



Hindu Majoritarian Rule and Challenges to Muslim Identity in India

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ABSTRACT

Apparently, the non-accommodative posture of the Bhartiya Janta Party and pursuit of Hindu majoritarian policies are perceived to be an existential threat towards the biggest minority i.e., Muslims. It necessitates an investigation and a careful study that how the Muslim and the Hindu identities evolved an irreconcilable character and got mired into conflictual-oppositional matrix. The ferocious Hindutva treats Muslims as aliens in the land and has threatened the mosaic of Muslim identity. This study attempts to analyze the factors and causes why Modi's India is entirely different from the India which has been construed by its founding fathers promulgating Indian nationalism, coexistence, and composite culture.

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1. Introduction

The ideals of secularism, multiculturalism, and liberal democracy are overshadowed by the rise of majoritarian nationalism under Modi's regime. The policies and actions of BJP government provided outlet to the politics of polarization and divisiveness and subsided grand construct of Indian nationalism (Talbot, 2010, p. 6). A striking blend of tradition and modernity, the Indian nationalism is, in words of Benedict Anderson, 'an imagined cultural artifact' (Anderson, 2016) which never derived its sustenance from 'the bonds of human affection' rooted in ideas of fraternity, equality and self-sacrifice (Talbot, 2010, p. 7). By contrast, the Indian nationalism owes its development and growth to the project of 'enlightened despotism' (Coupland, 1944, p. 20) by the British colonialists who claimed to have imparted training to a generation of Indian nationals on the lines of European thought and beliefs (Coupland, 1944, p. 23). Nevertheless, these claims were seriously challenged by the nationalist writings who picked up their themes to present their own indigenous variant of Indian nationalism (Talbot, 2010, p. 33). It is correct that initially due to inexorable pull of the Western thought of liberalism and self-determination, the nationalism in the Indian subcontinent overlooked the religious, ethnic and linguistic faultlines which are eventually driven to lead India to be overpowered by Hindu majoritarian nationalism, tearing up the transient covering of Indian nationalism (Barrow, 2001). As a matter of fact, the seminal works of leading figures like Dayananda's *Light of Truth*, (Sarasvati, 1915) V.D Savarkar's *The Indian War of Independence* (Savarkar, 2022), Ram Mohan Roy's invoking of Upanishds (Roy, 1989), Vivekananda (Vivekananda, 2019), Nehru's *The Discovery of India* (Nehru,

2008), provides a striking insight into how the breathtaking creativity of intellectual response of these social reformers to the colonial rule, not only mounted a challenging attack on these British claims to counter them but also brilliantly utilized the themes of Western Orientalist writings of the myth of golden Vedic age to strengthen the idea of Indian nationalism (Talbot, 2010, p. 34). Furthermore, in order to dig deeper roots in the Indian society, the nationalist writings invoked Hindu cultural and religious symbols and myths by rediscovering and reinterpreting them to reinforce Hindu nationalism (Smith, 2009). Nonetheless, in the process, as a consequence of creative engagement with the Western thought, Indian nationalism was massively tinted with the increasing strain of Hindu nationalism, raising concerns of other communities to intensify their efforts to shore up their communities boundaries (Barrow, 2001, p. 43). Thus, the growing attempts to link Indianness (Talbot, 2010, p. 35) with the variant of ancient Hindu civilization led to the marginalization of the Muslim community by the Vedic myth. Similarly, the non-Brahminic (PHULE & KOTTAPALLE, 2017) and Tamil population (Caldwell, 1875) could not resist embroidering of the drive for linking Indian nationalism with Hindu nationalism (Talbot, 2010, p. 36).

In the current scenario, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) appeared to have been championing the agenda of Hindu nationalists, aiming to forge unity in the ranks of Hindu majority with the avowed declaration of developing Hindu nation which lead to the exclusion of non-Hindu minorities (Babur & Akhtar, 2021, p. 1). Since its rise to power in 2014, the doctrine of Hindutva occupies a center stage in the India politics and has grown stronger than ever (Sajjad, 2018). It is true that the Bhartaya Janata Party under the leadership of former Prime Minister Vajpayee extended favorable support to the Hindutva *Sangh Parivar* (近藤光博, 2000). However, primarily because it failed to achieve a commanding electoral majority in the Indian Parliament, it did not adopt Hindutva as a doctrinal guide-post to play a central role in determining and shaping up the trends and tendencies of domestic politics. As opposed to its predecessor, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's political stratagem was comprised of two gimmicks or slogans to swell its vote bank: with a view to winning over the votes of Indian urban class, the slogan of development was deployed to attract them, and the doctrinal strategy based on Hindutva was employed to garner the support of Hindu vote bank, a political framework which he successfully tested and fitted in the state of Gujarat (Editorial, May 2014, p. 7). In the same vein, by spewing hatred, war mongering and violence against Pakistan, Narendra Modi whipped its support base in Hindu dominated areas of voters and projected himself as Chowkidar, the guardian of the Hindu nation and nationalism, which ultimately led him to win the 2019 general elections (Ibrahim, July 13, 2020). Consequently, the programs and projects of the BJP government hell-bent on conditioning its citizens with religious identity have turned out to be anti-Muslim, anti-Christian, even anti-Dalit (Shahzad, Falki, & Bilal, 2021, p. 1). These initiatives have also stoked anti-Pakistan sentiments and instigated the oratory again Pakistan in the Indian diplomatic and public spheres. Since the rise of BJP's government to prominence, the Indian diversity has come under increasing threat (Cohen, 2021), laying bare the hollow claims of Indian nationalism to be the abode of co-existence for all minorities and communities, races, and classes irrespective of their color, creed and customs and their distinctive languages (Masselos, 1991). Nonetheless, Modi's controversial laws and policies have subjected the Muslims to systematic discrimination, prejudice, and violence, despite constitutional protections (Watch, 2021).

Ironically, the 'idea of India' actually developed through the encounter between the inhabitants of Indian subcontinent and the rulers of the Muslim world (Shahzad, Falki, & Bilal, 2021, p. 48). Before their rule, the different regions of India were known by the multitude of nomenclature. Subjected to centuries of conquests and infiltration from the outside, Indian society has transformed into a complex constellation of various races, communities, languages, creeds and customs and religions (Coupland, 1944, p. 2). Nevertheless, India was distinguished for certain unity and homogeneity underlying the diversity of Indian life.

Furthermore, the variety of philosophies and religions that took birth from its heart were hallmarked for a set of common assumptions related to cosmology and life. In fact, the very subtle notions of homogeneity, uniformity and unity became the reasons for the Muslim to brand the entire area with the name of India (Qureshi, 1990, p. 2). On the contrary, the Muslims are now being increasingly alienated and marginalized in the very land they themselves conceptualized to be called India (Kumar, 2010).

India, the only largest democracy around the globe, is home to biggest religious minority with about 200 million Indian Muslims in the world, which would be the eighth most populous nation in the world if they have created the country of their own. The huge size of the biggest minority presents a monumental challenge to the Indian governance. Keeping in view the diversity of Indian life, the vanguards of Indian future envisioned a secular path and pluralistic political and cultural environment which would remain tolerant and democratic in the face of multiple flare ups and fault lines. India underlines two forms of pluralism, one is religious and another is political. A wide range of political parties ranging from a number of regional and far left national parties to far right parties such as the Bharatiya Janata Party, contest to claim power of India in their own hands. India hosts a large variety of religions. Almost nearly a billion Hindus, 200 million Muslims, 30 million Christians, over 20 million Sikhs, and more Indian Buddhists are currently residing in India.

1.1. The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism

Indian nationalism signifies a collective consciousness and identity which presents a holistic and inclusive theme for all the religions, cultures and histories by harnessing the power of characteristic unity and homogeneity rooted in common set of assumptions regarding cosmology and life (Ahmed, 2021, p. 2). The civilizational construct of India is presented to have developed in ways that could bring all religious minorities and ethnicities together under one grand composite nationalism. Indian nationalism is not only defined in terms territoriality. Rather, it is underpinned by the social and cultural life (Jaffrelot, 1999). Four major religions of the world – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism can be found in India. Indian is also home to Islam and Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Judaism. The idea of Akhand Bharat, the united India, originates from such conceptualization of Indian nationalism (Khilnani, 2004, p. 115).

It is beyond doubt that Indian nationalism is a by-product of the British colonialism (Panikkar, 2016). But, the creative genius of such figures as Roy, Dayananda, and Vivekananda who are hailed as fathers of Indian nationalism relentlessly, diligently and extensively worked to delink and demystify the Indian nationalism from the blemish of colonialism and present it as an autonomous and indigenously developed ideational construct of nationalism. Their creative efforts by blending the Hindu cultural and religious symbols and myths into Indian nationalism paved way for greater mass mobilization and helped dug deeper roots in Indian society. Furthermore, the feeding of neo-Hindu identity into Indian nationalism set modernization into motion without breaking them away from their cultural roots, thus, leading the Indians to the intellectual autonomy from the Western servitude, which was crucially important for achieving their political autonomy (Talbot, 2010, p. 49).

The Indian social reformers attempted to deconstruct the foreign ruler's representation of their past as it is considered to be pivotal for the struggle for power in the present (Talbot, 2010, p. 33). Thereby, Rabindranath Tagore's (Rajagopalachari, 1970) *Mahabharata* (Tagore, 1999) turned out to be epic historic version of the Aryan race. Similarly, the Indian intellectuals deployed the Orientalist myth of Vedic golden age to rehabilitate the collective dignity toppled by the degradation of foreign rule. The national glory can only be achieved by adherence to the pristine Hinduism of the Vedic golden age. Importantly, the myth of Vedic golden age helped project the Hinduism as a universal and primal religion, much older than Christianity. The mythical tale of Vedic golden age was rooted in European writings of H.T

Colebrook (Colebrooke, 1805) (Colebrooke, 1805)(Colebrooke, 1805)(Colebrooke, 1805)(Colebrooke, 1805) Essay on the Vedas , German born Orientalist Scholar Max Muller (1823-1900) (Müller, 1873), German Franz Bopp (1791-1867) (BOPP, 2012) and Henry Steel Olcott Theosophical Movement (Olcott, 1900). Therefore, these ideas were further carried forward by the M.J Ranade (1842-1907) who propounded the idea of 'parted cousins' about the Indian and the Europeans, and Swami Dayananda whose conception of Vedic myth radically broke away with the Western liberalism or the British administrative structures (Saraswati, 2000). Dayananda envisioned Aryavarta (Tickell, 2005) to be the abode of Aryas from the dawn of creation. Furthermore, the cultural symbol of the Shivaji, the seventeenth century Maratha warrior, was deployed to rejuvenate Hindunness in Indian nationalism by Mahadeve Govind Ranade and his disciple Gopal Krishna Gokhale for moderate purpose, and by Balwantrao Ganjadhhar Tilak for reinvigorating militant nationalism. The Indian intellectuals also rediscovered and reinterpreted the cultural symbols of the Bharat Mata and the cult of Kali, the sacred geography, the conception of motherland, and the myth around the cow. They also introduced their own scriptures of Bhagvad Gita in parallel to Quran and the Bible from which Gokhale, Tilak and Gandhi derive inspiration and helped counteract Hindu disunity.

Concomitant to the Indian nationalism along the cultural lines, reminiscent of the early conquests and a subsequent amalgamation of the Indo-Aryan race culture which resulted in the rule of powerful dynasties (Pargola, 2015, p. 298), the latest and modern manifestation of Indian nationalism took place in 1885 in the institutionalized form of Indian National Congress (INC) (Ghose, 1975, p. 9), representative of all races, communities and religions, and opposing the Hindu and Muslim nationalism strands of communalism. With the advent of the British Raj, the caste-system rooted in the Aryan race culture gave way to social class system, which gave birth to politically conscious middle class in India (Chhibbar, 1968; Jodhka & Prakash, 2016; Joshi, 2010). The Charter Act of 1833 led to developments which compelled the middle class to mount rebellion of 1857 to seize their political and economic rights (Mittra, 2003, p. 109). As a result of which the legislation of India Council Act 1861 & 1891 set in motion a political competition between the various communities in the Indian landscape. Thus, this is how the communal nationalism made headway in India (Cook, 2016, p. 115). Meanwhile, the development of the Indian nationalism laid groundwork for the emergence of Hindu nationalism as the former carried within it the seeds of Hindu communalism.

The increased nationalist consciousness intensified the primordial attachment to Hindu culture and religion and reinforce the communal sentiments. The majority community in India are Hindus and thus, they desire to reassert the will and doctrine of the majority rule in India. The very demand of the Hindu majoritarian rule flagrantly disintegrates the core fabric of inclusive Indian civilization and sought to re-envision it as Hindu civilization. Hindu civilization builds Indian nation on primordial criteria and ethnic lines, ripping apart the ideational construct of Indian nationalism on the pattern of civic and territorial conceptualization. In short, Hindu nationalism turned out to be a strong antithesis of composite India nationalism and views all the other identities, ethnicities and religion as counter-narrative or challenging threat to its unifying cultural and political program for the development of the Hindu nation (Jha, 2014, p. 1). Furthermore, in the same way, the Muslim nation paid the opportunity-cost of the hailing rebirth or rejuvenating restoration of Hindu civilization where they were represented as villain responsible for corrupting influence. The Hindu civilization and nationalism was further refined and reifies by the core notions of Hindutva doctrine, which reason out the will of the Hindu majority. A Hindu is defined by three peculiar characteristics such as Rashtra, Jati, and Sanskriti (Kanungo, 2002, p. 109). Rashtra delineates a collective existence and one nation, Jati points towards a common race and Sanskriti symbolizes a collective civilizational culture. In this conception, the other identities are viewed as oppositional to the primordial construct of Hindu identity in the ideology of Hindutva (Afzal, 2014, p. 113).

2. Hindutva and Communalization of Muslim Identity

The Hindutva ideology or Hindu nationalist ideology was mainly systematized and chiefly codified by such figure as the Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966) and Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar (Clarke, 2002, p. 205). The Hindu nationalist community envisaged by Savarkar was built on the lines of common cultural attributes and historical experience, as opposed to religious consideration (Ahmed, 2021, p. 4). Hindutva ideology meant to protect purity and superiority of the Aryan race (Babur & Akhtar, 2021, p. 4). Before the emergence of Hindutva ideology by Savarkar, Alberuni apprised us that the Hindus used to describe foreigners, particularly the Muslims as "mleccha," which signified peculiarly the meanings of impurity and inferiority attached with the incoming foreigners and the outsiders (Babur & Akhtar, 2021, p. 5). Alberuni further made a note of the Indians he came across, saying that the local Indians considered their religion, nation and country to be superior, which he assessed as vain and haughty (Denise Cush, 2008).

They used the jargon "mleccha" to refer to the uncivilized and unintelligible communication and speech of foreign visitors and their unfamiliar behavior was also explained by the same term ("Mleccha "). The snobbish attitude has its roots in the Aryan race superiority and purity. Perhaps, the deployment of Hindutva by Savarkar might owe its existence to the same conceptualization (Parpola, 2015, p. 298). In his doctrine of Hindutva, Savarkar presented a strong defense to uphold the sanctity, purity and superiority of the Aryan race and its cultural values in the opposition of all foreign invaders – such as the Muslims and the colonizers like the Europeans and proselytizing Christians (Sharma, 2002). The Savarkar's seminal work, *Hindutva, Who is a Hindu?* (Sāvarakara, 1999) defined the Hindu by giving graphic description of his attributes such as territorial, political, nationalistic and ancestral features. (Pandey, 1991) According to Savarkar, the one who come up with the following standards is a Hindu: 1) It is necessary for a Hindu that he must have taken birth within Hindustan which ultimately led to uphold the legitimacy of his claim to the nation-space as his fatherland (Pitrabhoo), 2) He must have pure Hindu blood inherited by natural parents (Jati) 3) Being the inhabitant of a particular sacred geography, it is imperative for him to possess a shared culture or Sanskrit. Finally, the identity of Hindu remains incomplete without his Punyabhoo or holy land being perfectly aligned with the Pitrabhoo (fatherland). This is the most important component to become a Hindu. (Deshpande, 1995, p. 3222). This is how the Hindu identity emerges to be the exclusionary force for all the Muslims, Christian Jews and Parsis and other local body of converts. Savarkar maintained that the "true sons of the soil." (Talbot, 2010, p. 50). In order to shield himself and political consequences of such kind of a short-sighted doctrine of Hindutva, Savarkar carefully chose to incorporate Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists in his definition of a Hindu (Sharma, 2002, p. 22). Therefore, the Hindu nationalists claimed that the Hinduness is rooted in the soil as the holylands of the Hindus are in India. But, as the Muslims and Christians's holy lands are outside Indian, therefore, they do not belong here and are foreigners to India. Thus, the Indian future lies in the hands of Hindus who would form a majority Hindu nation (Jha, 2014, p. 1).

Furthermore, Golwalkar gave a racial twist to the Savarkar's ethnic Hindu nationalism in his seminal work of *"We, or Our Nationhood."* (Islam, 2006). He suggested the purging of non-Hindu minorities, more particularly the Muslims on the mode of Nazi Germany which carried out "purging" of the Semitic races (Desai, 2005). The fanatics Hindu like Savarkar and Golwalkar envisioned a Hindu Rashtra and propagandized the idea of Indian development lies in realization of Hindu Rashtra (Jaffrelot, 2003a). This kind of exclusionary thinking contested the nationhood in terms of geopolitical and religious demarcation of boundaries of the Indian state (Varshney, 1993). Furthermore, the Hindutva ideology does not advocate equality of citizenship. The vision of Hindu Rashtra is principally aimed at targeting the Muslims by branding them threatening other who have corrupted the ethos of the Vedic golden age, resulting in the challenging of the Muslim citizenship (Anderson & Jaffrelot, 2018). Since 1980s, fundamentalism has taken precedence in the Hindu communalism by the inexorable

cultural reassertion of the Hindutva ideology of Sangh Parivar (Lahiry, 2005). Later, in 1989 & 1991, the BJP with its rising emergence brought radical changes in the electoral dynamics to materialize the vision of Hindu Rashtra by expanding political geography (Sajjad, 2018). The Hindu nationalism achieved its peak when the BJP endorsed the erection of Hindu Temple at Ayodhya on the site of Babri mosque (Hatcher, 2020). The demolition of the Babri mosque in 1992, which heightened communal violence and resulted in the loss of about 2000 people, testified the fact that the intensely growing polarization have jeopardized the hollow claims of Indian secularism (Shahzad, Falki, & Bilal, 2021). In short, Hinduness found its expression in the Muslim "other" which is enemy, threatening or a villain to the Hindu nationalism (Kanungo, 2002). The Muslims have been painted as licentious whereas the Hindus were projected to be sexually controlled. The attributes of barbarism, and incivility were attached to the Muslim and Hindus were termed to be civilized and clean. Another dimension was that the Muslim always turned out to be violent, whereas the fight back of Hindus was also an act of self-defense (Talbot, 2010, p. 36).

3. The Emergence of BJP and Politics of Majoritarianism

Their policies are focused on making Indian a Hindu state. The partition and creation of Pakistan is viewed as the ultimate manifestation of the Muslim infidelity. The fabric of India's secular model began to be ruptured by political tensions in the 1980s (近藤光博, 2000). In order to swing back to power, the Congress party's leader and former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stoked religious sentiments to whip up his support base. Her son Rajive, after her assassination by a Sikh body guard did not pull away his support for the Hindus for political purposes. Kanchan Chandra stated in Foreign Affairs that the continued support and embrace of Hindu majoritarianism spanning over decades created conducive environment for the rise of more extreme ideology of the BJP (Chacko, 2013). The Bhartiya Janata Part was founded in 1980 and its origin could be located to the political wing of its right-wing paramilitary sidekick Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) (Sahoo, 2020).

Established in 1925, RSS meant to bring a revolution to overthrow the British colonial rule but keeping the Muslims at an arms' length as its founder Kashav Baliram Hedgewar who was a doctor from the city of Nagpur, termed the Muslims 'anti-national' and 'yavana snakes.' (WERLEMAN, 2021). The man who assassinated Mahatama Gandhi in 1948 was a disciple of Hedgewar for extending cooperation towards the Muslims. The adherents of RSS were massively inspired by the fascist movements in Europe, particularly the Nazi Party of Germany, which was reasons for admiration and praise for its doctrine of racial and ethnic purity (Mitta, 2014). In words of Srenik Rao, the famous film maker of India, in the Hindu nationalist camp, the desire to identify themselves with the fascist movements of Italy and Hitler's Nazism is strong because these movements and ideologies provide reasons to commit acts of genocide and hatred towards Muslim. After the assumption of power in 1998 elections, the BJP did not pursue its radical goals in a bid to save coalition from disintegration. But, the BJP could hold on to power until 2004 and the Congress party came back to power. The BJP's radical goals were comprised of the revocation of the special status of Kashmir, a disputed Muslim-majority area; building of Ayodhya Temple where Babri Mosque was demolished; and introducing a civil code which would be uniform and unified so that all citizens must have cherished the identical personal laws (Vanaik & Brass, 2012).

4. Hinduization of Polity

The adherents of Hindutva ideology aims at restructuring and overhauling society in social, cultural and political domains. On top of that, they are driven to bring Hinduise all spheres of Indian politics, society and culture (Sahoo, 2020). The proliferation of Hindu spiritual imagery is one of the mechanisms by which they are aiming at Hinduisation of the social, cultural and political space of India. Robinson argued that the internet is hub of packages spirituality, and being bombarded on us by television industry and plethora of newspapers. Television channels compete with each other capitalize on the spirituality of their

viewers. For instance, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are popular religious serials and dramas in Indian society. Similarly, the drama serial on Krishna, on Ganesh or on Hanuman supply spiritual sustenance to their viewers. One can easily find the flashy headings and titles such as Sacred Space, Sacred Chants, Inner light, Religion and Religious values, in numerous newspapers columns (Robinson, 2004, pp. 200-201).

With an avowed ambition to bring Hinduism to every household, a systematic and well-orchestrated campaign is underway to indoctrinate the masses with cultural imagery and spirituality of Hinduism. An extended and comprehensively designed cobweb of Hindu nationalist organization has been spread across India under the umbrella of Sangh Parivar. Hatched by RSS, its ideological offshoot Shiv Sena, and political offshoot – the BJP, Akil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, Bajrang Dal, Vishva Hindu Parishad are among the few organization which are in a calculated way carrying forward the mission of Hinduisation of India. In view of some scholars, this amounts to cultural intervention in terms of transformation: the reasons why communalism is still rooted in social consciousness could be traced to the cultural intervention of these organizations spread over a large area in civil society.

Earlier, the Sangh Parivar has been actively pursuing the Hindutva inspired communalist agenda of Hinduisation. Panikar's observation goes like: In the course of last many days, a vast network of social and cultural organizations has been carrying forward Hindu communalism and it has been consciously flourished since long. Almost all fields of intellectuals and cultural arena of activities – including history, archaeology, music, or media and education, are covered by these organizations and their count is difficult to maintain as they are spread over an indefinite space across India... Almost 20,000 educational institutes, plethora of publishing organizations in all kinds of languages, organizations to pen down the history of every district, dramatic clubs and literary societies, environmentalists, women's associations, committees to look after temple rebuilding and so on come under this network. In order to realize the communal agenda of Savarkar to bring Hinduisation of India into reality, the systematic and well planned program is operation spearheaded by the Sangh Parivar, whose mission is to "further the process of taming all heterogeneous and plural forms to fit into the unitary construction of a religiously synthesized India while defining the core of this disciplined pan-Indian identity in Hindu (specifically Brahmanic) terms." (Robinson, 2004, p. 200).

In line with Savarkar's soft corner for non-Hindu minorities other than the Muslims, about whom he has no room for tolerance and assimilation in Indian society, the Sangh Parivar is operating on two fronts. In the first place, the Sangh Parivar is seeking to attract those minorities which in accordance with Savarkar's assessment are in close resemblance and comparatively willing to adopt Hindu culture. They attempt to assimilate Hindu nationalism in order to join them. In the second place, the support garnered by these committees is being utilized to counter the impact of the Muslims (Sen, 1993). The socio-cultural activism, motivated and inspired by the Hindutva's doctrinal guide post is meant to lure away the minorities, goading them to give up their differences with regard to culture and religion. They urged them to join the ranks of all-powerful Indian identity heavily tainted with Hindu overtones (Upadhyay & Robinson, 2012). The adherents of the Hindutva doctrine and the majoritarian principle led by Savarkar are committed to bring homogenization of the Indian society in terms of Hindu tradition by elimination its cultural diversity rooted in races, religions and cultures in order to achieve the cherished goals of primordial superiority and spiritual purity of the Aryan race and revival of Vedic culture (Varshney). It is pertinent to remind here that the aims and objectives of Hindutva inspired systematic campaign is not limited to racism. Rather, it is more about domination of Hindu race by invoking the doctrine of majority, thereby enticing Dalits, Adivasis, and Christians to go for assimilation of their identity within the broader and historically significant universal culture of the majority shaped

by the Vedic golden age. To this end, they are imparting education and training to them at the grass roots level in accordance with their religio-cultural space within the fold of Hinduism. In the same way to act upon this agenda, the RSS has launched full scale network of village-level units of educational institutes that created enabling environment for teachers who were well versed in the ideological training to Hindutva to bring life in conformity with its dictates and pass on instruction to minority communities about the ideal of their nation, Hindu cultural heritage and civilization. According to rough estimate, at least 2.4 million pupils and 80, 000 teachers are busy in these Vidya Baharti educational institutes administered and controlled by RSS-VHP joint venture of coalition. Nevertheless, the intent to Hinduise the minorities under the pretext of renewal and revival of Hindu purity and superiority of Hindu civilization through cultural indoctrination is actually projecting and promoting hatred, bigotry and intolerance in the Indian society under the pretext of promotion of knowledge and awareness about Hindu culture and ways of life.

Furthermore, these Hinduisation campaign and program are actually meant to isolate and marginalize the Muslims, by extending tentacles to non-Hindu and non-Islamic minorities in India. Dionne Bunsha stated quoting Gujarat: Dalits were shown paths to achieve ranks and acceptance in the upper class by practicing and harboring hatred towards the Muslims. As it is evident that the Dalits are suppressed community themselves in India and in the prima facie they are part of Hindu community. So, the attempt to entice them is meant to enhance the numbers of Hindus; thought unimportant to Savarkar, the question of caste is still relevant in India and the religious, political and economic community mostly Brahmin elite wield real power in their hands (Jaffrelot, 2010). Therefore, it could be safely concluded that the Dalits are being baited to isolate and marginalize the Muslim community in their project of homogenization under the Hindutva (Jaffrelot, 2003b)

According to the Concerned Citizens Tribunal report (Spodek, 2010) regarding Gujarat riots, about Rs. 3,000-4,000 / month were paid to the Dalits by the Bajrang Dal to become part of this project to marginalize and isolate the Muslims by obtaining training in the indoctrination centers against Muslims and received training about arms and weapons (Venkat, 2021). During public functions, the activists used to distribute and demonstrate sharp daggers and the swords which were stylized on the pattern of trishuls, the symbols of Lord Shiva. In private meetings, the purpose of the trishuls were briefed to them in a more explicit ways that they would be used against the Muslims, in case a riot or disorder broke out (Clarke, 2002). If the Muslims are killed by you, then the organization would be there to escape you from punishment and penal consequences. The organization would take care of your families, in case something happened to you in the course of the mission. If during the riots, you were arrested or apprehended, you would be required to produce your Bajrang Dal identity card and you will be let free by the police (Waikar, 2018). To this end, Prime Minister Modi introduced the Other Backward Classes¹ of which he himself has membership, along with Dalits when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat. The goal of this OBC category is to make anti-Muslim campaigns run free of troubles and problems. More particularly, once Babri mosque is destroyed and demolished, the BJP extended invitation to OBC –such as the Dalits –to recognize their service for provision of muscle power in terms of awarding them with benefits, as well as Hindu Brahminic civil society. Their role was aimed at abusing the Muslims, and Modi exhorted them to play it effectively. Apart from social and cultural activism, another methodology on the basis of which Hindutva project of homogenization works is characterized by the effort where the government institution were mobilized to promote the teachings of Hinduism in all sections of the nation, aimed at forging unitary consciousness in the heart of

¹ The Indian Government employed Other Backward Class (OBC) as a collective term for classification of castes. These castes are educationally or socially disadvantaged. That kind of categorization is one amongst many official classifications pertaining to the population of India, along with General Class, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCs and STs).

nation. The intent was to restore the essentialist identity that dissolved during the era of colonialism, conversion and rebellion (Dalits' and Adivasis's self-assertion).

The Hindutva construct of identity card become the essentialized identity which was designed to pursue the principle of majoritarian rule by the descendants of the Aryan race. Thus, we see the state machinery and especially the incumbent government in India have tasked their government agencies to operate and chalk out policies that target anti-Muslim provocation and instigation. For instance, in reaction to reservation upper caste riots in opposition to Dalits, the riots of 1985 and 1986 were orchestrated and twisted by BJP and VHP leading figures, and Congress leaders as well, to inflame anti-Muslim riots. In order to swell their vote bank embracing Hindu community and win their political mileage, these leaders went to any extent for instance by inciting innocent people to violence against the Muslims using Hindutva doctrine. The politicians not only take advantage of the situation to serve their petty political vested agenda but also exert their influence to drive demonization spree against Muslims as is amply evident that the Ahmedabad brutal killing was a gruesome demonstration of violence beyond paid murderers and demagogues. At certain point, demonization was necessary. Because of sustained propaganda campaign and active incitement, the majority of Hindus in Ahmedabad were indoctrinated to harbor hatred against the Muslims (Spodek, 2010). Since the BJP's return to power as a Hindu majority party in the parliament, the government has adopted openly anti-Muslim policies and programs. These are comprised of Ghar Wapsi² project aimed at converting the adherents of Islam, Christianity and other religions to Hinduism as envisioned by RSS and VHP. Chief Mohan Bagawat, the RSS prominent figure has directed Hindus to reaffirm their commitment for the successful implementation of "Ghar Wapsi" of those who had gone astray and adopted other religions.

5. Conclusion

In addition to the aforementioned plans and agendas of Hinduisation of the incumbent BJP government under Modi, a number of legislations and initiatives were introduced to realize these cherished goals. The controversial legislation regarding the Citizen Amendment Act was passed by the Indian parliament in December 2019 (Sen, 1993). The Act meant for the fast-tracking of the process to obtain citizenship for Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian who are coming from the neighboring states of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan (Opinion, 2016,). In words of critics, the discriminatory law has first time included the category of religion in the criteria for the citizenship and deliberately excluded the Muslims to target them (Maizland, 2020). However, the Modi government defends its legislation, saying the Act meant to protect "persecuted religious minorities" from the aforementioned countries. Furthermore, the completion of a National Register of Citizens (NRC) was also promised in the 2019 election manifesto of the BJP (Maizland, 2020). The original purpose of the NRC, established in 1950, was to determine the status of residents in the Assam whether they are Indian citizens or they have migrated from the neighboring country Bangladesh. With the updating of the Assam's NRC in 2019, nearly two million people have been excluded in the process. Thus, if the same was done across the Indian mainland nationwide, the residents in India would be bound to produce documents for their citizenship. Consequently, critics frightfully assessed that the NRC would lead to exclusion of many Muslim, rendering them stateless. The primary reasons for the exclusion would be lacking of required documents and are not entitled in the latest legislation of the CAA to take benefit of the fast-tracking citizenship (Watch, 2021).³ The Muslim Rohingya refugees have also been deported by the BJP government who migrated to India to escape persecution in Myanmar. Not stopping here, Narendra Modi has delivered a severe blow to the political standing of what was known as India's only state where the Muslim are in majority: The state of Jammu and Kashmir. The BJP government unilaterally revoked the special status of the illegally occupied

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Jammu and Kashmir by splitting the state into two territories. The government imposed curfew, by cutting off all communication of the region, by suspending internet and mobile service for indefinite time. Moreover, tens of thousands of individuals were sent into detention or put under house arrest. The detainees included leading political figures.

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