riots of 2002, provides a stark illustration of the consequences of religious polarization.

[18]Leidig, Eviane. (2019). Reconfiguring Nationalism: Transnational Entanglements of Hindutva and Radical Right Ideology. (YLDQH/HLGLJ, 2020 Series of dissertations submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo. ISSN 1564-3991

[19]Andrea Malji. (2002). The Rise of Hindu Nationalism and Its Regional and Global Ramifications. Education About Asia. https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/the-rise-of-hindu-nationalism-and-its-regional-and-global-ramifications.pdf

[20]Harriss, John. "Hindu nationalism in action: The Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian politics." South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, vol. 38, no. 4, 2 Oct. 2015, pp. 712–718, https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1089826.

[21]Qamar, N. U. (2021). Rising Hindutva and its impact on the Region. Article in South Asia and World Politics. National Defence University, Department of International Relations.

[22]Qamar, N. U. (2021). Rising Hindutva and its impact on the Region. Article in South Asia and World Politics. National Defence University, Department of International Relations.

In exploring the challenges posed by religious nationalism, it's evident that India isn't alone in facing such ideological shifts. Instances of religiously infused political appeals have emerged in diverse geographies, from Latin America to Southeast Asia, indicating a global trend toward merging religion and governance[23]. The erosion of the Muslim community's sense of identity due to discriminatory practices, social exclusion, and violence is a critical aspect. This erosion is evident in debates over cultural practices, religious attire, and public displays of faith, which are often met with hostility.

The dissertation by Leidig delves into a specific subset within the Indian diaspora, examining its support for radical right movements in Western contexts. It contextualizes this emergence against significant events (the Brexit referendum and Trump's 2016 election) identifying these as arenas where Hindutva ideology intertwined with elements of the radical right[24]. Hindutva ideologies have influenced Indian diaspora communities worldwide. Studying the interactions between these communities and their host societies offers insights into the global dissemination of Hindutva ideas and potential tensions with other religious groups. The BJP's support base among the new middle class and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) played a pivotal role[25]. Despite claims of economic development, Gujarat's model faced criticism for its unequal growth, increased inequality, and favoritism towards corporate interests Modi's struggles in balancing fiscal discipline, public spending, and the Hindutva agenda portrayed a precarious political enterprise, highlighting the BJP's precarious position[26].The study by Chalcraft meticulously analyzes the socio-political developments within India, particularly focusing on nuanced signs that suggest a potential shift towards fascist tendencies. The report delves into the complexities of these indications and their implications for India's democratic fabric. The report underscores the importance of vigilant

[23]Vaishnav, Milan. (2019, April 04). Religious Nationalism and India's Future. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/04/04/religious-nationalism-and-india-s-future-pub-78703\\

[24]Leidig, Eviane. (2019). Reconfiguring Nationalism: Transnational Entanglements of Hindutva and Radical Right Ideology. (YLDQH/HLGLJ, 2020 Series of dissertations submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo. ISSN 1564-3991.

[25]Harriss, John. "Hindu nationalism in action: The Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian politics." South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, vol. 38, no. 4, 2 Oct. 2015, pp. 712–718, https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1089826.

[26]Harriss, John. "Hindu nationalism in action: The Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian politics." South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, vol. 38, no. 4, 2 Oct. 2015, pp. 712–718, https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1089826.

observation, critical analysis, and contextual understanding to address the challenges and implications associated with such shifts. His study serves as a thought-provoking resource for scholars, policymakers, and stakeholders, stimulating discourse and encouraging a deeper understanding of the nuanced developments within India's political landscape[27]. Central to this transformation was the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, which became a defining event intensifying communal divisions and at the same time destruction of the mosque by Hindu fundamentalist groups, notably the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), escalated Hindu-Muslim tensions, leading to widespread riots and a disproportionate loss of lives among Muslims. Subsequent terrorist attacks in Mumbai in 1993, attributed to Islamic extremists, deepened Hindu anxieties and bolstered the rise of militant Hindu groups like the VHP and Shiv Sena, advocating for the protection of Hindu values[28]. Ahmed extensively analyzes the tenure of the Modi government, illustrating the profound influence of Hindu nationalistic narratives on domestic policies and political decision-making. The revocation of Article 370 and amendments to the Citizenship Amendment Bill are cited as emblematic examples of how Hindu nationalism has manifested within legislative and governmental actions. Sud concludes by highlighting the endurance of state authoritarianism and the strong populist connection with Narendra Modi, facilitated by a lack of viable alternatives. Despite the fractures and contradictions within the model, the authoritarian grip and the charismatic appeal of the larger-than-life leader persist, thus far unchallenged[29].

The collection of literature reviews examined here collectively offers a rich tapestry of insights into the multifaceted realm of contemporary Indian politics. Each review focuses on specific dimensions, contributing diverse perspectives that paint a comprehensive portrait of the

---

[27]Chalcraft, J. (2020). India Developing Fascistic Undertones? University of York. https://www.york.ac.uk/igdc/news/news/india-developing--fascistic-undertones/

[28]Andrea Malji. (2002). The Rise of Hindu Nationalism and Its Regional and Global Ramifications. Education About Asia. https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/the-rise-of-hindu-nationalism-and-its-regional-and-global-ramifications.pdf

[29]Sud, Nikita. "The Actual Gujarat Model: Authoritarianism, Capitalism, Hindu Nationalism and Populism in the Time of Modi." Journal of Contemporary Asia, vol. 52, no. 1, 18 Nov. 2020, pp. 1–25, https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2020.1846205.

[30]Ahmed, Hilal. "New India, Hindutva Constitutionalism, and Muslim Political Attitudes." Studies in Indian Politics, 4 Apr. 2022, p. 232102302210828, https://doi.org/10.1177/23210230221082833. Accessed 6 Apr. 2022.

sociopolitical landscape, governance paradigms, and underlying ideological currents shaping India's trajectory. Ahmed's extensive analysis delves into the intricate historical evolution of Hindutva, offering a nuanced understanding of its deep-rooted impact on Indian political ideologies[30].

This review traces the trajectory of Hindutva, illustrating how these ideological undercurrents have influenced significant legislative decisions and policy formulations. The narrative captures pivotal shifts in governance, highlighting the considerable sway these ideologies hold over societal norms and political discourse in India.

Ghani[31] offer distinctive yet converging perspectives on the governance ethos under Modi's leadership. Their reviews intricately dissect the convergence of Hindu nationalism with the ascendancy of majoritarian values in shaping the contours of domestic policies. Through meticulous analysis, these reviews spotlight emblematic moments in India's recent political history, such as the revocation of Article 370 and the legislative amendments concerning citizenship. These events serve as symbolic manifestations, indicative of broader systemic changes driven by ideological currents within the Indian political landscape.

In contrast, Chalcraft[32] and Chao[33] articles provide external lenses, proffering critical perspectives on India's political trajectory under Modi's leadership. They articulate concerns about the potential implications of Hindu nationalism and the perceived authoritarian tendencies on India's global standing and internal stability. These reviews offer a valuable vantage point from which to contemplate the intersection of India's internal politics with its global perception and engagement.

---

[31]Ghani, M. (2018). Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan in Modi's India. Margalla Papers, 3(1). https://margallapapers.ndu.edu.pk/site/article/view/36.

[32]Chalcraft, J. (2020). India Developing Fascistic Undertones? University of York. https://www.york.ac.uk/igdc/news/news/india-developing--fascistic-undertones

[33]Chao, Xie. (2020). India's Ultra-nationalism Will Only Lead to Its Isolation. Global Times. https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1192865.shtml

[34]Leidig, Eviane. (2019). Reconfiguring Nationalism: Transnational Entanglements of Hindutva and Radical Right Ideology. (YLDQH/HLGLJ, 2020 Series of dissertations submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo. ISSN 1564-3991.

[35]Andrea Malji. (2002). The Rise of Hindu Nationalism and Its Regional and Global Ramifications. Education About Asia. https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/the-rise-of-hindu-nationalism-and-its-regional-and-global-ramifications.pdf

Leidig's[34] comprehensive dissertation takes an intriguing turn, exploring the intricate transnational entanglements between Hindutva and the Western radical right. This exhaustive study uncovers and dissects the resulting ideological hybridity, shedding light on its multifaceted implications for minority groups and the wider sociopolitical fabric.

Simultaneously, Noor-ul-Qamar's dissertation ventures into examining the profound impact of Hindutva on minority communities and regional stability. It intricately unpacks the nuanced dynamics, exploring the repercussions of these ideological undercurrents on sociocultural identities and regional geopolitics. The BJP's rise to power, its alignment with Hindu nationalist ideologies, and its associations with radical Hindu groups like the RSS and VHP signify a significant departure from India's secular foundations, profoundly impacting domestic politics and echoing global ramifications[35].

In concert, these diverse and insightful reviews collectively underscore the intricate tapestry that weaves the fabric of India's sociopolitical landscape. They emphasize the paramount importance of continued scholarly inquiry and robust public discourse in comprehending and navigating the complexities inherent in India's evolving political milieu. Understanding the intricate interplay between historical legacies, ideological orientations, governance paradigms, and global perceptions emerges as a pivotal endeavor in deciphering India's trajectory on the global stage.

3. Findings and Conclusions

The nuanced exploration undertaken in this literature review signifies the intricate tapestry of India's socio-political history, revealing the profound interplay between coexistence and conflict within the paradigm of Hindutva's ascendancy and its manifestation as Hindu nationalism. The comprehensive analysis has elucidated the evolution of Hindu-Muslim relations, offering critical insights into the complex dynamics shaping the nation's societal fabric. Hindutva's emergence, rooted in historical foundations, has catalyzed a transformative shift in India's political rhetoric and societal ethos, challenging the bedrock of secularism and redefining the contours of social harmony. This examination goes beyond the surface of political maneuvering, delving into the nuanced layers of cultural interactions, religious dynamics, and the everyday lives of individuals in an ever-evolving India. At this critical juncture, India grapples with fundamental questions about the trajectory of its religious plurality and the preservation of its secular values amid the fervent embrace of Hindu nationalism. This comprehensive study provides a scholarly foundation for

further inquiry, urging a deeper examination into the nuanced intersections between ideology, identity, and the socio-political landscape in contemporary India. The rich historical vistas unveiled in this exploration serve as a springboard for rigorous academic discourse and future research endeavors, beckoning scholars to delve deeper into the multifaceted dimensions of India's socio-political evolution under the influence of Hindutva ideology. Under Narendra Modi's leadership, there have been significant shifts in India's socio-political landscape, particularly impacting the Muslim identity crisis. The policies and actions undertaken during his tenure have contributed to the accentuation of religious fault lines and the marginalization of the Muslim community.

My understanding of India's sociopolitical landscape has deepened significantly through the collective array of literature reviews explored here. The multifaceted perspectives unveiled by various scholars shed light on the complex interplay between ideology, governance, and global implications within India. As dissected by Ahmed, the historical evolution of Hindutva elucidates the foundational underpinnings of contemporary Indian politics. Ghani's[36] exploration of India-Pakistan relations under Modi's governance emphasizes the regional implications, underscoring the interconnectedness of internal dynamics on the global stage. The intricate socio-economic fabric, marred by ideological shifts, as revealed by Noor Ul Qamar's[37] dissertation, underscores the challenges faced by minority groups. Leidig's examination of transnational ideological entanglements provides insights into the global facets of India's political ideologies. Collectively, these studies have illuminated the multifaceted nature of India's political sphere, emphasizing the need for continued scholarly exploration to comprehend its evolving narrative in the global context.

3.1 Media

The media plays a significant role in the spread of Hindutva ideology, particularly through books and newspapers that serve as Ideological Apparatus (IA) for Hindutva. Bankim Chandra Chatterji's novel Anandamath is considered an early manifestation of Hindutva, defining nationalism in a religious sense. The media, as an IA, has been used to proliferate Hindutva ideology in post-colonial India. The ownership of media by big corporations has also led to the spread of Hindutva ideology, as these corporations control the information disseminated by media houses for their own

[36] Ghani, M. (2018). Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan in Modi's India. Margalla Papers, 3(1). https://margallapapers.ndu.edu.pk/site/article/view/36.

[37] Qamar, N. U. (2021). Rising Hindutva and its impact on the Region. Article in South Asia and World Politics. National Defence University, Department of International Relations.

interests[38].Indian print media, especially articles, have definitely promoted Hindutva beliefs, as seen in the BJP's manifesto, which aligns its policies with Hindutva, emphasizing the importance of Hindutva in linking India's past, present, and future[39]. Under the tenure of Narendra Modi, the media landscape in India has witnessed discernible changes in its portrayal and treatment of the Muslim community. There have been instances where certain segments of the media have been criticized for their biased representation, often contributing to the perpetuation of negative stereotypes and fostering division among religious communities. These biased representations, both in print and electronic media, have played a role in intensifying religious fault lines, perpetuating distrust, and further alienating the Muslim community. Additionally, social media platforms have also been instrumental in spreading and amplifying divisive narratives and misinformation, exacerbating the challenges faced by Muslims in India. From the literature we've explored, it's clear that media outlets in India often echo and reinforce prevailing societal and political narratives. The ascendancy of Hindutva ideals and their integration into political discourse has been prominently featured in media coverage. Significant policy decisions like the revocation of Article 370 and the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Bill have been depicted, sometimes advocating, the Hindu nationalist narrative. The increased visibility of polarizing content has contributed to the creation of an atmosphere that is hostile and inhospitable for many Muslims, exacerbating the identity crisis they experience within the socio-cultural milieu of India.

I have observed how media representation functions as a tool for disseminating and sometimes shapes public perceptions of nationalist agendas. The portrayal of majoritarian values and the construction of 'Others' within media landscapes have significantly impacted public discourse on religious diversity, nationalism, and governance. Moreover, the media's portrayal of dissent and protests against certain policies, such as the Citizenship Amendment Act, has influenced public opinion on socio-political matters. This portrayal offers insights into how media channels frame oppositional voices, affecting societal views.

Digital media and social networking platforms have transformed information dissemination dynamics. Social media has emerged as a platform for public discourse, fostering both opposition and reinforcement of existing ideologies. Understanding these platforms' impact on public opinion

---

[38]Ugen Bhutia (2017), *"The role of media in the emergence of Hindu nationalism in Indian politics"*

https://dspace.cus.ac.in/jspui/bitstream/1/5985/1/Ugen%20Bhutia-History-PhD.pdf

[39]*RMA Saleem (2021), Religions, http:// mdpi.com*

is crucial in comprehending contemporary media dynamics and their influence on societal perceptions.

Lastly, it is my understanding that the media landscape in India, as gleaned from our discussions on various articles and expert opinions, not only reflects but also perpetuates prevalent societal and political ideologies. Recognizing the nuances of media representation and its role in shaping public opinion is essential to grasp the intricate interplay between media, politics, and societal values in contemporary India and its nationalist discourses.

3.2 Religious/Cultural Point of View

Modi's Religiously, the socio-political atmosphere in India has witnessed a shift towards assertive Hindu nationalism, significantly impacting the Muslim community's identity and social standing. The promotion of Hindutva ideology, marked by its emphasis on Hindu primacy and exclusivity, has led to the marginalization of Muslims. The narratives espoused by certain political and social groups have been exclusionary, fostering an environment that accentuates religious differences and promotes a sense of otherness among Muslims. The rise of vigilantism, especially cow protection groups, prohibition on calling Adha'an (call to prayers), wearing of Hijab, 'Love Jihad' movement (to defame the concept of Jihad in Muslims), 'Mazaar Jihad' movement (destruction of proximately 10 thousand Mazaar (Holy shrines) has targeted Muslims, contributing to an environment of fear and uncertainty within the community. Moreover, cultural ramification of historical places (renaming of cities, universities, roads etc.,) in their so-called hindu-centric campaign by altering the names of Islamic historical places is obliterating the rich and diverse and rich history of sub-continent.

The comprehensive review of scholarly works underscores the historical evolution of Hindutva ideology and its far-reaching implications in contemporary India. It meticulously dissects the symbiotic relationship between political movements and religious narratives, showcasing how these realms significantly influence each other. The literature highlights the strategic harnessing of religious sentiments in the political arena, often used to advance specific agendas and amass support.In this scholarly discourse, the analysis of religious perspectives accentuates the intricacies of identity politics, communal dynamics, and religious pluralism within the Indian context. It delves into the challenges posed by hegemonic ideologies, particularly Hindu nationalism, on the secular ethos of the nation and its implications for religious minorities. Moreover, it nuances the discussion by exploring dissenting religious voices and movements, illuminating the complexities within religious communities and their interactions with the dominant narrative of Hindutva.

Additionally, the endorsement of cultural practices and policies that favor Hindu traditions over others has contributed to the alienation and discomfort experienced by Muslims in India. The push for policies such as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) has further exacerbated these sentiments by potentially rendering a section of the Muslim community stateless or second-class citizens, thus intensifying the religious identity crisis.

3.3 Political Impact

Politically, the Muslim community in India faces challenges in terms of representation and participation in mainstream politics. The rise of Hindu-centric politics has marginalized the political voice of Muslims and other minority groups. The nationalist rhetoric, coupled with the prioritization of Hindu-centric policies, has created a political environment that alienates Muslim representation, reinforcing a feeling of exclusion and disenfranchisement. Moreover, the analysis extends to scrutinizing the policies and governance strategies implemented by these political entities, accentuating the ways in which majoritarian ideologies influence policy-making and socio-political trajectories.

It elucidates the implications of these policies on marginalized communities and their socio-political agency, offering critical insights into the power dynamics embedded within India's political landscape. The literature's depth illuminates the intricate relationship between political power, governance, and societal dynamics, highlighting the complexities inherent in the Indian political sphere. It emphasizes the need for a comprehensive understanding of the intersections between political ideologies, governance structures, and socio-political realities to effectively navigate India's multifaceted political landscape. The decline of Muslim representation in legislative bodies and the lack of substantial efforts to address their socio-economic concerns through inclusive policies have led to a further erosion of trust between the community and the ruling political establishment. The BJP's political ideology, rooted in Hindu nationalism and its close association with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), underscores the party's commitment to establishing a Hindu-centric polity in India. However, the pursuit of this agenda presents substantial challenges, given India's diverse societal fabric and the constitutional commitment to secularism.

Moreover, the sidelining of Muslim politicians within political parties and the absence of substantial efforts towards affirmative action have hindered the community's ability to actively participate in shaping policies that directly impact their well-being and identity within the Indian socio-political framework. To my understanding, this review underscores the intricate web of political dynamics in India, advocating for a nuanced comprehension of the ideological,

governance, and electoral dimensions within the realm of Indian politics. Modi's leadership style, akin to a centralized authority, raised concerns reminiscent of the centralization witnessed during the Indira Gandhi era. His administration's focus on Hindutva ideals juxtaposed with promises of economic growth created a balancing act, one that often-left significant segments of society grappling with its implications.

References / Bibliography

1. Vaishnav, Milan. (2019). Religious Nationalism and India's Future. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/04/04/religious-nationalism-and-india-s-future-pub-78703
2. Jalal, A. (2021). Unraveling Sectarianism in South Asia. Imprint Routledge India.Book Title (pp. 15-36). Taylor & Francis. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003329510-2/unravelling-sectarianism-south-asia-ayesha-jalal
3. Chalcraft, J. (2020). India Developing Fascistic Undertones? University of York. https://www.york.ac.uk/igdc/news/news/india-developing--fascistic-undertones/
4. Chao, Xie. (2020). India's Ultra-nationalism Will Only Lead to Its Isolation. Global Times. https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1192865.shtml
5. Ghani, M. (2018). Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan in Modi's India. Margalla Papers, 3(1). https://margallapapers.ndu.edu.pk/site/article/view/36
6. Andersen, W. (2016). Challenges to Indian Ultra-Nationalism. Routledge.
7. Sakib, Nazmuz. (2021). Hindutva's Emergence in India: A Sociopolitical and Historical Analysis. https://preprints.apsanet.org/engage/apsa/article-details/6176350d0c048082c443d846
8. Sud, Nikita. "The Actual Gujarat Model: Authoritarianism, Capitalism, Hindu Nationalism and Populism in the Time of Modi." Journal of Contemporary Asia, vol. 52, no. 1, 18 Nov. 2020, pp. 1–25, https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2020.1846205.
9. Jaffrelot, C. (2015). Modi and Hindu Nationalism. South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, 38(4), 720-734. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00856401.2015.1089826
10. Andrea Malji. (2002). The Rise of Hindu Nationalism and Its Regional and Global Ramifications. Education About Asia. https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/the-rise-of-hindu-nationalism-and-its-regional-and-global-ramifications.pdf
11. Leidig, Eviane. (2019). Reconfiguring Nationalism: Transnational Entanglements of Hindutva and Radical Right Ideology. (YLDQH/HLGLJ, 2020 Series of dissertations submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo. ISSN 1564-3991.
12. Qamar, N. U. (2021). Rising Hindutva and its impact on the Region. Article: South Asia and World Politics. National Defence University, Department of International Relations.
13. Harriss, John. "Hindu nationalism in action: The Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian politics." South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, vol. 38, no. 4, 2 Oct. 2015, pp. 712–718, https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1089826.
14. Ahmed, Hilal. "New India, Hindutva Constitutionalism, and Muslim Political Attitudes." Studies in Indian Politics, 4 Apr. 2022, p. 232102302210828, https://doi.org/10.1177/23210230221082833. Accessed 6 Apr. 2022.