

BJP and secularism in India: A state in identity crisis

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Abstract

The motive behind the creation of India was to have a land where all the people with different religions, different castes can live together. The founders of India said that no matter you are Hindu, Muslim, or Sikhs, we all are Indian, and we have been living together for centuries so after independence we can live together as well. That is why they were against the creation of Pakistan (an independent Muslim country) they were in favor of one united India Where people of all religions can live peacefully in harmony. Even after the creation of Pakistan, India was considered as the top secular state but since the BJP has come in power their motive has now been changed, they thought that India is only for Hindus. The current prime minister of India Narendra Modi is a lifelong member of RSS and he is having a fascist mindset. Rise of fascist organizations such as RSS in government ranks is proof that India is no more a secular state. RSS is the same organization whose member assassinated Gandhi, who was a symbol of India's secularism, and a person who assassinated Gandhi, the RSS members considered him as a hero. The fascist government (BJP) was involved in demolishing Babri Mosque. In Punjab, the Indian military attacked the Golden temple known as Operation Blue Star to kill religious Sikh leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. When Modi was the CM of Gujrat he had killed more than two thousand civilians there. Recently, BJP has passed two Bills: the first one is the abrogation of article 370 and the second is the amendment in the Citizenship bill. So, India which was once considered as the top secular state is no longer secular and is ruled by a leader of fascist mindset. Whose ideology is Hindu Rashtra which means that India only belongs to Hindus.

Key Words: *Harmony, Secular, fascist, RSS, BJP, Demolishing*

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Introduction

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was founded in 1980 by the Hindu nationalists. .BJP was formed on religious and communal feelings as it draws inspiration from Hinduism. In its first two decades, the party's major holds were in north India's Hindi speaking regions because this party supported turning Hindi into the national language of India. BJP is basically the successor of The Bharatiya Jana Sangh which was also following the ideology of Hindu Nationalism or Hindutva. Bharatiya Jana Sangh was formed in 1951 and dissolved in 1977. After that, Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) was formed. BJP is also considered as a political wing of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) which I shall describe below. Here, I just introduced RSS and its rise under BJP. The RSS was founded in 1925 and considered a fascist organization. The rise of RSS started from the day when BJP was founded. Historian Ramachandra Guha writes that "the factional wars within the Janata government, its period in power had seen a rise in support for the RSS, marked by a wave of communal violence in the early 1980s. Despite this, the BJP under Vajpayee initially took a more moderate approach to Hindutva, to gain a wider appeal. This strategy was unsuccessful, as the BJP won only two Lok Sabha seats in the elections of 1984" (Ramchandra 2007, 263-264). The ideology of Mahatma Gandhi was to create a state where all the people with different religions, different castes can live together. The founders of India said that no matter you are Hindu, Muslim, or Sikhs, we all are Indian and we have been living together for centuries so after independence we can live together as well. That is why they were against the creation of Pakistan (an independent Muslim country) they were in favor of one united India Where people of all religions can live peacefully in harmony. As Mahatma Gandhi said "If I were a dictator, religion and state would be separate. I swear by my religion. I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The state has nothing to do with it. The state would look after our Secular Welfare, health, communications, foreign relations, currency, and so on, but not your or my religion, that is everybody's personal concern." Even after the creation of Pakistan, India was considered as the top secular state but since the BJP and Narendra Modi have come in power their motive has now been changed, they thought that India is only for Hindus. Rise of RSS is proof that India is no more a secular state. RSS is the same organization whose member Nathuram Godse assassinated Mohandas Gandhi who was a symbol of India's secularism. India is facing so many separation movements. In Punjab, the Indian military attacked a golden temple known as Operation Blue Star to kill religious Sikh leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. After that Sikh separatist movement got ignited because they were not feeling Secure in India as Sikhs and this movement is known as the Khalistan movement in which Sikhs demanded a separate country and that movement is still going on (Singh, 2004, 332).

Methodology

Methodologically this article is based on the constructivism theoretical framework and technique of content analysis was used to develop theme based on the secondary data. The articles based on the criteria of keywords were searched and downloaded for review. Initially 287 articles were found relevant based on key words. However, at the later stage, based on the reviewing of the abstract, methodology, research question and objective 18 articles were selected for the review and development of the themes.

Theoretical framework

Constructivism is the claim that significant aspects of IR are historically and socially constructed, rather than inevitable consequences of human nature or other essential characteristics of world politics (Jackson and Nexon, 2002). Constructivism denies the theory of neo-realism and neo-liberalism. Neo-realism states that there is an anarchy and due to this anarchy states go for maximization of power whereas the neo-liberalism accepts that there is anarchy, but states can cooperate, and anarchy can be reduced by this cooperation. But Social constructivism states that there is neither anarchy nor cooperation, the reality is what you make of it. Constructivism states that the Ideas, Beliefs, norms and values, action, interaction, and perception build the construct and shape into reality. According to Alexander Wendt "that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature" (Wendt, 1999, 1). So, According to Social constructivist, that perception, Ideas and norms are matter. So, the perception and ideology of the founders of India were that the Muslims and India lived together for centuries and had common culture so they can live together, no matter what their religion, religion is for their personal affair. For the state, all the citizens are equal and should be treated equally, Religion doesn't matter for the state. And even in the constitution of India the articles 25 to 28 all about secularism the articles 25 says all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion subject to public order, morality and health." The article 26 says that all denominations can manage their own affairs in matters of religion (Constitution of India, n.d.). But the ruling party of the India, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and current Prime Minister of India Minister Narendra Modi has different ideas, norms and perception are different he constructs that India belongs to Hindus. According to him, Muslims don't belong to here, they just came from different parts of the world and ruled here and after them, the British ruled here. Hindus are always being oppressed. Around 182 Million Muslims are living in India and Modi and his party is fearing from them that they would rule this country again, Modi constructs that thing and he is oppressing Muslims since he was the CM of Gujrat. He has a Fascist mindset whose ideology is that Hinduism is superior to any other religion and follows the ideology of Hindutva. So, as social constructivism says there is no objective reality when leaders say something- that occurs, and someone construct social reality by saying In pursuit of the above mentioned assumptions of social constructivism the subsequent analysis revolves around one main thesis that the India is no more secular under BJP, and India is in an identity crisis.

BJP is considered as a political wing of RSS, Comparative analysis of Modi and Hitler

As I mentioned above that how the Indian ruling party BJP has linked with RSS and how the ideology of BJP similar with RSS Narendra Modi is a lifelong member of RSS and is described as a Hindu nationalist by media, scholars and himself, he is a controversial figure both within India and internationally His administration has been severely criticized since 2002 Gujarat violence and now he is the prime minister of the for the 2nd time and he did much terrorism activates in India which I would explain in detail. Here, I would share a few statements of BJP leaders and compare the Ideology of Modi with Adolf Hitler that How Modi is following Hitler. BJP member

Nanda Kumar said "Secularism is a western, semitic concept. It came into existence in the West. It should not be used in the constitution of India" In the campaign of General elections 2019, the BJP leader Ranjeet Bahadur Srivastava said that "Vote for BJP if you want to destroy Muslims" he furthermore said that 'in the past five years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made attempts to break the morals of the Muslims vote for the PM Modi if you want to destroy the breed of Muslims.' He also said that 'after elections, the party will bring machines from china to shave thousands of Muslims and later will force them to adopt the Hindu religion" This was the same ideology of Adolf Hitler whose Nazi party killed thousands of Jews in Germany. Because he thought that Jews will dominate Germany. Hitler's hatred of the Jews stemmed from his belief in the concept of racial superiority. He believed that the Nordic/Germanic people were the master race, better than all the other races, and the only ones that deserved to live and procreate. In line with his view, he created a racial hierarchy placing the Germanic races on top and Jews, Romani, Africans at the bottom. He sometimes referred to them as outsiders and parasites. Hitler himself in his biography "Mein Kompf" stated that at one point in his life he was against antisemitism. His hatred of Jews was directly related to his hatred of social democracy. He believed that the Jews were the leaders of social democracy and were spreading anti- national beliefs in the Germans. This is the reason why he supported Zionism. He believed that the Jews were outsiders and as such should not remain in Europe (Hitler, 1925). Similarly in India, as I mentioned above that Modi thinks that Muslims doesn't belong to India and he thinks that they will dominate India and he is killing Muslims, the only reason Modi isn't at that high level of Fascism where Hitler was (in term of killing) because at a time of Hitler the world wasn't advanced, today's media and Institutions wasn't on that time and moreover, Hitler didn't cared about the reputation of himself and Germany in the world. But now, the world is advanced and has great institutions and all the major powers of the world have eyes on India and Modi wants to keep the reputation of India in world politics that is why extreme level is not at that, yet he did many terrorist activities in India which I would explain below. .Likewise Hitler, Modi's beliefs that India belongs to Hindus and he is giving superiority to Hindus and preferring Hinduism over any other religion. In simple words, Hitler wanted a Jews free Germany and Modi wants Muslims free India.

Narendra Modi, BJP and Saffron Terrorism

The fascist government (BJP) was involved in the demolition of Babri Mosque. In December 1992, BJP organized a rally in which 150,000 volunteers were Involved, known as kar sevaks (Someone who services free for the religious cause), and they demolished the Babri Mosque. After that, the Area was divided into two sites because Hindus claims that the Rama was born in Ajothya and the Mughal General had built a mosque at a Rama's birthplace and in November 2019, when BJP was in power, the supreme court of India ordered the entire site to be handed over to a trust to build the Hindu temple (Srivastava, 2019). When Fascist Modi was the CM of Gujrat, he had killed more than two thousand civilians there. On 27 February 2002, riots broke out after over 50 Hindu Pilgrim died in a train fire in the town of Godhra. Between 1,000 to 2,000 Muslims were killed in the riots, Modi was the CM of Gujarat at that time and was accused by his critics of not doing enough to stem the riots and even quietly encouraging them. Lately in Delhi Muslims were killed, their property got destroyed and was forced to leave their neighborhood by Hindu extremists with the help of security forces. Muslims were forced to abandon Islam and adopt Hinduism,

there are hundreds of videos circulating on social media where Muslims are being forced to abandon their religion.

Amendment in Bills

BJP has passed two Bills. The first one is the abrogation of article 370 which revoked the special status of Kashmir. After that, they imposed curfew in Kashmir and picked thousands of youngsters from Kashmir and god knows where their destination is. And they try to Convert Muslims majority to the minority in Kashmir even Prime Minister Imran khan mentioned it in his UN speech. There is a question that what if India changes demographics and then offers for the referendum, would Pakistan accept that offer? If no, then what would be Pakistan's next step? And second is the amendment in Citizenship bill according to which gives citizenship to everyone who entered India before December 2014 except Muslim. The CAB would not only violate the Assam accord, but it also goes against the Constitutional provisions of secularism, equality before the law, no discrimination on grounds of religion and freedom of religion, besides it will bring disaster particularly to the people of Assam to save its culture, heritage, and language. After Passing CAB the citizens of India had protested in the country, mainly in Assam. According to BBC, 6 people were killed in Assam and 3 were died in Delhi and hundreds were injured by police. This bill was passed in 2019 to marginalize Muslims and is enough to prove that India is no more secular because how can religion be a condition for citizenship in a secular country.

Adam Augustyn, Lauren Frayer, Neera Chandhoke, and Christophe Jaffrelot have written articles on BJP and RSS. They explained in detail why BJP is a threat to secular India. They collect various statements from BJP and RSS leaders and put them in their journals. They said that Hindu nationalists were almost completely absent from the Constituent Assembly that was charged with drafting the country's constitution because congress was totally against RSS. RSS is a Hindu nationalist organization that was founded in 1925 in response to Khilafat Movement. RSS believes that Hindustan Belongs to Hindus, V. D. Savarkar said India culturally RSS as a Hindu country and intends to transform it into a Hindu Rashtra (nation-state). Because they are in majority, and they are the actual sons of soils and Nehru was totally opposed to it because he thinks that if religion would matter for the state it would lead to separate movements likewise a huge part of India (Pakistan) separated from it based on religion. Nehru fought against all forms of communalism (whether Hindu, Muslim or Sikh), not against religion per se. This is evident from the fact that he never intended to separate politics and religion, as happened in the strongholds of laïcité (a form of secularism that strictly forbids any government involvement in religious affairs) "We talk about a secular state in India. It is perhaps not very easy even to find a good word in Hindi for 'secular.' Some people think it means something opposed to religion. That is not correct. What it means is that it is a state which honors all faiths equally and gives them equal opportunities." That is why communal riots were very rare at that time. Between the 1950s and 1970, almost all the religious minorities were well-represented in Assemblies. But late in the 1970s the RSS was transferred into BJS because they decided that they could no longer remain disengaged from electoral politics, so it helped establish a political party, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), later on, this political party were dissolved and in 1979 BJP was formed. The RSS chief at that time, Balasaheb Deoras said: "Politicians think only of the next election and personal gains for themselves." Furthermore, he said that Hindus must awaken themselves from the election point of view once Hindus united, the government would start caring for them. Paradip Kumar Datta said it primarily

through the Bharatiya Janata Party, Modi's party. The prime minister, the president, and most of those in India's Cabinet are RSS members. Modi joined when he was young. The RSS campaigned for his 2001 election as chief minister of Gujarat state. Neeraj Chowdhury, a political commentator, and columnist said "The prime minister and senior ministers went there to report on their policies and to get the RSS' views on policy. So that was a very overt meeting," In an exclusive interview to IANS, Nandakumar (key RSS leader and All India Convenor Prajna Pravah) said, "Secularism is a western, Semitic concept. It came into existence in the West. It was actually against Papal dominance." Nandakumar argued that India does not need a secular ethos as the nation has moved "way beyond secularism" furthermore she said The RSS' influence can now be seen in national policies affecting everything from education to commerce and food. It helps shape India's public-school curriculum, which, in some BJP-led states, teaches Hindu scripture as historical fact. Through its affiliates, it has been able to scuttle legislation it doesn't like. And it pressures the Indian government to be more protectionist when it comes to big multinational companies entering the country. Pradip Kumar Datta, a historian and political scientist at Jawaharlal Nehru University said "It started, for the first 50 to 60 years, as [pushing for] moral change, remaking the personhood of the Hindu," "But now, it is what we might call a Boy Scouts organization that seeks to run the country."

Conclusion

So, a country whose ruling party is more likely a fascist party. A country whose ministers and MLAs are giving open statements against Muslims. A Man whose ideology is that Hinduism is superior to any other religion and India belongs to just Hindus is Ruling India not once but two times in a row and the second time came into power with more support than first, which is proof that his ideology is prevailing in India. Actions like Delhi riots, abrogation of article 370, and amendment in citizenship, by government and support they got from the majority of their population, means India is no more a secular state. Minorities in India are not feeling safe, lately in a public survey minority students in India said: "Modi (current PM) is Mussolini and Amit shah (Minister of home affairs and right hand of Modi) is Hitler of India". RSS is the Nazi party of India and now their political wing BJP is in power. India was once a secular to some extent but not anymore this can be verified by a statement of a BJP leader who said "This is not the India of Gandhi and Nehru; this is the India of Modi and Amit Shah. It will take barely an hour to wipe Muslims if we get a go signal".

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