

Rise of Hindu Nationalism: Impact of Domestic Environment on International Relations

Javed Hassan Hashmi *

Waseem Ishaque †

Abstract

This article briefly examines the rise of Hindu nationalism, its role in the formulation of the domestic environment and assesses its impact on the international relations of India. Since the ascendance of Modi to power, the involvement of RSS in Indian politics and governmental affairs has increased manifold. Curbs on civil society, NGOs, and media freedom have been noticed by independent observers. Hate speech and the enactment of laws to marginalize space for minorities are common happenings. This article has incorporated an integrative review technique while working under an overall design of qualitative research methodology. It is observed that India's erstwhile secular credentials are endangered due to the assault of the Hindutva wave on freedom of expression, civil society, and minorities. The dominance of the BJP and the autocratic behaviour of Modi have affected the domestic environment of India thus impacting India's international relations, especially with her neighbours.

• Heading

- [Introduction](#)
- [Literature Review](#)
- [Methodology](#)
- [Hindu Nationalism and Media](#)
- [Hindu Nationalism and Civil Society](#)
- [Hindu Nationalism and Minorities](#)
- [Conclusion](#)
- [References](#)

Key Words: Hindu Nationalism, Domestic Environment, Foreign Policy, International Relations

Introduction

After the partition in 1947, India successfully established democracy in the country under the Indian National Congress led by Gandhi and Nehru. Congress was famous for its commitment to secularism, pluralism, civil liberties for media and individuals, and religious freedom. ([Pardesi & Oetken, 2008](#)). Congress introduced, modified, and led the democratic processes and structure for the country until the rise of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), whose central philosophy spins around Hindutva. In 2019, BJP won the election as it won the 2014 election, and

Narendra Modi became Prime Minister of the largest democracy in the world for the second consecutive term. BJP has outperformed the Indian National Congress, the mainstream political party of India, which used to explicitly conform to and advocate for secularism and liberal democracy in India.

Conversely, BJP is associated with the ethno-religious party Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), opposes the pluralistic ideology, and believes in promoting Hindu Nationalism ([Jaffreot & Verniers, 2020](#)). However, different

* Ph.D. Scholar, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Email: javedhashmi6@gmail.com

† Director, Area Studies China, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan.

organizations and scholars have defined Hindutva or Hindu Nationalism differently. It is usually perceived as a perspective or ideology which advocates that the Hindu majority must be made culturally, religiously, politically, constitutionally, legally, and administratively central to Indian politics and civil society ([Bhatt, 2007](#)). This sort of Hindu Nationalism is different, which was endorsed by Nehru and Gandhi, emphasizing harmony, pluralism, and convergence of identities in society and culture. The rise of Hindu Nationalism and recent events cannot be comprehended without having familiarity with the historical and social factors that shaped Indian society. Historically, Indian National Congress remained the most dominant political party in Indian politics and won the majority of seats in parliament from 1947-2000, excluding the terms 1977-79 and 1996-99, and specifically in 2014 and 2019 when BJP won consecutive elections. The BJP made its place in mainstream politics through increasing tensions between Hindus and Muslims. The rise of the BJP, an extremist political party, is not mere abrupt and coincidental. Instead, it was implicitly existing at the structural and agency level and gradually influenced the ordinary Hindus about their superiority over all other ethnicities, especially religious identities. The dominance of an extremist politico-ethnic and religious party, the BJP, affects domestic and regional political dynamics. Indeed, it also indicates the political trajectory that has started to systematically influence the country's political system and institutions ([Jaffrelot & Verniers, 2020](#)). The overwhelming support of most Hindus to the extremist BJP questions the nature of secularism or political pluralism in India and what ramifications it may bring for the democratic institutions as well as democracy in India? It is also pertinent to understand the impact of such majoritarian domestic make-up on the conduct of international relations. Hence, this article endeavours to examine and comprehend the rise of Hindu Nationalism and how has it transformed the democratic environment in India with the aim to analyze its impact on international relations. The article comprises three parts: Part I explains the evolution of Hindu Nationalism for developing a broader understanding of the issue,

Part II explores the impact of Hindu Nationalism on Indian democracy in the form of media censorship, curtailing space for civil society, and suppressing the minorities, particularly Muslims whereas Part III analysis the impact of democratic environment on international relation.

Literature Review

Christophe Jaffrelot's critical study, "The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India," (Jaffrelot, C. 1998) examines the development of the phenomenon of Hindu Nationalism right up until the 1990s. He believes that the 'construction' of Hindu Nationalism as an ideology commenced between 1870 and 1920; however, its crystallization as a doctrine began after 1920. The same author also wrote an article titled "Hindu Nationalism: Strategic Syncretism in Ideology Building" (Jaffrelot, 1993) in which he explains the emergence and evolution of Hinduism as an ideology. The same writer, in his recent book, "[Modi's India](#): Hindu nationalism and the rise of ethnic democracy," contends that a structural transformation is taking place in today's India where the world's largest democracy is changing into 'an authoritarian Hindu Raj'. He argues that the time period following the rise of Modi in 2014 can be characterized as an era of populism which is leading to the creation of an 'ethnic democracy' consequently accentuating the slide of erstwhile democracy towards authoritarianism. (Jaffrelot, 2022)

John Zavos, in his book, "The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India," ([Zavos, 2000](#)) states that "Hindu Nationalism has become a familiar feature of modern Indian politics. During the final two decades of the twentieth century, it has established itself as a central idiom in the high politics of state power in the Republic, associated with the rise of certain parties and the projection of certain visions of political development. It also comes with various vibrant political and cultural associations: Hindutva, the saffron wave, the Sangh Parivar, majoritarianism, and perhaps more specifically pejorative, communalism and fundamentalism". The author has endeavoured to contextualize the phenomenon of Hindu Nationalism while tracing

its origins and the formation of various groups and parties ascribed to the motives of Hindutva. He has tried to differentiate between Nationalism and communalism.

The book, titled "Majoritarian State: How Hindu Nationalism is Changing India," ([Chatterji et.al 2019](#)) edited by Angana P. Chatterji, Thomas Blom [Hansen](#), and Christophe Jaffrelot is a compilation of beneficial essays which take stock of the situation in Hindu India that is dominated by the Hindutva proponent Modi. This book has tried to picture how the majoritarian ideology of Modi's Hindu nationalist government functions and reshapes the relations between adapted state institutions and the public. The authors in this book have ventured to trace the political and social ascendance of the BJP and other Hindu nationalist organizations while exploring the underlying shift that is taking place between the Indian state and its peoples/ communities. They argue that the current dispensation under Modi has created a unique effect by combining populism, Nationalism, authoritarianism, and majoritarianism.

Thomas Blom [Hansen](#), in his book, "The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India," (Thomas, 1999) discusses the movement of Hindu Nationalism from the periphery to the core. Duly incorporating academic work on Hindutva, the book examines political discourse, forms of governance, and political strategies that have evolved over time, bringing the "Hindu Nation" into a position it is in now. The writer, through extensive fieldwork, shows the acceptability of the discourse of Hindu Nationalism in neighbourhoods and villages.

The book "Indian Nationalism: Essential Writings"(Habib, 2019) is edited by S. Irfan Habib and comprises views expressed by various leading personalities on Nationalism. The editor, in his introduction, espouses Indian Nationalism being inclusive and soft as against the popular belief currently peddled by ultra-nationalists of BJP/RSS. The editor argues that the form of Nationalism ascribed to RSS or BJP is not the Nationalism most prominent Indian leaders talked about. He equates it with communalism that thrives on hate for others as according to him

"Communalism is not self-sustaining and requires a clearly defined enemy at all times."

In his article "A Critical Study of 'Hindu Nationalism' in India,"([Siddiqui, 2016](#)) Kalim Siddiqui studies the rise of Hindu organizations in India since the 1990s. RSS, BJP, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal, and Shiv Senna are the most prominent among these organizations. They all work under the influence of Hindutva ideology and are considered anti-minority in their stance. They use a religious minority (such as Muslims) as an 'enemy' to unite Hindus and consolidate their support in the Hindu base. This article highlights that RSS had assumed relative importance since May 2014, when BJP came to power in India. Senior BJP leadership and ministers support RSS openly and collaborate with right-wing RSS who have used divisive tactics. They target Muslims now and then and have ramped up the cultural cum religious issues like cow slaughtering and the building of the Ram temple.

In his article "Is Empowered Hindu Nationalism Transforming India"? (Ganguly, 2020) Sumit Ganguly has opined that since it came to power, Modi's BJP, the flag bearer of Hindu Nationalism, has taken many actions to transform the country under their ideology. Four key steps, such as an attempt to implement the National Register of Citizens, the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act, revocation of articles 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution, and blatant attacks on the country's leading universities, have indeed shaken the secular foundations of the Indian state. Most of these actions are aimed against minorities, in particular denying Muslims equal citizenship status in India, and reflect the BJP's ideological commitments and its wish to modify the country's constitution fundamentally. With its commanding parliamentary majority, a weak and dispirited opposition, and a seemingly ambivalent Supreme Court, the BJP is acting as a veritable juggernaut. The writer concludes the article by stating that such a drastic reshaping of India's constitutional order could have sweeping consequences for the state's ability to maintain social order, given the country's inherent ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity.

Ian Hall, in his book, “Modi and The Reinvention of Indian Foreign Policy” (Hall, 2019) suggests that Modi’s foreign policy between 2014 and 2019 has exhibited that Modi as the leader wants to affect change in an erstwhile ideological paradigm that he inherited in order to lend more energy and pragmatism to such an important function of statecraft. Modi desires to be known as a ‘transformational’ leader; for which he wants to reinvent the foreign policy of the country “by replacing an older vision with a new approach grounded not in pragmatism or even realism, but in Hindu nationalist ideology”. However, the extreme form of ideology being practised by Modi and his government not only hurt India’s soft power image but also retarded the country’s ability to open up economically as well dented her hard power during the stand-off with China at Doklam in mid-2017 and against Pakistan in 2019.

Sreeram S. Chaulia in his article, titled “BJP, India’s Foreign Policy and the “Realist Alternative” to the Nehruvian Tradition” ([Chaulia, 2002](#)) writes that it is important to understand the connection between domestic political aspects and external policy formulation. He describes the Nehruvian school of thought, its evolution, and its impact on almost all the political dispensations prior to Modi’s BJP. His article also discusses BJP’s ideology and its approach to the country’s foreign policy. Then writer puts forth empirical evidence suggesting how the “Nehruvian consensus” was overturned by the BJP regime; he has given three specific concerns which are guiding Modi’s foreign policy formulation namely, “nuclear proliferation, relations with Pakistan, and ties with the USA.”

Atul Mishra and Jason Miklian in their report titled “The Evolving Domestic Drivers of Indian Foreign Policy” ([Mishra & Miklian, 2016](#)) which was written for the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center have explored the implications of India’s domestic environment upon her international relations’ behaviour. The report talks about new domestic determinants that have influenced the foreign policy decision-making of the BJP government since 2014. It also highlights noteworthy factors in the domestic environment which affects India’s

ability to conduct its international relations in the desired manner. The report sums up its analysis by mentioning Modi’s foreign policy aspersions and challenges that it faces on the domestic front and its likely impact on the policy formulations in international relations.

Methodology

This article incorporates qualitative research methodology as it is the most suitable method for developing a comprehensive view of a particular phenomenon. The integrative review technique is considered appropriate in this form of research for the collection of data as well as its analysis for understanding the phenomena of the rise of Hindu Nationalism and its consequences on the institution of democracy in India. The use of qualitative data assists in an in-depth analysis of the issue. The secondary data in the shape of journal articles, books, and reports have been gathered and critically viewed/analyzed. Thematic analysis has been done for ascertaining the factual context to independent (rise of Hindu Nationalism) as well as dependent variables (Democracy in India) for arriving at pertinent conclusions.

Evolution of Hindutva or Hindu Nationalism

The idea of Hindu Nationalism can be traced to the movement launched by anti-colonial revolutionary VD Savarkar in the early 20th century under colonial rule. In the early 1920s, Savarkar invented the term "Hindutva" and declared that it is different from Hinduism. Savarkar elaborated that Hindu means racially, ethnically, and religiously belonging to the native holy land. He concluded that the native and pure Indians are Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs. He excluded the Muslims and Christians. ([Savarkar, 2016](#)). In the 1930s, *Hindutva* was also influenced by Fascism and Nazism, and in the 1950s, a Hindu nationalist murdered Gandhi ([Anderson & Longkumer, 2018](#)). In the late 1970s, under the rule of Indra Gandhi, there was a mass political agitation by the Hindu nationalists. The *Hindutva* ideology was formalized in the early 1980s with the establishment of the BJP as a political party with

the support of RSS, VHP, and numerous other small political or religious groups ([Palshikar, 2016](#)). In 1992, a large gathering of Hindu extremists and nationalists turned violent and demolished the Babri Mosque, which further caused the Hindu-Muslim riots ([Mehta, 2015](#)). In the 1990s, the BJP, RSS, and VHP successfully appeared on the political scene in the Indian political system. In the 1996 elections, BJP won the majority seats and formed the Government under the premiership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee ([Bhatt, 2007](#)). In 2001, BJP appointed Narendra Modi, famous for his commitment to the *Hindutva* ideology, as the Chief Minister for Gujarat. In 2002 an attack on a train of Hindu pilgrims was carried out by some extremists that caused wide-scale riots between Hindus and Muslims. The pogrom led to the indiscriminate killings of thousands of innocent Muslims including women and children (Ayub, 2016). The response of the BJP and Modi government was not effective and appropriate to stop the riots, and even national and international media declared these riots as a cleansing of Muslims ([Jaffrelot, 2015](#)). Based on such riots, the United States, in 2005 under the Religious Freedom Act, denied a diplomatic visa to Modi. However, BJP showed their confidence and full support to Modi and declared his name as the candidate for Prime Minister in 2013. In 2014, BJP won a majority, and Modi became the Prime Minister of India, the largest democracy in the world. The US has substantial interests in South Asia and the Indian Ocean, and to achieve those interests, the US granted him a visa and welcomed and invited him to Whitehouse under the administration of Obama ([O'Boyle, 2018](#)).

BJP intended to install the extremist elements protecting their ideology across the country. For this reason, in 2017, another extremist political figure, Yogi Adityanath, was named for the Chief ministership for the most populous state, Uttar Pradesh. Adityanath is famous for running campaigns against minorities, including Muslims and Christians, and is involved in the enforced conversions of the religion of minorities ([Singh, 2017](#)). Even in the 2022 elections in the state of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath won the elections for BJP again as was done during the 2019 general election by

Modi. These humiliating defeats have politically marginalized the Congress, indicating that the BJP has systematically captured India's entire domestic politics.

Hindu Nationalism and Democratic Environment of India

India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was mindful of this danger and stated that "Communalism of the majority is far more dangerous than communalism of the minority." ([Chowdhury, P. \(2020\)](#)). Sardar Patel in 1949 declared that "India is a secular country and termed *Hindu Raj* as insane." He further stated that the RSS movement was being handled appropriately and the government would not tolerate the forceful imposition of *Hindu Raj* ([Vallabhbhai Patel: Where Does Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Belong? - The Economic Times, n.d.](#)). With the social and political evolution, the RSS, the VHP, the BJP developed their consensus on the *Hindutva* ideology, which according to them is considered the only way forward for the success and prosperity of the society and state. Nonetheless, now BJP is in power and imposing its ideology on society through administrative, legal, constitutional, and other political means and strategies. The process of imposing *Hindutva* ideology is impacting Indian society and politics. The domestic environment is built around the majoritarian and authoritarian ideology of *Hindutva*. The impact of such an environment on international relations in India cannot be overestimated.

The focus of this article is on analyzing the impact of the domestic environment on international relations. democracy which is further assessed and examined with its three significant indicators under the BJP regime: the role of press and media, curtailing space of civil society, and the status of minorities.

Hindu Nationalism and Media

The media has effectively played a role in promoting and strengthening India's democratic norms and values. However, due to the rise of *Hindutva*, the country comprising 1.4 billion people has lost the 'freedom of expression' and

has tumbled from ‘democracy to electoral autocracy’.([Mazhar, 2021](#)).

After forming the Government, BJP systematically attempted to co-opt media against the anti-Hindutva narrative or pluralism and civil liberties. Modi's regime also made efforts to contain media through different legal or administrative means. It has become difficult to publish political articles in the newspapers. It is noteworthy that “self-censorship” has become the norm by ‘news channels’ for avoiding reporting controversial matters. The Editors Guild of India started in September 2014 that "By delaying the establishment of a media interface in the Prime Minister's Office, in restricting access to ministers and bureaucrats in offices and in reducing the flow of information at home and abroad, the government in its early days seems to be on a path that runs counter to the norms of democratic discourse and accountability." Similarly, the Times of India published a story on the academic qualification of Smriti Irani and the increase in assets of Amit Shah, the BJP leader who filed his paper for Rajya Sabha nomination. But within an hour of story publication, it was taken down from the website without giving any justification or explanation ([Stories on Amit Shah's Assets, Smriti Irani's "Degree" Vanish From TOI, DNA, n.d.](#)) Prime Minister Modi has an army of trolls who propagate and advocate for the *Hindutva* ideology among the masses. If someone disagrees, including the journalists, they threaten and abuse them. Women journalists face more attacks and rape threats on social media by trolls. Even it is suspected that Gauri Lankesh, a female newspaper editor, was murdered by the Hindu nationalists ([Under Modi, India's Press Is Not So Free Anymore - The New York Times, n.d.](#)). Since Modi came into Government, for the first time in the history of Indian Media, the media houses, including print and electronic media, deliberately practised self-censorship. Electronic media dropped the interviews and ignored the political activities of the opposition, while print and social media removed the published stories from the websites (How India's News Media Have Changed since 2014: Greater Self-Censorship, Dogged Digital Resistance, n.d.) The suppression of media

became more explicit with time as two TV Channels, Asia net News and Media One, were banned for 48 hours for allegedly airing reports against the central Government on the riots in Delhi (Sheikh, n.d.) World Press Freedom Index released a report in 2018, Reporters Without Borders which revealed that India ranked 138th nation in the world out of 180 countries measured regarding press freedom which is even lower than Afghanistan and Zimbabwe. It is gradually going down as according to the report of 2017, India was at 136th position. The fall is continuous, and the 2020 report on World Press Freedom shares that India went down and ranked at 142nd. It is ironic that in 2002, India occupied the 80th position out of 139 countries Gopalakrishnan, R. (2018.). The BJP has used and exploited the media effectively to come to power but now cannot digest even the fair criticism. The civil society of India raised their voices against the suppression and exploitation of media, but the extremist Hindus have also targeted the civil society through legal and administrative measures.

Hindu Nationalism and Civil Society

The civil society serves as a bridge between the Government and the people. On one side, it promotes awareness among the masses about their legal, constitutional, social, economic, and political rights. On the other hand, it puts pressure on the Government for transparent and good governance. Civil society is also facing huge pressure and constraints under the Modi regime. A Sweden-based V-Dem Institute([Weale, 1999](#)) revealed in Democracy Report - 2020 that the Indian Civil Society is facing immense pressure under the Hindu nationalist regime led by Modi. The first step towards Autocratic rule is suppressing and curtailing civil society (India's Democratic Processes “on a Path of Steep Decline”: Report, n.d.). NGOs are an essential part of civil society, which is also under severe pressure; for instance, about 170 NGOs working in India wrote a letter to Prime Minister Modi and shared their reservations about the role of the ministers in creating an environment of intimidation and state coercion (Modi's Systematic Clampdown on Indian Civil Society Must Stop – The Diplomat,

n.d.). NGOs used to advocate for equal human rights. The Modi government has created an atmosphere where if NGOs raise their voices against the suppression and discrimination against the minorities, they are portrayed as a threat to national security. According to the Government, foreign NGO funding was reduced by about 60 % from 2014 to 2017 under the Modi regime. The Government did not give new NOCs to some 4,800 NGOs to operate in 2017. The liberal democracy in India has been swiftly turning into an illiberal democracy, and traditional liberal norms and values are discouraged and opposed to supporting and promoting *Hindutva* ideology.

Hindu Nationalism and Minorities

India's democratic environment has transformed from a secular democracy to an ethnic/authoritarian democracy over time. This change in Indian politics is intriguing and influences almost every aspect of society. Winning two consecutive terms by BJP, the extremist political party indicates that most Hindus are not comfortable with the minorities, particularly Muslims. The Prime Minister of India, also known as a populist leader, has formalized and legitimized the extremist and militant groups in India to contain the minorities. Under the leadership of Modi, the BJP government has introduced several laws in recent years to marginalize religious minorities. For example, The Citizenship Amendment Act, passed by parliament on 11 December 2019, explains that refugees who flee to India of every south Asian faith are eligible except for Islam, particularly in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh. It is a clear legal and political position of the BJP to subjugate Muslims, the most significant religious minority. It is also a debate among the Hindu extremist groups that to truly implement the ideology of *Hindutva*, Islam, or Muslims must be erased from the country (How Hindu Supremacists Are Tearing India Apart | India | The Guardian, n.d.). Aljazeera TV reported about two conferences held in Northern India where speakers urged participants to attack minorities leading to the genocide of the

Muslims (Hate Speech and Online Abuse: India's Growing Extremism Problem | Media | Al Jazeera, n.d.). Indian Supreme Court asked Uttarakhand state to investigate the matter, however, government authorities took little interest as most of the speakers belonged to the ruling BJP and RSS (India's Top Court Intervenes in Hate Speeches against Muslims | News | Al Jazeera, n.d.). The gravity of the situation can be gauged by the statement made in a briefing to US Congress by Gregory Stanton, "the founder, and director of Genocide Watch", that "there were early 'signs and processes' of genocide in the Indian state of Assam and Indian-administered Kashmir."

Despite having a significant commitment to religious freedom, the US ignored the prevailing phenomenon of Hindu extremism in India, which has become a substantial threat to the minorities, including Christians and Muslims. It seems that even the international community has more concerned with the economic success of the Modi regime rather than the religious oppression and repression in India (The Violent Toll of Hindu Nationalism in India | The New Yorker, n.d.)

Implications for Conduct of International Relations

It will be relevant to analyze the conduct of international relations from a realists' perspective. It may be seen that the attitude displayed by BJP and RSS towards minorities and other state institutions reflect shades of realism theory. In order to carry out an objective assessment, the theory of "Neoclassical Realism" has been selected which would help in developing a holistic understanding of the rise of Hindu Nationalism and its impact on the conduct of Indian international relations. Neoclassical realism, a term coined by Gideon [Rose \(1998\)](#) considers both the domestic as well as the systemic factors that contribute towards the development of state relations. As such, neoclassical realism is one of the few approaches that entertains domestic state politics, human nature, and state-society interaction as a basis of analysis ([Meibauer et al, 2021](#)).

The emphasis on the role of human nature in neoclassical realism (also in classical realism) pairs well with the case of India's extremist attitude towards Pakistan, especially in the last few years under the regime of the BJP and Narendra Modi. The forceful promotion of the Hindu Nationalist agenda, regional and ethnic political narrative, followed by the scrapping of Article 370 of the Constitution of India that ended Kashmir's special status is all the state and human factors that are the focus of classical realism. The patriotic fever generated by Modi's electoral manifesto to abrogate Article 370 and revoke the special status of the Muslim-majority based Kashmir, to the successful achievement of this historical mandate; Modi's anti-Muslim and subsequent anti-Pakistani rhetoric formed the collective identity and school of thought of the Indian nation; the Indian nation that has deep prejudice in its roots against Muslims since centuries. Thus, advocating the realist narrative of self-interest, power struggle, aggression, and the fact that state actions and decisions are rooted in human nature. (Robin, 2020).

The domestic environment is one of the important variables that is discussed by neoclassical realists. Considering India's case, the rise of the Hindutva narrative led to the domination and forced imposition of Indian political, economic and more importantly religious narratives and ideologies upon the non-Hindu population especially Muslims. Moreover, in the case of the staged Pulwama attack and Indian airstrike, Article 370's abrogation and marginalisation of the Kashmiri people (all a result of the anti-Muslim narrative) also resonates with India's desire to gain absolute power in the region by tussling with Pakistan. Thus, Prime Minister Modi's political stance on 'national security' corresponds strongly with Hobbes's fundamentals of human nature that contribute to a power struggle initiated by the egotistical, power-hungry and selfish motives of man - the leader and face of the Indian nation in this case. It also resonates with Morgenthau's principles of political realism, particularly those pertaining to the (a) autonomy of the political sphere within which India's national interests affiliated with the occupation of Kashmir depart from existing standards of morality and (b) the

different concepts of interest held by the Indian state that is premised on the 'ethnic cleansing of Muslims in this disputed territory (c) showing an aggressive outtake towards Pakistan in the regional power matrix. (Farooq & Javaid, 2020).

Additionally, the propagation of a staunch Hindutva narrative, advocating Hindu supremacy and politics of extremism has erupted violent activities all over the Indian atmosphere. Dominantly, the politically induced seizure of what is now Indian-Occupied Kashmir has been marked by violent clashes between the local citizens of Kashmir and the radically pushed Indian military troops. This is not only limited to Kashmir as this violent ideology is a poison that is mindfully injected into Indian society. As a result, extremist activities against all other minorities such as Sikhs and Christians are also witnessed. This fanatic sidelining of the non-Hindu inhabitants of the once secular state of India is a shame to its democracy. These internal state fiascos are forming a larger state narrative from regional and international relations perspectives as well. The violence and brutal situation within the boundaries directly correspond with the classical realist notion that the violent nature of individuals is responsible for states becoming violent. ([Moolakkattu, 2009](#)). In that, chaotic opinions and beliefs held by leaders - such as those reflected in Modi's mandate for political hegemony and power through the suppression of non-Hindu and especially Muslim population - can transform nations (negatively or positively). This is primarily through engaging in decision-making and policies that are chaotic. Under the political realist thought these violent notions within the state ultimately define the state behaviours outside their boundaries such as affecting the conduct of international relations.

Conclusion

Hindutva ideology is proudly and explicitly owned by the right-wing Hindu nationalist parties like RSS, BJP, and VHP. In the beginning, under colonial rule, the term meant and emphasized building a purely Hindu nation in India. Minorities, especially Muslims were framed as an enemy by proponents of this hateful ideology which has sought inspiration from

Nazism in Germany. Initially, it had a posture of a politico-cultural movement but later increased its scope by focusing on religion in a bid to create a Hindu identity.

The democratic environment of a country is shaped by freedom of expression, vigorous and vibrant civil society, and equal treatment of minorities based on identities are essential variables. Under the Modi regime, the media is under pressure, even practising self-censorship and avoiding being outspoken against authoritarian or undemocratic practices. Similarly, the role of civil society, which works as a watchdog and continuously interacts and monitors the performance of state institutions in the context of the constitution and human rights perspective, has significantly shrunk as the BJP Government has also taken civil society as a challenge and took aggressive administrative and political actions to curb the voices of civil

society. The authoritative domestic attitude of the ruling BJP is causing aspersion in the conduct of international relations.

The discriminatory behavioural patterns against the Muslims, the most significant minority, have also become very common in the BJP Government, which is contrary to Gandhi-Nehru's views on the significance of pluralism. Since the independence of India, it has never experienced such structural and systematic political and social crises. The *Hindutva* ideology demands that all must fall in line majoritarian vision. The opposition parties have been marginalized and entirely restricted from emerging on the political scene. The obtaining environment has diminished the roles of state institutions and hence they cannot contribute to policy formulations at the international level which affects the state's relations with its neighbours as well as other countries.

References

- Anderson, E., & Longkumer, A. (2018). 'Neo-Hindutva': evolving forms, spaces, and expressions of Hindu nationalism. *Contemporary South Asia*, 26(4), 371–377. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2018.1548576>
- Ayyub, R. (2016). *Gujarat Files: Anatomy of a cover up*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Bhatt, C. (2007). Democracy and Hindu nationalism. *Democratization*, 11(4), 133–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1351034042000234567>
- Chatterji, A. P., Hansen, T. B., & Jaffrelot, C. (Eds.). (2019). *Majoritarian state: How Hindu nationalism is changing India*. Oxford University Press.
- Chaulia, S. S. (2002). BJP, India's Foreign Policy and the "Realist Alternative" to the Nehruvian Tradition. *International Politics*, 39(2), 215–234. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ip.8897388>
- Chowdhury, P. (2020, January 21). *Communalism of the majority*. Deccan Herald. <https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/comment/communalism-of-the-majority-796552.html>
- Farooq, M., & Javaid, U. (2020). Suspension of Article 370: Assessment of Modis Kashmir Masterstroke under Hindutva Ideology. *Global Political Review*, V(I), 1–8. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2020\(v-i\).01](https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2020(v-i).01)
- Ganguly, S. (2020). Is Empowered Hindu Nationalism Transforming India? *Current History*, 119(816), 123–127. <https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2020.119.816.123>
- Gopalakrishnan, R. (2018, April 27). *Indian journalists say they are intimidated, ostracised if they criticise Modi and the BJP*. U.S. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-india-politics-media-analysis-idUKKBN1HX1EO>
- Habib, I. (2019). Book review: S. Irfan Habib, ed., *Indian Nationalism: The Essential Writings and Inquilab: Bhagat Singh on Religion and Revolution*: 6(1), 97–98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2348448919834810>
- Hall, I. (2019). *Modi and the reinvention of Indian foreign policy*. Policy Press.
- Hansen, T. (1999). *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400823055>
- Hate speech and online abuse: India's growing extremism problem | Media | Al Jazeera. (n.d.). 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/the-listening-post/2022/1/8/hate-speech-and-online-abuse-indias-growing-extremism-problem>
- How India's news media have changed since 2014: Greater self-censorship, dogged digital resistance. (n.d.). <https://scroll.in/article/929461/greater-self-censorship-dogged-digital-resistance-how-indias-news-media-have-changed-since-2014>
- India's Democratic Processes "on a Path of Steep Decline": Report. (n.d.). <https://thewire.in/rights/india-democracy-shrinking-media-v-dem-report>
- India's top court intervenes in hate speeches against Muslims | News | Al Jazeera. (n.d.). <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/12/indias-top-court-to-investigate-calls-for-genocide-of-muslims>
- Jaffrelot, C. (1252). *Hindu Nationalism: Strategic Syncretism in Ideology Building*. Economic and Political Weekly. http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=mOXWgr53A5kC&pg=PA389&dq=Hindu+Nationalism+Strategic+Syncretism&hl=&cd=1&source=gs_api
- Jaffrelot, C. (1998). *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (0ed.). Columbia University Press.

- Jaffrelot, C. (2015). Narendra Modi and the Power of Television in Gujarat: *16*(4), 346–353.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476415575499>
- Jaffrelot, C. (2022). Modi's India: Hindu nationalism and the rise of ethnic democracy. *60*(1), 114–117.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14662043.2021.2018969>
- Jaffrelot, C., & Verniers, G. (2020). The BJP's 2019 election campaign: not business as usual. *28*(2), 155–177.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2020.1765985>
- Mazhar, M. S. (2021). India Turns an Electoral Autocracy. *36*(2), 233–244.
- Mehta, D. (2015). The Ayodhya dispute: The absent mosque, state of emergency and the jural deity: *20*(4), 397–414.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183515607093>
- Meibauer, G., Desmaele, L., Onea, T., Kitchen, N., Foulon, M., Reichwein, A., & Sterling-Folker, J. (2021). Rethinking Neoclassical Realism at Theory's End. *International Studies Review*, *23*(1), 268–295.
- Mishra, A., & Miklian, J. (2016). The evolving domestic drivers of Indian foreign policy.
- Moolakkattu, J. S. (2009). Robert W. Cox and critical theory of international relations. *International Studies*, *46*(4), 439–456.
- O'Boyle, J. (2018). Twitter diplomacy between India and the United States: Agenda-building analysis of tweets during presidential state visits: *15*(1), 121–134.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1742766518818859>
- Palshikar, S. (2016). The BJP and Hindu Nationalism: Centrist Politics and Majoritarian Impulses. *38*(4), 719–735.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1089460>
- Pardesi, M. S., & Oetken, J. L. (2008). Secularism, Democracy, and Hindu Nationalism in India. *4*(1), 23–40.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14799850701783148>
- Rathbun, B. (2008). A rose by any other name: Neoclassical realism as the logical and necessary extension of structural realism. *Security Studies*, *17*(2), 294–321.
- Rose, G. (1998). Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy. *World politics*, *51*(1), 144–172.
- Savarkar, V. D. (2016). *Essentials of Hindutva*.
- Sheikh, (n.d). Banonchannels. Scribd.
<https://www.scribd.com/document/450501216/BANONCHANNELS>
- Siddiqui, K. (2016). A Critical Study of “Hindu Nationalism” in India. *Journal of Business & Economic Policy*, *3*(2), 9–28.
www.jbepnet.com
- Singh, R. (2017, March 20). *Why Narendra Modi and Amit Shah picked Yogi Adityanath as Uttar Pradesh CM*. The Economic Times.
<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/newspolitics-and-nation/why-narendra-modi-and-amit-shah-picked-yogi-adityanath-as-uttar-pradesh-cm/articleshow/57722848.cms?from=mdr>
- Stories on Amit Shah's Assets, Smriti Irani's “Degree” Vanish From TOI, DNA. (n.d.).
<https://thewire.in/media/amit-shah-assets-smriti-irani-degrees-toi-et-outlook>
- Under Modi, India's Press Is Not So Free Anymore - The New York Times. (n.d.).
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/02/world/asia/modi-india-press-media.html>
- Vallabhbhai Patel: Where does Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel belong? - The Economic Times. (n.d.).
<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/opinion/et-commentary/where-does-sardar-vallabhbhai-patel-belong/articleshow/25287443.cms>
- Weale, A. (1999). Varieties of Democracy. *Democracy*, 19–39.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-27291-4_2
- Zavos, J. (2000). The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India. 245.
<https://books.google.com/books?id=72jXAAAAMAAJ&pgis=1>