Modi’s Urge for Hindu State: A Historical Overview of Identity Doctrine

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Abstract

Akhant Bharat with only Hindus are the main agenda of BJP led government which formed its policies -posed as religious extremist Hindu political party- having goals of ethnic cleansing and make its land pure from non-Hindus mainly Muslims. The Hindutva doctrine followed and advocated by BJP actually “sought to define Indian culture in terms of Hindu values”. Which was opposite to Nehru’s approach and critical to secular policies but it incepted, grow and now reach a momentum where orthodox rightest Modi passed citizenship Act in which religion has been used as criteria for citizenship besides its constitutional commitment to secularism. Modi led BJP’s policies disturbs the social fabric of India as what they exactly want that non Hindu believers can only live at sufferance of Hindutva which is actually against Hindu Teachings. This study will highlight Modi Government policies that indicate his
urge for Hindu state and will trace the connection between Modi’s practical approach for Hindutva with Hitler’s far-right wing working for the supremacy of his race and its influence on South Asia.

Keywords: Modi, Kashmir, Hindu State, Hitler, doctrine.

Introduction

The BJP sponsored Hindutwa doctrine had its foot prints back pre partition formed Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and traces its roots from the war of independence 1857, where Muslims whole heartedly fought against British Colonial designs to protect their land from outsiders. On the other hand, Hindus looking at visible defeat, rather to show loyalty towards Muslims who provided the maximum religious facilities even more then Muslims\(^1\) shifted its sentiments towards British as it was just a matter of change of master for them. From there to onward, rightest Hindus start objecting Muslim affiliated matters and started Urdu-Hindi Controversy 1867 where they demanded to replace Urdu manuscript with Devnagri script. The Hindu reaction towards the partition of Bengal 1905 besides knowing that it was purely an administrative decision actually unveiled the Hindu mentality which British themselves experienced in the form of Swadeshi Movement, revert their decision and announced the annulment of partition decision in 1911. The Hindu attitude was as well surprising for British as they consider them as allies in India. Due to Hindu ethno-religious
discrimination, Muslims established All India Muslim League with the aim to protect the rights of the Muslims from Hindu domination primarily in political domain which guarantees the survival of Muslims in all other societal domains. Congress-working for Hindu domination - conceived Muslim League as religious threat to Hindu’s and rather than to assure Muslims reservations started political mobilization on religious grounds mainly against Muslims but along hidden agenda to show off man power to pressurize British and made them conscious to not take any decisive decision like the partition of Bengal which was against Hindu interests.

In result, a religious extremist organization “Hindu Mahasbha” formed in 1921 by Vinayak Damodar Sarvarker (revolutionary of pre-independence era----anti-thesis of Gandhian non-violence) with prime objective of Hindu based domination and provided platform to those who opposed the main leadership of Congress having secular outlook and vision regarding India. Initially Mahasba worked for uplifting the status of Hindu educationally and supported Arya Smaj’s movements of “Suddhi” and “Sanghtan” which aimed to convert the Muslims and Christians to Hinduism first by preaching then by force to pure India from non-Hindus.

Vinayak Damodar Sarvarker was anti-Government, vocally supported independence from British even with violence. He mainly militarized the Freedom Movement of India and provided base to politically use or misuse the religion to terminate the British Imperialism and purify India by converting non-Hindus to
Hinduism. He was sent behind bars by British Government where he wrote “Hindutwa: Who is Hindu?” in which he coined new term Hindutva and explain the difference between Hinduism and Hindutwa.

**Framework of the Study**

Modi’s approach towards purify India from Non-Hindus which primarily targeted Muslims goes parallel with Nazist approach to purify Europe from Jews where Aryans were considered and called as the supreme native race to dominate. Whereas in India, Modi declared Muslims alien to this land, term them as invaders or grabbers and practically took steps to purify India by social degradation, Mass Muslim massacre and mainly via constitutional means where Hindutva reign remain supreme. The National Register of citizen (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019(CAA) acts are the manifestations of his thinking approach of purifying India.

**Research Objective**

The underline objective of the study is to Analyze the Modi’s efforts for Hindu State and trace the connection between Modi’s practical approach for Hindutva with Hitler’s far-right wing working for the supremacy of his race and its influence on South Asia.
Statement of the Problem

Modi’s Hindu centric approach where he wants to turn the secular status of India to religious state where only pure race of Hindus have all rights to rule and minorities are supposed to be treated as the majority wants to treat them. Muslims are the main target and hurdle of Modi’s urge of a Hindu state. Numerous modes of oppression have been used to suppress the Muslim minority of India but the latest constitutional amendments of article 370 and 35(a) related to Kashmir and NRC-CAA acts shock the Indian minority where their existence and citizenship has been questioned.

Methodology

The Study is intricate in terms of Religion and Politics, so Qualitative method will explore the real picture of the concerning area based on the explanatory and exploratory goals of the study. The qualitative data will be analyzed by using observational and thematic approach of the study by using secondary source of data.

Political history of Bhartiya Janta Party

Hindu Mahasba with Sarvarker leadership provided base to other religious organizations with the aim of Hindutva and in result Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bharti Jan Sangh (political group of RSS) and later its successor Bharti Janta Party (BJP). These fundamental organizations followed different patterns and constitutions but
shared same ideology regarding rebuilding of India upon Hindu Culture. “RSS played a parenting role in politics and divided its parivar (family of organizations) as cultural RSS, religious VHP and political BJP on the basis of nature of work” [2]. However due to secular outlook, in formative years of India secularism got strengthen due to political elite.

Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) was officially formed in 1980 under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani who were former members of Bhartiya Jana Sasngh (BJS) which was functioned as political wing of RSS. BJS was established in 1951 to counter Indian National Congress (INC) due to its secularist approach and “Policy of appeasement” towards Muslims.

INC may have this approach and appeasement policy for three purposes

- To gain maximum support of minorities for electoral purposes
- To compliment secularism as state approach and justified their stance on Partition of India.
- Easy to draft the constitution in multi ethnic and religiously diversified India.

BJS failed to achieve political recognition in 1951 because of popular secular democracy of INC but in 1977 elections, BJS stood victorious with coalition of 3 like-minded political organizations after emergency was called off in India. This coalition shared same
regionalist and socialist approach. Later, this coalition was called as Janta Party (JP). JP secured a landslide victory and a coalition government was formed under Moraji Desai but failed to sustain because of increasing political chaos and domestic factionalism and collapsed in 1979. Then, Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) was formed in 1980 with the member of JP having Vajpayee as its first President. BJP torn the one party domination, come up with most vocal and long term opposition while introducing Hindutva ideology in Indian politics. In 1989 elections, BJP able to secure 86/543 seats in Lower House and jumped with 20% by having 120 seats in 1991 electorates and with vote share and consolidate power in 4 states, secure 161 seats in 1996 elections and emerged as largest single party of India but its office tenure was not long. Vajpayee again elected as the Prime Minister of new Government made under National Democratic Alliance (NDA) by securing 182 seats out of total 294 NDA seats and remained in power till 2004. However, along with their Hindutva ideology, BJP pursue with economic liberalization policy and related multi sided policies which highlighted their status as national party besides Babri Mosque incident 1992.

Due to India’s deep rooted secular politics, there was uncertainty prevailed among people especially after Modi’s rule as Chief Minister in Gujrat where a massive Muslim massacre happened and he remained banned to visit US by its government on humanitarian grounds may led to poor results in 2004 elections. Congress regained its lost power and able to secure 145 seats -whereas, BJP
graph fell to 137 seats only- but not enough to form Government. So coalition was formed named United Progressive Alliance (UPA) by Congress and Sonia Gandhi refused for premiership and recommended Manmohan Singh might be to neutralize Sikh sentiments after Operation Blue star as violence against Minority led BJP to lose membership in Lok Sabha. In 2009 elections, again Congress secured majority with 206 seats and Manmohan Singh again formed a coalition Government. BJP fell from 137 in 2004 to 116 in 2009 elections.

In 2014 elections, BJP campaigned mainly on economic loopholes of Congress and presented Modi’s economic model of Gujrat productive for rest of India. He was soon chosen as candidate of premiership. His vigorous campaign mainly highlighted his economic policies and its outcomes in Gujrat and portray himself as contrast to elite dominated Congress. He focused on Hindu-Nationalism and advertises his strong ties with RSS. The five week long election process ended up in Mid-May resulting in humiliating downfall of Congress and extraordinary uplift of BJP. The BJP secured 282 seats while NDA added with 54 seats which accumulate 336 and Modi took the oath on 26, May 2014.

**Policies of Modi**

It was after thirty years that single party got majority votes in India after 1984. Modi mainly hold his office on two points first his economic policies in Gujrat second his nationalist ideology to revive
Hindutva in India. So the religious and moderate too voted him for respective purposes. Modi promised during election campaign to “reform, perform and transform.” Generally the mixture of following factors dominated to form governments in multiple states usually

- Religion and Politics
- State and Religion
- Military government and Religion
- State and Military

But in India, the case was not alike; the clear majority of BJP was amalgamation of Government, Religion and Economy. Where religion played a dominant role in forming Government back in 2002 in Gujrat and economic policies were manipulated on patterns of neoliberalism mainly to support Modi’s business backers interests to create the sense of economic nationalism which culminated in form of “religious nationalism” in India and advocate “Mera Bharat Mahan” (My great India).

The roots of this tri-disciplined government traced after Cold War when BJP government opened up the economy. Apparently both are different domains to hold in politics and are really hard to analyze them when they are entwined. Neoliberalism has characteristics of de-territorialize capital, disrupt communitarian affiliations and weakens the foundation of nation-state, took it away from Government and transfer it to global entities. Whereas, nationalism
supports nation-state, creates the sense of association enrooted with identity and belonging or “how the collective imagining of a nation as an entity manufactures a sense belonging and affiliation”\(^3\).

The Pathan Kot attack, Uri attack, Burhan wani death in Kashmir, boycott of SAARC submitted which was going to held in Pakistan in 2016, Pulwama Attack, Surgical Strikes and in result shooting down of two Indian Air Force plans by Pakistan Air Force were some major incidents happened during First Tenure of Modi Government that influenced the Pakistan-India relations and created the tensions of nuclear war.

In short span of second tenure, the demographic engineering in Kashmir to settle the Hindu community, the Babri Masjid demolition verdict against opening of Kartarpur Corridor by Pakistan on same day solidified the Hindutva doctrine of Modi which is further cemented with recent citizenship act of NRC and CAA.

**BJP and Kashmir**

BJP was established in 1980 and presented its disagreement with Article 370 in its first election manifesto 1984. BJP reiterated its concerns over hate campaigns by pro-Pakistani state elements and promise of revoking Article 370. Hindu evacuation from the Kashmir Valley in the year 1991 BJP manifesto expressed its concern and promised “to weed out Pakistani elements from the valley” and repeated its stance over article 370. The 1996 election
manifesto document mentioned Kashmir 16 times and presented a comprehensive vision related to Kashmir such as setting up three regional councils Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir, when BJP-led NDA government in the leadership of A. B. Vajpayee collapsed in 13 days. Again BJP-led NDA government in 1998 failed in a year due to lack of majority but the stance over Kashmir remained same. In 1999’s short manifesto Kashmir was missing but party actively put forth Kashmir since 2004 in its agenda. BJP mentioned Kashmir in its all manifestos such as in 2009 election manifesto mentioned it 12 times. “The abrogation of article 370 including tackling terrorism, the resettling of Kashmiri Pundits and planning to carryout developmental activities in Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir regions etc.” are part of that manifestos. This manifesto mentioned Article 370 as a psychological barrier which hindered the inclusion of Kashmiri’s in national mainstream. In 2014 and 2019 manifestos, Kashmir was mentioned 6 times and commitment to revoke article 370 was reiterated in it.

In recent victory of BJP led government the article 370 was scrapped but with the help of article 370 clause 3 which empowers the president to decide the limit of Jurisdiction of the Indian Constitution over the state. The latest move of government gives Indian constitution full applicability in Jammu and Kashmir. Government used Presidential Order to overtake previous Presidential Orders related to 370 inclusion in Indian Constitution
as previously only defense, communication and foreign relations department were under jurisdiction of Indian Constitution.  

**BJP & CAB**

Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB, 2019) will ruin “the idea of India” because post-independence secular character of India is under threat of abolition. This Citizenship Amendment Bill is the latest part of “Politics of Belonging” in India and Muslims are on influence and no explanation of ruling privilege is an absurdity. Keeping in view the BJP nationalist policies and manifestos, CAB is not a surprise as well as the Exclusion of Muslims from the beneficiaries of this Act. The intentions of Modi’s nationalistic government are evident from the fact that only Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan’s religious refugees (non-Muslims—Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists) are beneficiaries of the policies and other neighbors such as China, Myanmar and Sri Lanka are not in the list of beneficiaries and especially the cut off 2014 has special reasons. Modi’s government is eroding the social identity of Muslim community since 2014 and this bill attempted to impact political identity of Muslims. Because the previous citizenship provisions in Indian Constitution (Article 5-11) do not discriminate on the basis of religion but CAB do. This introduction of religion in defining nationality is paving way for “Theocratization of India” and NRC (National Register for Citizens) for India is aimed at discrimination of Muslim Community in India. This act compete Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s partition vision. But Hindutva’s homogenized state vision
is not restricted to the Muslims as atheists, seculars, liberals and modernists are common victims.\textsuperscript{6}

**Narendra Modi: The Hitler of South Asia?**

“Patriotism is when the love of your own people comes first. Nationalism, when hate for other people than your own comes first” – Charles de Gaulle.

In previous century Adolf Hitler taken the world to the war and world witnessed Jews Holocaust and Narendra Modi (current Prime Minister of India) has adopted same path promoted nationalism with the idea of Hindu Supremacy and world again witnessed Muslim killing in Gujrat (India) in 2002 as he was Chief Minister of Gujrat. Distortion of facts and use of nationalism to manipulate their people for personal achievements remains the main drive of both the leaders. This drive helped both the leaders to promote hate sentiments against the minorities of their countries such as Hitler German nation hated Jews at that time and presently Hindu nation (knows a secular liberal nation) hate Muslims in the rule of Modi. Modi has also followed the idea of Hitler influencing youth through education and started alterations in textbooks especially in the field of History through glorifying Hinduisation and vilifying Muslim rulers of the Sub-continent. Same was the case of when officials of the Nazi were supposed to assure the circulation of desired ideas through securing high positions. Hindu nationalism share common
roots with the idea of White supremacy going back to the 19th century idea of the ‘Aryan Race’.

Over the last few years world is witnessing the rise of an ultranationalist right-wing feature in politics across United States and Europe evident from the extremist far-right ideology of Trump era getting support from India through a loosely knit alliance of populists, white nationalists, white supremacists and neo-Nazi. Both are independent on each other and that populist coalition has turned to India find historic justification for their xenophobic, racist and conflict-ridden views. This pressure group has used Orientalism to project their fantasies of racially pure society with the help of white nationalist orientalists through rendering Indian culture which received a warm welcome from Indian Hindu Fundamentalists. Apparently this bewildering association between Western alt-right and Hindu far-right has a long history back to the one of the ideological roots of Nazism “Construction of Aryan Race Identity” in the early 20th century which is very supportive academic argument to explain the term “Narendra Modi: The Hitler of South Asia”.

19th century theory is embraced by the German nationalists in the 1930s that Sanskrit civilization has been developed by the original Sanskrit speakers of India and Europeans and to build their white supremacist racist ideology they claims a common Indo-European/Aryan ancestor (a “pure” race). Maximiani Portas (French-Greek thinker and mysticist) was a spiritual icon of Nazism
who travelled to India in the early 1930s “discovered the source of the Aryan culture” and become Savitri Devi through converting into Hinduism. She promoted Hindu’s superiority especially of privileged cast and integrated herself to Hindu nationalist movement by promoting theories in support of Hindu Nationalism. A Hindu nationalist Asit Krishna Mukherji who see shared aims between the youth movement of Hindu nationalism (Rashtra Sevak Sangh--RSS) and Hitler’s youth goals and praised Nazism/ Third Riech’s commitment to ethno-nationalism married to Savitri Devi in 1940s. Throughout World War II, Devi worked as spy for the federation forces in India and used British-Indian passport to leave country after defeat of Nazi Germany. She became denier of zealous holocaust and was founding member of “World Union of National Socialists — a composite of neo-Nazi and far-right organization from around the world”. Hindu nationalists in India is highly influenced by Devi’s ideas and her work such as her still widely read and highly regarded 1939 booklet “A warning to Hindus--in which she cautions Indian nationalists to embrace Hindu identity and guard it from non-Aryan influences such as Islam and Christianity”. She is an alt-right icon amongst right-wing ideologues in West and her theories have also been rediscovered by such groups recently.

Western far-right groups and Hindu nationalists have still connection which neither limited to the old myth of Aryan race nor to Devi’s teaching as today they share common goal of eroding secular characteristic of their respective states to counter common
enemy “Muslim minorities”. They often coordinate and support each other. On top of above two shared reasons their protests, aggravations and destructive actions are also much alike such as Diwali celebrations at Babri Masjid through pulling of huge demonstration by having a helicopter drop off individuals dressed as Ram and Sita similar to the rally of far-right white supremacist neo-Nazi’s that shook the Charlottesville (city in Virginia) with chants “You will not replace us” through street march in 2017.

Modi’s tilt towards America is clearly evident to the academia and the other fact is that Hitler was also inspired from American Racism. Hitler in his “Mein Kampf” praised America “as the one state that has made progress toward a primarily racial conception of citizenship, by excluding certain races from naturalization”.7

Both Modi and Hitler have good oratory skills which made their parties dependent on them. BJP's paramilitary wing RSS helped country during 1962 Sino-India war such as the Schutzstaffel (paramilitary wing of Nazi party) helped German soldiers in WWII. The Akhand Bharat and Lebensraum (greater Germany) are the similar shared concepts as their aim includes territories from neighboring countries. Their distrust and hatred for minorities and making a new breed through genetic experiments and cross breeding has also shared features of both characters and their parties. Changes in history books according to their interests and viewpoints are another common characteristic.
There are various explanations regarding their similarities such as their childhood, upbringing, struggle to be the leaders of the state, their religious views and hate towards minorities but there are number of differences amongst two presented by various writers such as one is a democratic leader and the other was dictator. Adolf Hitler chose to be a full-fledged Soldier and later turned a politician while Modi chose to be a half-hearted ‘Sanyasi’-ascetic and eased his way into politics. Hitler hated Jews and Arabs but Modi has special love for Jews and Arabs. Hitler considered himself as purest and finest Aryan. Here, in India, many Hindi Heartland Brahmins take pride in calling themselves as true Aryan descendants. However, Modi can’t claim to be an Aryan. Hitler was a born artist and he knows how to present himself and his ideas to the world.

Another important debate related to the Modi’s character is his attempt to scrap the special status of Indian Occupied Kashmir which was decade long constitutional and state recognized status. This attempt is part of the extremist right-wing dream of Hindu State presented by the V. D. Savarkar (while sitting in an Andamans prison cell) to deal minorities such as Adlof Hitler came up with the solution to Jewish question. The ideas came up on the same time and same circumstances as Savarkar and Hitler both were in prison for political violence. Muslims and Christians are unsolicited in Savarkar’s Hindu dome as were the Jews in the Hitler’s Third Reich.
Concluding Remarks

There is worse situation in case of India as compare to Third Reich which was a temporary phenomenon of one-man show got over in 20 years but “Modi is the product of an ideology that has taken roots over the past century” and definitely his policies will have left its impact for centuries. These hindutva policies questioned the very basic objective of Indian National Congress which assures the protection of Muslims at the time of partition and rationalize the concept of two-nation theory of Muslims of sub-continent India. The policies of Modi turned the secular outlook of India towards religious orthodox nation where wellbeing of minorities is no longer interest of State. It unfolds the reality where being citizens of India Minorities specially Muslims needs to justify their loyalty towards State.
References

Exemption in taxation, din-e-Elahi and many other related laws are the example.


