MEDIA FRAMING OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS: UNPACKING INDIAN RADICAL NATIONALIST POLICIES

HAFIZ MUHAMMAD TAHIR IDREES[1], MUNIZA JAVED[2]

[1]*Higher Education Department, Pakistan\ Ankara University, Turkiye*
[2] *Lahore College for Women University, Pakistan\ Istanbul Medeniyet University, Turkiye*

Abstract

This systematic review examines the media framing of human rights violations, in the backdrop of radical nationalist movements in India. The study focuses on the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP's) governance and its association with a radical nationalist (Hindutva) ideology. The study aims to shed light on the International Media's criticism of the party's role in perpetuating anti-minority sentiments and provoking violence against them. Using an integrative review approach, this paper meticulously analyzed 34 selected articles, from research journals and newspapers, published between 2010 and 2022. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns and key themes related to the BJP's radical nationalist approach and its impact on minorities. Findings from the existing literature and international media's reporting reveal the BJP's transformation from a political organization to a stubborn force, promoting radical nationalist principles to consolidate its power base. Furthermore, analysis shows that the enactment of the discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) triggered widespread protests whereas amending Articles 370 and 35A stripped Jammu and Kashmir of its autonomy, which resulted in human rights violations. In conclusion, the media content analysis highlights the human rights concerns due to the BJP's radical nationalist approach and underscores an urgent need to make such policies that promote co-existence, inclusivity, and social cohesion to foster a pluralistic society.

Keywords

media framing, political agenda, content analysis, radical nationalism, human rights violations

Introduction

History is replete with ample examples of conflicts among groups on religious, ethnic, and racial grounds. The crucial point is not to carry this hatred into the future in a way that constantly generates hostility. It is evident from literature that various groups, which were once highly opposed to each other, are now to some extent giving equal space, freedom, and respect to each other. One such example is Africans and Americans trying to live peacefully together (DeHanas & Shterin, 2018).

On the other hand, India is a country where medieval outrage still exists between Hindus and Muslims (Vaishnav, 2017). This apprehension between the two groups rooted years before the country gained its independence (Vaishnav, 2017). The continuous negation by the major party in the country towards the minor party's identity, beliefs, and moral grounds is one of the major factors in this ongoing conflict. The use of Religiously Inspired Nationalist Movement is one strategy Hindu Nationalists are using to exacerbate this conflict between Hindus and Muslims in India (Friedlander, 2016).

Before delving into the details of Hindu's Religiously Inspired Nationalist movements, it is important to discuss the nationalist movement. Nationalist movement is not a newly created phenomenon (Grzymala-Busse, 2012). Over centuries, countries have used nationalist movements based on political, social, and religious agendas to establish a national identity (Jaffrelot, 2007). Many countries have employed nationalist movements to vindicate national interests and gain political power (Atalia & Springs, 2013).

History reveals that North America and Western Europe first used Nationalism as an ideology in the mid-eighteenth century, and after a short period, Latin America also followed in their footsteps. Revolutions in Europe in 1848 marked the hype of the First Wave of Nationalist Movements, which led to the unification of Germany and Italy, declaring nationalist movements as a positive pace (Brubaker, 2011). By the end of the nineteenth century, the Second Wave of Nationalist Movements hit various other regions and countries, including Eastern and Northern Europe, India, Japan, Egypt, and Armenia. Gradually, Nationalist Movements spread to most parts of the Asian and African regions (DeHanas & Shterin, 2018). Nationalist Movements became a global phenomenon in the twentieth century and were the driving force behind many anti-colonial struggles in Asian, African, and Latin American regions (Atalia & Springs, 2013).

Despite playing a progressive role in history, nationalist movements have also led to some of the darkest moments in modern history (Jaffrelot, 2007). The rise of Fascism in Europe in the 1930s and ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s are some of the negative products of Nationalist Movements (Grzymala-Busse, 2015). Additionally, the prominence of Religious Nationalist Movements in various countries around the globe in recent years has also resulted from nationalist movements (Grzymala-Busse, 2016). Religious Nationalist Movements come with the ideology of Religious Nationalism, which itself is controversial and has historical roots, according to many historians (DeHanas & Shterin, 2018). Various definitions state that Religious Nationalism is a fusion of Religion and National Identity, on the basis of which some political actors shape their vision and public policy to regulate political decisions in any country (Friedlander, 2016).

Many scholars argue that while Nationalist Movements have strong manipulative power to control a nation, Religious Nationalism has an even stronger impact on influencing nations, both positively and negatively, regarding religious practices, public policy, and, on an extreme level, creating violent conflicts in a country (Gorski & Dervişoğlu, 2013). The reason behind this strong impact of religious nationalism on a nation is the belief system, which can be molded and used by various political actors in their favor to control countries (Pew Research Center, 2015). One set of scholars emphasizes the advantageous influence of religious pluralism on religious practices. They are of the view that religious consortiums are a source of bringing religious solidarity and identity to any nation (DeHanas & Shterin, 2018).

In recent years, many countries around the globe have witnessed a rise in religiously influenced nationalist movements. Latin America, Western Europe, and the post-Soviet states are some of the places where the spread of religiously inspired movements is at its peak (Raderstorf & Reif, 2018). Shedding light on a few recent incidents, in 2018, the Costa Rican presidential elections were called off due to a rally headed by Fabricio Alvarado, who came with the motto that "if a man of God can't govern us, then nobody can". Following the trend, right-wing populist candidate Jair Bolsonaro used a similar strategy and designed a slogan, "Brazil before everything, and God above all", based on religiously inspired ideology to campaign for the Brazilian presidency (Vaishnav, 2019). Similarly, in Indonesia, religious nationalists, including Islamic and anti-Chinese xenophobes, made an alliance with economic nationalists to unseat Jakarta's Christian governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama and devised a strategy to convict him on blasphemy charges (Raderstorf & Reif, 2018).

Examples show that religious nationalist movements are molded differently in various political groups. However, there are some common grounds found in all religiously inspired nationalist movements around the world (Vaishnav, 2019). Firstly, political parties with a religious nationalist approach often possess a moralistic gallop that supports their electoral campaigns and govern with moralistic intonation (Friedlander, 2016). Secondly, in various regions, religious nationalists use religious beliefs and tactics to patron economic continence. Thirdly, the dark side of religious politics is that it negates majoritarian nationalism and reinvigorates national identity in a way that sidelines the rights of religious minorities in any country or state (Fukuyama, 2011).

Today, India is one such country where the major religious group is targeting other minority religious groups, especially Muslims, under the umbrella of Religious Nationalism to sideline them and other religious minorities in the country, to declare India a complete Hindu state (Vaishnav, 2019). India is considered one of the largest democratic countries in the world, accommodating one-sixth of the world's population. Any political development in India has broader implications throughout South Asia and the democratic world. India has landed in hot water in recent years due to the anti-Muslim behavior endorsed by their religious nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) (Chhibber & Verma, 2018).

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the present ruling party in India. Founded in 1980, the BJP received broader support from both higher and lower castes in the country. The BJP's ideology is purely based on Hindu nationalism and has its roots from the Bharatiya Jana Sangh party, which was a pro-Hindu group founded in 1951 (Andersen & Damle, 2018). The BJP gained power in 2014 by securing a clear majority in the chamber, winning 282 seats, and declaring Narendara Modi as Prime Minister (Chhibber & Verma, 2018).

From the beginning of their rule, the BJP has based its policies on Hindutva. Hindutva is an ideology that states India belongs to the Hindus, and others are excluded or completely subordinated to the Hindus (Andersen & Damle, 2018). In this context, Hindutva is a nationalist conceptualization that expresses Hindu fundamentalism. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was the first one to introduce the Hindutva concept and laid the basis for the Hindu nationalist movement. Hindutva literally means the state of being a Hindu, and a Hindu is someone who follows Hinduism religion and its practices (Blakeslee, 2018).

India is the birthplace of Hinduism and the ancestral home of Hindus. The BJP's religious nationalist movement endorses the ideology that people of the Hindu religion deserve the sole ownership of India (Vaishnav, 2019). Therefore, every aspect of Indian society, including laws, policies, and all other aspects, should be regulated according to the principles and teachings of Hinduism (Clark, 2010). Non-Hindus such as Buddhists and Sikhs are considered sub-religions of Hinduism, falling under the umbrella of Hindutva. On the other hand, Muslims, Christians, and Jews are excluded from the Hindutva framework and are considered minorities in India (Gowen & Sharma, 2018).

It is evident that the essence of Hindu nationalism in India, and the anti-Muslim sentiment, is supremely evident in the Hindutva ideology. The BJP, as the current ruling party, is the political representative of Hindutva/Hindu nationalism in India (Islam, 2020). A surprising fact is that the BJP is the political wing of The Rashtriya Swayam Sevak (RSS), an extremist group in India that emerged in 1924. The ideological grounds of the RSS state that "Hindu culture is the life-breath of Hindusthan" (Gowen & Sharma, 2018). The motive of RSS is to protect and promote Hindu culture exclusively, excluding all other cultures and religions living in Hindustan (Vaishnav et al., 2018). Presently, the BJP, as the ruling party in India, is following the same motive as the RSS and is emphasizing redefining the national identity of India based on Hindutva (Palshikar, 2018). According to this new national identity, all policies, social, economic, and political affairs will be based on Hindutva, excluding the

basic rights of minorities, especially Muslims, who make up a significant portion of India's population (Palshikar, 2018). This exclusion has led to increased targeting and violence against Muslims in India (Gowen & Sharma, 2018).

Purpose of the study

Political and religious radicalization is not a new phenomenon. It has roots in the past and still exists in many countries around the globe. Generally, radicalization refers to extremist behavior and attitudes towards people with different opinions and belief systems. Many religious nationalist movements are based on radical attitudes driven by political actors. Today, in various countries, many political parties try to incite religious radicalization in the common public to exploit them for their own benefits. Religious radicalization involves extremist and violent attitudes held by the majority religious group towards minority religious groups in a country.

India is one such country where religious radicalization has been at its peak for many years. While Hinduism is the major religion in India, the country is also home to people belonging to various other religions. Indian Muslims have been victims of religious radicalization for many years, despite India being home to the third-largest Muslim population in the world. This religious radicalization against Muslims has its roots in the Hindutva ideology, which began in 1928. However, the Hindutva ideology gained major recognition in 2014, when the BJP came to power under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The purpose of this systematic review analysis study is to explore the ground realities behind the increased Hindu religious radicalism towards Muslims under the rule of the BJP. Furthermore, the study intends to review the role of the BJP as a Hindu nationalist party in fueling anti-Muslim sentiments among Hindus and provoking them to initiate various violent attacks against Muslims in India.

Research question

How are Nationalist Movements in India under the BJP Government fueling human rights violations?

Research objectives

1. To examine the ideological linkage between the BJP and radical nationalism (Hindutva) concerning human rights violations.
2. To explore the role of the BJP in exacerbating anti-minority sentiments during its governance in India.

Methodology

Research design

The present study adopted a systematic review analysis method to investigate the relationship between Radical Nationalist Movements in India under the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) Government and the hype of anti-minorities sentiments. The integrative review approach was chosen to summarize and synthesize relevant literature given the nature of the topic and research question.

Furthermore, the thematic analysis method was used to analyze the data extracted from the relevant research and newspaper articles. This process involved identifying and coding key themes and patterns related to the ideological linkage between the BJP and Hindutva, the role of the BJP in hyping anti-Muslim sentiments, and violent attacks during the BJP government in India.

Data sources

A comprehensive search of original published studies, international newspaper articles, and magazines from the years 2010 to 2022 was conducted. The following sources were used for the systematic review analysis:

- academic journals: Journal of Indian Studies, Journal of Social and Political Psychology, Journal of South Asian Studies, Annual Review of Sociology, Annual Review of Political Science, Asian Journal of Law and Society.

- publishers: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, Santa Barbara, Yale University Press, Princeton University Press, New York University Press, Oxford University Press, Routledge.

- international newspapers and magazines: The Washington Post, The New Yorker, Human Rights Watch, Council on Foreign Relations, The Economist, Pew Research Center, The Intercept, CNN, The Guardian, The New York Times, BBC ASIA.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The selected articles were required to focus on the ideological linkage between the BJP and radical Hinduism (Hindutva) in terms of anti-minorities behavior and explore the role of the BJP in hyping anti-minorities sentiments and human rights concerns during the BJP government in India. Articles were included if they were relevant to the research question and covered the period between 2010 and 2022. Duplicate and irrelevant articles were excluded during the selection process.

Article selection

The initial search yielded 50 articles comprising 25 research articles and 25 newspaper/magazine articles. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 34 articles (16 research articles and 18 newspaper/magazine articles) were deemed eligible for the review.

Data extraction

Data from the selected articles was extracted and organized in a systematic manner. Key information such as authors, publication year, study design, sample characteristics, and major findings were collected from each article.

Validity and reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the thematic analysis, peer review was conducted, and feedback from co-researchers was sought. Additionally, critical reflexivity was practiced, acknowledging and mitigating potential biases.

Reporting

The findings of the thematic analysis were reported in a narrative format. The results were structured to address each research objective and research question.

Data preparation

The textual data from the selected 34 articles (16 research articles and 18 newspaper/magazine articles) is collected and organized for analysis. This data includes information related to the ideological linkage between BJP and radical Hindutva, the role of BJP in hyping anti-minorities' sentiments by Hindus during BJP government in India.

Familiarization with data

The researchers familiarize themselves with the collected data by thoroughly reading and immersing themselves in the content. This helps in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the material and identifying relevant sections related to the research question.

Generation of initial codes

Initial codes are generated to capture key concepts and themes within the data. Codes could include phrases, sentences, or words that highlight specific aspects related to Hindutva, anti-minority sentiments, and human rights concerns.

Searching for themes

The data is systematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns and themes. The researchers compare the initial codes to recognize similarities and group related codes into potential themes.

Reviewing and defining themes

The potential themes are reviewed to ensure they accurately represent the data and align with the research objectives. Each theme is defined clearly and concisely to capture the essence of the information.

Data charting

A data chart/matrix is created to organize the themes and relevant data extracts. This helps in visualizing the connections between themes and specific data instances.

Collating themes

The researchers collate group related themes into overarching themes. In this case, the generated themes could include:
- "Hindutva" Reflection in BJP's Dogma
- Amendment in Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution
- Exclusionary Citizenship Law

Defining and naming themes

Each theme is defined with clarity, and a descriptive name is given to represent the content and meaning of the theme accurately.

Findings and discussion

The study aims to gain insights into the ideological linkage between BJP and Hindutva, the role of BJP in fostering anti-minority sentiments, and the implications of these factors on radical nationalism in India.

Through the integrative review of selected literature, results illustrated the answers to highlighted research question "How are Nationalist Movements in India under the BJP Government fueling human right violations?"

Theme 1: Ideological linkage between the BJP and radical nationalism (Hindutva)

It is perceived that "Hindutva" ideology has a major influence on radical Hinduist behavior. According to the concept of "Hindutva", a Hindu is someone who considers India as both their Fatherland and Holyland. This view excludes people of other religions like Christianity, Judaism, and Islam from Hindu India (Savarkar, 1923/2005). Radical Hinduist behavior is an extremist approach towards opposite ideologies and belief systems.

The first objective under the major research question will be answered in this theme by reviewing the ideas of various authors in selected research papers and international newspaper/magazine articles.

The pre-history of Hindutva ideology sheds light on the idealistic approach of Swami Dayananda, the founder of Arya Samaj, who stated that the Hindu race was superior to all other races in the Indian Sub-continent (Palshikar, 2015). Dayananda claimed that the actual superior Aryan race belonging to the Tibetan area were the Hindu people, which is why Hindus living in the Indian Subcontinent are considered superior to all races (Leidig, 2020). Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar were the two prominent founding leaders of the Hindutva ideology (Sharma, 2020). These Hindu nationhood theories were published 80 years ago but continue to be the driving force of Hindu Nationalist Movements (Khan et al., 2017).

The term Hindutva was first coined by Vinayak Damodar Sarvakar. Sarvakar was a revolutionary figure during the pre-independence era and was against Gandhian non-violence (Flaten, 2017). He wrote the book "Hindutva: who is Hindu" while he was in prison due to his anti-British attitude and criminal offense against the King of England. This influential book was published in 1928 and laid the foundation of the Hindutva Movement (Zafar et al., 2018).

Through his Hindutva ideology, Sarvakar differentiated between Hinduism and Hindutva. Sarvakar's Hindutva ideology was a product of pre-independence issues (Leidig, 2020). His ideology provoked Hindu nationalists to fight against external influences to make India purely and solely a place for Hindus only. In his text, he urged to fight against the threatening factors for Hindus, including increasing foreign influence (including British) and minorities' invasion in the country (Sharma, 2020).

On the other side, Madhav Sadashiv Golwalker, another prominent Hindutva leader, expressed a similar opinion about foreigners' presence in India. Golwalker was of the view that "The foreign races in Hindustan must adopt the Hindu culture and language - must learn to respect and hold in worship the Hindu religion, must entertain no ideas but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture and may only stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation claiming nothing, not even citizen's rights" (Golwalkar, 1939).

Throughout history, it is evident that there were various nationalist movements held in the country, but not all were based on Hindu radicalistic beliefs. Mahatma Gandhi's and Jawaharlal Nehru's secular Indian National Congress were examples of different nationalist movements promoting peace, nonviolence, and secularism. Hindutva ideology is against these nonviolent ideologies, promoting communal violence and religious extremism. The ideology of Gandhi's movement is a singular Hindu identity with loyalty towards the nation only. In contrast, Hindutva ideology is that every citizen claiming to be an Indian must consider this land as Holyland and have the same faith. This is the reason they exclude Muslims and Christians, as India is their Fatherland, not Holyland (Rambachan, 2009).

The ideology of Hindutva and its exclusion of Muslims and Christians are evident through the review of selected articles. The further debate will shed light on the linkage between Hindutva ideology and the BJP government's anti-Muslim behavior (Sharma, 2020).

History reveals that every ideology needs followers and movements to spread the belief, and the same goes for the Hindutva ideology. There is a network of right-wing Hindu Nationalist Movements named "Sangh Parivaar" depicting Hindutva ideology in India (Khan et al., 2017). The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS established in the 1920s), the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP established in 1964), and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP established in the late 1970s) are a few very prominent organizations under the "Sangh Parivaar" leading Hindu nationalist movements (Zafar et al., 2018).

As discussed above, Sarvakar and Golwalker were the two prominent figures in the early 1900s who provided the philosophical grounds for Hindu Nationalist Movements. At the same time, Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar was the first person to turn Hindutva vision into a movement by founding the first Hindu Nationalist organization in 1925, named the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) (Islam, 2020). The grounds of Hindu radicalistic movements with the vision of Hindutva started from this RSS organization. Hedgewar developed the organizational structure and mission of RSS with consultation from Sarvakar. Hedgewar had no intention of gaining state power (Flaten, 2017). His main purpose was to strengthen the Hindu society and revive Hindu national consciousness at the grassroots level against increasing Muslim Nationalism during the pre-independence time.

By 1931, the RSS grew rapidly and became a famed organization, spreading its mission across the country. Many Hindus started feeling that joining the RSS was their national obligation. This growth and expansion faced a huge setback in 1948 when Gandhi was assassinated and Vinayak Godse, a member of the RSS, was found guilty of this murder (Jaffrelot & Jairam, 2020). Godse was extremely against Gandhi due to his anti-violence policies, which he believed were pro-Muslim policies and a source of humiliation and subordination for the Hindu community. Godse considered Gandhi a threat to the Hindu community.

Godse's association with the RSS caused a huge damage to the Hindu Nationalist Movement, resulting in a nationwide ban and anti-RSS uproars. Later, the ban got lifted, but the damage to the RSS was done as it caused a significant decrease in RSS membership (Flaten, 2012). The RSS's goal was never political, but after this setback, the RSS added a political orientation to the organization. From there, the RSS started making its grounds and playing a prominent role in Indian politics (Roy, 2022). The foundation of the RSS-based political party was laid in 1951, but failed to gain any electoral power, and it was assumed that Hindutva ideology had no place in the new secular democratic India (The Muslim500, 2021). The RSS came up with a new strategy by subdividing its organization into the Cultural Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Religious Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

These sub-organizations have different structures, constitutions, and working patterns, but they back each other in every manner. The beneficial outcome of this strategy was the BJP gaining fame in politics. In the 1980s and 1990s, the BJP introduced their first political banner based on Hindutva ideology and gained a place as a long-term opposition party in the 1990s against one of the most influential political parties in India (Flaten, 2012). From there, the journey of the BJP's Hindu Nationalist Movements started, which depicts the essence of Hindutva ideology in every move of the BJP. In 1992, one such incident depicting anti-Muslim behavior was the demolition of Babri Masjid by a huge crowd of Hindu radicals provoked by the anti-Muslim speeches of BJP and VHP leaders outside the Babri Masjid. Despite this huge violent attack backed by the BJP, they still managed to achieve significant electoral success in the mid-1990s due to their economic policy characteristics (Harriss, 2015).

After that, in 2002 and then in 2014, the BJP succeeded in gaining electoral power by winning majority seats in parliament and becoming the ruling party in India. The BJP used economic issues as a political tool to win those elections rather than relying solely on Hindutva ideology (Tharoor, 2018). The BJP achieved back-to-back success and is still in power. At first glance, it may seem that all the electoral success of the BJP is due to their economic policies, but the hidden story is that the BJP must secure the support of the RSS to stay in power (Firstpost, 2014). In other words, the regulation of BJP's political strategies and the appointment of BJP's party leaders are in control of the RSS. Many of the members of the BJP were part of the RSS before, including current Prime Minister Narendra Modi and previous leaders such as Lal Krishna Advani and Atal Bihari Vajpayee (Firstpost, 2014). The most important clause is that the support of the RSS to the BJP depends on the level of loyalty of the BJP towards Hindutva Ideology. RSS remains the backbone of all Hindu Nationalist Movements even after a century (Tharoor, 2018).

The whole scenario and political journey of the BJP depicts the ideological linkage between the BJP and radical nationalism (Hindutva), and then the RSS. In other words, the BJP is promoting Hindutva ideology and posing a threat to the minorities' rights.

Theme 2: Exclusionary citizenship law

This theme will discuss the second objective of the present research "To explore the role of the BJP in exacerbating anti-minority sentiments during its governance in India".

Through a critical analysis of selected articles, it is evident that the BJP government during its tenure took decisions that clearly depict their hatred towards Muslims and incite various violent attacks by Hindu radicals in India (Flaten, 2017). One of the anti-Muslim actions taken by the BJP government is the discriminatory Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), which marginalized Muslims from Indian citizenship. This incident occurred on December 12, 2019, under the leadership of Narendra Modi, when the BJP successfully passed the Discriminatory Citizen Amendment Act (The Intercept, 2020).

According to this law, only Muslim immigrants are excluded, while Hindus, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain, Zoroastrian and Christian immigrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan can still avail Indian citizenship (Vanaik, 2017). During various public appearances, BJP leaders gave assurance to Hindus in other parts of the world that through citizen verification process they will protect Hindus everywhere. On October 2019, Home Minister Amit Shah said: "I want to assure all Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, and Christian refugees, that you will not be forced to leave India". In his statement he deliberately omitted Muslims from the list of protected religions (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

The above mentioned statement by BJP leader and Minister clearly depicts their anti-Muslim sentiments. Literature stated that the citizenship amendment law violates International Human Rights law as it discriminates Muslims on religious basis from others (Vanaik, 2017). Many International Human Rights Organizations raised this issue on an international level. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights declared this Citizenship Law as "Fundamentally Discriminatory" (Jaffrlot & Jairam, 2020). On February 2020, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated that "after the approval of the Citizenship Amendment Bill, I am afraid for the future of religious minorities in India". The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom stated that US government should consider acting against the home minister and other principal leadership in India (The Economist, 2022). Further, the commission held a hearing on March 2020, in which one of the commissioners raised the point that the large number of Indian Muslims will become highly vulnerable in result of this citizenship amendment law (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

BJP govt tried to justify this bill by saying that this bill intends to provide asylum to religious minorities residing abroad and are trying to escape victimization. Critics argued that this bill is discriminatory because if it truly aimed to protect minorities then they wouldn't exclude Muslim minorities from this bill (Danziger, 2020).

BJP govt further stated that "Non-Muslim minorities in other countries are refugees escaping from victimization. Whereas Muslims coming from the predominant Muslim countries are infiltrators coming to India that's why we exclude them". To justify BJP govt stance, Home Minister Amit Shah said "There is a fundamental difference between a refugee and an infiltrator. This bill is for refugees" (USCIRF Annual Report, 2020). One such example of BJP govt showing anti-Muslim sentiment was they took Supreme Court assistance to deport Rohingya Muslim from India. BJP claimed that Hazara from Afghanistan, Shia and Ahmadis from Pakistan and Rohingyas from Myanmar are not refugees but infiltrators in India (BBC ASIA, 2019).

Sooner the Citizenship Amendment bill got much hype and became the talk of the town. Resulting, more than 140 petitions were filed in Supreme Court of India against this bill (The Intercept, 2020). UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also filed an intervention application as amicus curiae (third party) in the Supreme Court on March 2020 (Harriss, 2015). UN high commissioner urges Indian govt to keep international human rights, norms, laws, and standards in mind while proceeding citizenship amendment bill. In response to this application, Indian govt criticized that citizenship law is their internal matter and foreign party have no right to sue any issue pertaining to India's sovereignty (Human Rights Watch, 2020; The Print, 2022).

BJP govt's anti-Muslim behavior and approval of discriminatory citizenship amendment bill hurt the sentiments of Muslims both in India and around the globe. This resulted into huge protest in India, as well as all around the world (Danziger, 2020). On 27 February 2020, huge number of Muslims recorded their protest on the roads of Delhi against this amendment bill. The extreme hatred of BJP govt was shown when local BJP politician Kapil Mishra ordered to shoot Muslims protestors on spot (The Economist, 2022). His order clearly depicts the barbaric and violent behavior of BJP towards Muslims in India. Later, this protest turned into a violent clash between Hindus provoked by BJP govt and Muslims standing against discriminatory bill in Delhi. This violent clash resulted into killing Muslims, burning their shops, homes, mosques, and properties (Roy, 2022; The Muslim500, 2021). Police supported and praised Hindu Mob attackers in their violent acts against Muslims. Protest then expanded from Delhi to Uttar Pradesh, Assam and in Karnataka killing Muslims brutally (The Intercept, 2020).

Overall, critical analysis of selected articles revealed the anti-minority and anti-Muslim sentiments of the BJP and their actions to promote hatred for minorities among Hindus in the country through this exclusionary citizenship law and extremely violent actions against Muslim protestors in India.

Amendment in Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution

This theme also focuses on the second objective of present research "To explore the role of the BJP in exacerbating anti-minority sentiments during its governance in India".

Another anti-minority action taken by the BJP government was the amendment of Article 370 and 35A in the Indian Constitution regarding the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir after seven decades (The Intercept, 2020). The BJP government justified this amendment by portraying it as a correction of a "Historical Blunder". Literature revealed that Jammu and Kashmir got some special privileges and autonomy (BBC ASIA, 2019). According to Article 370 and 35A, India cannot interfere in Kashmir's internal affairs, except

Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Idrees, Muniza Javed, *Media framing of human rights violations: unpacking Indian radical nationalist policies*

DOI: 10.2478/eras-2023-0007

for matters such as defense, foreign affairs, and communication (Roy, 2022). Furthermore, it grants Kashmir the autonomy to have its own constitution, separate flag, and the authority to make laws related to fundamental rights, permanent residency, and property ownership (The New Yorker, 2019). Additionally, Article 35A bars non-Kashmiri Indians from buying property and settling in the state (Danziger, 2020).

The BJP has always wanted to scrap this article to integrate Kashmir with the rest of India. The Hindu nationalist BJP opposed this article because Kashmir is a Muslim-majority region, and it provides special status to Muslims in Kashmir (The Muslim500, 2021). To abolish this special status, the BJP government aims to bring about a demographic change in Jammu and Kashmir. As Jammu and Kashmir is a state with a clear majority (68-70 percent) of Muslims, the change will be in favor of Hindus, which would be highly appreciated by Hindu voters (The New Yorker, 2019). Finally, when the BJP came to power with a massive mandate, they amended this article in August 2019 (Roy, 2022). This amendment permits the central government of India to interfere in the purchase of property and land in Kashmir. Hindu nationalists have always favored a demographic change in Kashmir because it would make Muslims a minority in the region (BBC ASIA, 2019).

Babri Masjid demolition incident

This theme is also in line with the second objective of present research. The Babri Masjid demolition incident occurred years ago, but it remains a topic of ongoing debate due to the damage it caused. December 6, 2022, marked the 30[th]anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition, yet the true reasons behind the incident remain unrevealed. Moreover, the situation of Muslims in India has not improved since then (Bourne, 2023).

Researchers and critical analysts have shed light on this incident through various scholarly and magazine papers. Babri Masjid has always been embroiled in controversy since its construction in 1528 during the Mughal Era by Mir Baqi. Some scholars argue that the demolition was a counteraction, claiming that Babur ordered the construction of Babri Mosque by demolishing a temple. However, many historians refute this claim, asserting that Babur never visited Ayodhya and did not issue any such order. Some even challenge the existence of Mir Baqi in Babur's Court (Wahab, 2021). This dispute between Hindus and Muslims has persisted for decades, with Sunni Muslims claiming that Hindus made Rams Temple by demolishing a mosque, while Hindus argue that Muslims built the mosque by demolishing a temple, fueling an unending debate.

The focus of this paper is to explore the aftermath of the Babri Masjid demolition and its recent implications during the BJP regime. In 2010, a positive step was taken as the Allahabad High Court gave a verdict to resolve the dispute, deciding to divide the land between the Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara, and the Ram Lalla petitioners. However, progress related to holding the culprits behind the demolition accountable was not made (Wire Staff, 2021).

In 2011, the Allahabad High Court put a stay on the verdict, effectively putting the Babri Masjid demolition case on hold. Later, in 2017, Chief Justice JS Khehar suggested an out-of-court settlement among the rival parties (Wire Staff, 2021). In 2019, the Supreme Court ordered the return of the 67-acre disputed land to its original owners. Subsequently, in November 2019, the Supreme Court granted the entire disputed land in Ayodhya to the deity Ram Lalla and announced a 5-acre land for Muslims to build a mosque at a prominent location (Wahab, 2021). In 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the construction of a temple on the disputed land. In September 2020, a special crime branch court acquitted all 32 accused in the Babri Masjid Demolition case, including former BJP leader and Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani, former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Kalyan Singh, former Union

Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Idrees, Muniza Javed, *Media framing of human rights violations: unpacking Indian radical nationalist policies*

DOI: 10.2478/eras-2023-0007

Ministers Murli Manohar Joshi, and Uma Bharti. Sadly, by the end of 2022, no culprit had received punishment, and the Supreme Court closed all cases related to the Babri Masjid demolition, leaving no justice served (Bourne, 2023).

Conclusion

The integrative review of international media and research reports sheds light on the ideological linkage between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Hindutva, and its implications on radical nationalism in India. The study revealed that Hindutva is the driving force behind radical nationalist behavior, and it fosters an exclusionary ideology that marginalizes Muslims and other religious minorities in India.

The historical roots of Hindutva can be traced back to the foundation of Hindu nationalist movements. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) form a network of right-wing Hindu nationalist organizations that promote Hindutva ideology.

Throughout its political journey, the BJP has consistently shown radical nationalism through its policies and actions. The discriminatory Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the amendment of Articles 370 and 35A in the Indian Constitution are glaring examples of BJP's exclusionary approach. These actions have resulted in violence and protests, causing immense harm to the minorities' rights in India.

It is crucial to recognize the impact of radical nationalism on the social fabric of India. The rise of Hindutva ideology and the BJP's political dominance have exacerbated communal tensions and led to the marginalization of religious minorities. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that promotes secularism, religious harmony, and equal rights for all citizens.

In conclusion, the study based on international media reporting, emphasizes the urgent need for dialogue, understanding, and tolerance among different religious communities in India. Efforts should be made to foster a pluralistic and inclusive society, where all citizens can coexist peacefully, irrespective of their races and beliefs. Only through such endeavors can India overcome the challenges posed by religious radicalization and move towards a more harmonious and united nation.

Acknowledgement

REFERENCES

Anantan, K., & Rambachan, A. (2009). Hinduism, Hindutva and the Contest for the Meaning of Hindu Identity: Swami Vivekananda and V.D. Savarkar. Irnees. Retrieved from https://www.irenees.net/bdf_fiche-analyse-878_en.html (accessed 30 September 2022).

Atalia, O., & springs, J. (2013). *Religious nationalism: A reference handbook*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Andersen, W. K., & Damle, S. D. (2018). *The RSS: A View to the Inside*. Gurgaon: Penguin Random House India.

Brubaker, R. (2011). Religion and nationalism: Four approaches. *Nations and Nationalism, 18*(1), 2–20.

Blakeslee, D. (2018, June 12). *The Rath Yatra Effect: Hindu Nationalist Propaganda and the Rise of the BJP* (Working Paper). New York University Abu Dhabi.

Bourne, S. (2023). *30 years on: the demolition of Babri Masjid*. Islam Channel. Retrieved from https://www.islamchannel.tv/blog-posts/30-years-on-the-demolition-of-babri-masjid (accessed 25 July

2023).

Clark, W. R. (2010). Towards a political economy of religion. *Political Economist* (spring), 2–10.

Chhibber, P. K., & Verma, R. (2018). *Ideology and Identity: The Changing Party Systems of India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

DeHanas, D. N., & Shterin, M. (2018). Religion and the Rise of Populism. *Religion, State and Society, 3*, 177–185.

Danziger, S. (2020, June 19). *Dividing Lines: What India's Hindu Nationalist Turn Portends for Relations with Pakistan*. Stimson. Retrieved from https://www.stimson.org/2020/dividing-lines-what-indias-hindu-nationalist-turn-portends-for-relations-with-pakistan (accessed 25 July 2023).

Election Results 2014: Historic Win for NDA with 336 Seats, 282 for BJP. (2014, May 17). Firstpost. Retrieved from https://www.firstpost.com/politics/election-results-2014-historic-win-for-nda-with-336-seats-285-for-bjp1526377.html (accessed 30 June 2023)

Flåten, L. T. (2012). Hindu nationalist conceptions of history: Constructing a Hindu-Muslim dichotomy. South Asia.*Journal of South Asian Studies, 35*(3), 624-647. https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2012.708934 (accessed 20 September 2022).

Friedlander, P. (2016). Hinduism and Politics. In *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics* (pp. 70–71). Abingdon: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315737053 (accessed 20 September 2022).

Flåten, L. T. (2017). *Hindu nationalism, history and identity in India: Narrating a Hindu past under the BJP*. London, U.K.: Routledge.

Filkins, D. (2019, December 2). *Blood and Soil in Narendra Modi's India*. New Yorker. Retrieved from https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/12/09/blood-and-soil-in-narendra-modis-india (accessed 20 September 2022).

Golwalkar, M. S. (1939). *We, or our nationhood defined*. Nagpur, India: Bharat.

Golwalkar, M. S. (1966). *Bunch of thoughts*. Bangalore, India: Vikrama Prakashan

Grzymala-Busse, A. (2012). Why comparative politics should take religion (more) seriously. *Annual Review of Political Science, 15*, 421-442. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-032211-214118 (accessed 20 June 2023)

Gorski, P., & Türkmen-Dervişoğlu, G. (2013). Religion, nationalism, and violence: An integrated approach. *Annual Review of Sociology, 39*, 193–210. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071811-145439 (accessed 20 July 2023)

Grzymala-Busse, A. (2015). *Nations under God*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Grzymala-Busse, A. (2016). The difficulty with doctrine: How religion can influence politics. *Government and Opposition, 51*(2), 327–350.

Gowen, A., & Sharma, M. (2018). Rising Hate in India. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/world/reports-of-hate-crime-cases-have-spiked-in-india/?utm_term=.eda98513cade (accessed 20 June 2023)

Harriss, J. (2015). Hindu nationalism in action: The Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian politics. *South Asia. Journal of South Asian Politics, 38*(4), 712–718.https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1088523 (accessed 25 October 2022).

Haselby, S. (2015). *The origins of American religious nationalism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press

Head, J. (2019). *Rohingya crisis: Villages destroyed for government facilities*. BBC ASIA. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-49596113 (accessed 30 September 2022).

Hindutva as a variant of right-wing extremism. (2020). *Patterns of Prejudice, 54*(3), 215-237. https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2020.1759861 (accessed 30 September 2022)

Islam, R. (2020, August 18). *Hindu Nationalism: A Rise of New Religious Radicalism in India*. Insamer. Retrieved from https://insamer.com/en/hindu-nationalism-a-rise-of-new-religious-radicalism-in-india_3170.html (accessed 30 September 2022).

Jaffrelot, C. (Ed.). (2007). *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7s415

Jagannatthan, R. (2014, March 24). *How the RSS is heavily invested in elections 2014 and Modi*. Firstpost. Retrieved from https://www.firstpost.com/election-diary/how-the-rss-is-heavily-invested-in-elections-2014-and-modi-1448357.html (accessed 30 July 2023).

Jafferlot, C., & Jairam, P. (2019). *BJP Has Been Effective in Transmitting Its Version of Indian History to Next Generation of Learners*. Carnegie Endowment for Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/11/16/bjp-has-been-effective-in-transmitting-its-version-of-indian-historyto-next-generation-of-learners-pub-80373 (accessed 20 July 2022).

Khan, S. S., Svensson, T., Jogdand, Y. A., & Liu, J. H. (2018). Lessons from the past for the future: The Definition and Mobilisation of Hindu Nationhood by the Hindu Nationalist Movement of India. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 5*(2), 477-511. https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v5i2.736 (accessed 30

July 2023)

Leidig, E. (2020). Hindutva as a variant of right-wing extremism. *Patterns of Prejudice, 54*(3), 215-237. https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2020.1759861 (accessed 30 September 2022).

Meharban, MD. (2020, April 09). *Shoot the Traitors: Discrimination against Muslims under India's New Citizenship Policy*. Human Rights Watch. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/04/10/shoot-traitors/discrimination-against-muslims-under-indias-new-citizenship-policy (accessed 30 September 2022)

Palshikar, S. (2015). The BJP and Hindu Nationalism: Centrist Politics and Majoritarian Impulses. *Journal of South Asian Studies, 38*(4), 719-735. https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1089460 (accessed 20 July 2023).

Pew Research Center. (2015). *the Future of World Religions: Population, Growth Projections* (2010-2050). Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/(accessed 30 July 2022)

Runciman, D. (2011). *The origins of political order by Francis Fukuyama-* review. The Guardian. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/may/12/origins-political-order-francis-fukuyama-review (accessed 10 October 2022)

Raderstorf, B. & Reif, M. (2018, April 9). *A New Trend of Religious Populism in Latin America?* Retrieved from https://www.thedialogue.org/blogs/2018/04/a-new-trend-of-religious-populism-in-latin-america/ (accessed 15 December 2022)

Roy, A. (2022, June 22). *Opinion: India's democracy is under threat from the BJP's Hindu nationalist agenda.* CNN. https://edition.cnn.com/2022/06/22/opinions/bjp-hindu-muslim-democracy-modi-arundhati-roy/index.html (accessed 15 July 2023)

Savarkar, V. (2005). *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* New Delhi, India: Hindi Sahitya Sadan.

Sunaina, D. (2019, December 2). *Blood and Soil in Narendra Modi's India*. New Yorker. Retrieved from https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/12/09/blood-and-soil-in-narendra-modis-india (accessed 25 June 2022)

Shanker, S. (2020, January 30). *India's citizenship law, in tandem with national registry, could make BJP's discriminatory targeting of Muslims easier*. The Intercept. Retrieved from https://theintercept.com/2020/01/30/india-citizenship-act-caa-nrc-assam/ (accessed 30 July 2023)

Sharma, A. (2020). On the Difference between Hinduism and Hindutva. *Association for Asian Studies, 25*(1).

Tharoor, S. (2018, November 30). *Dear Troubled Liberal, Don't Fear the Congress Party*. The Print. Retrieved from https://theprint.in/opinion/dear-troubled-liberal-dont-fear-the-congress-party/156690/ (accessed 30 September 2022)

The Muslim 500. (2021). *The Rise of Fascism in India Threatens Its Minorities and India's Survival*. Retrieved from https://themuslim500.com/guest-contributions-2021/the-rise-of-fascism-in-india-threatens-its-minorities-and-indias-survival/ (accessed 30 July 2023)

The Economist. (2022, January 26). *Hindu radicals have been holding speeches with some spine-chilling talk—religious hatred in India*. Retrieved from https://www.economist.com/podcasts/2022/01/26/hindu-radicals-have-been-holding-speeches-with-some-spine-chilling-talk-religious-hatred-in-india (accessed 30 September 2022)

Vanaik, A. (2017). *The rise of Hindu authoritarianism: Secular claims, communal realities*. London, UK: Verso Books.

Vaishnav, M. (2017). *When Crime Pays: Money and Muscle in Indian Politics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Vaishnav, M., Ravi, J., & Hintson, J. (2018, October 8). *Is the BJP India's New Hegemon*? Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/10/08/is-bjp-india-s-new-hegemon-pub-77406 (accessed 25 July 2023)

Vaishnav, M. (2019). *Religious Nationalism and India's Future.* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Wire Staff. (2021). *Babri Masjid: The Timeline of a Demolition*. The WIRE. https://thewire.in/communalism/babri-masjid-the-timeline-of-a-demolition (accessed 20 September 2022)

Wahab, G. (2021). *Night of Terror: The Dust Kicked up Before the Babri Masjid Demolition*. The Wire. Retrieved from https://thewire.in/communalism/lk-advani-rath-yatra-communal-violence-agra-babri-masjid-demolition (accessed 30 September 2022)

Zafar, Z., Ali, S., & Irfan, S. (2018). Origin of "Hindutva" and its reflections in Modi's doctrine. *Journal of Indian Studies, 4*(2), 225-232.