

## **Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and Minorities in India: It's Impacts on Secular Status of India**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research is conducted on Bhartiya Janata Party's policies and its impacts on secular status of India which is mentioned in the constitution of India. BJP's tendency is observed that they support the Hindutva ideology which is about to damage the status of secular India. Minority rights seem to be neglected from last decade. This research comprises on the facts that international media is also observing that the image of secular India is going to be defamed. It is easily observed that from last decade, BJP is governing in overall India and this status is going to be changed due to the BJP tendencies. This research is completed with the help of analytical approach, and it is concluded that the status of secular India would be damaged because of partial policies of BJP towards minorities.

**Key Words:**        **Bhartiya Janata Party, Constitution, Hindutva, India, Minorities, Secularism.**

### **Introduction**

Modi's success in India's 2019 election profoundly effects the country's economy, foreign policy, and state politics, as well as its future as a secular republic. In recent years, religiously inspired nationalist movements have gained prominence in several countries around the world. Few cases are more worthy of greater study than India—thanks both to its size and its democratic longevity. As the world's largest democracy, India is home to one-quarter of the world's voters and one-sixth of humanity. Political developments in India, therefore, are likely to have broader repercussions throughout South Asia and across the democratic world. India is not alone in facing the challenges that accompany religious nationalism: many democracies worldwide are witnessing a rise in such political movements. The widespread use of religiously inspired political appeals can be detected in

places as diverse as Turkey, Latin America, Western Europe, and the post-Soviet states. For instance, in the 2018 Costa Rican presidential runoff election, voters for evangelical populist candidate Fabricio Alvarado reportedly rallied behind the mantra that “if a man of God can’t govern us, then nobody can. In his recent successful bid for the Brazilian presidency, right-wing populist candidate Jair Bolsonaro similarly campaigned on the slogan, “Brazil before everything, and God above all. In Indonesia, meanwhile, Islamic nationalists allied with anti-Chinese xenophobes and economic nationalists to oust Jakarta’s Christian governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnima and convict him on blasphemy charges. This party has anti-Muslim feelings which not only harm the communal peace but also its foreign policy. BJP adds fuel to the fire during their election campaign and after their victory they have a complete authority to make anti-minority policies. BJP always allowed fully to its party workers to fasten anti-Muslim’s activities within India which is main cause of communal violence over Muslims. Extreme policies towards Islam and Muslims are a dominant feature of Hindutva groups. BJP’S election manifesto had a muscular anti-minorities narrative. In fact, according to many Indian analysts, his win in many states primarily rested on taking the stance to make India Nationalist state. His hegemonic and dictatorial style of politics is a definitive part of political traits. Credit of lack of stability in India goes to BJP government. Media also follows the instructions of BJP government and creates hatred emotions within Indian population towards other castes of India and declared them refugees and threat for Indian integrity.

## **Literature Review**

The literature of this study mostly depends upon books, articles, and journals. Bhartiya Janata party is one of the major political parties in India along with Indian National Congress. This party founded on 6 April 1980 by Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L.K Advani. The official ideology of BJP is “integral humanism “The party expresses a commitment to Hindutva (an ideology articulated by Indian independence activist Vinayak Damodaran Savarkar. According to the party, Hindutva is cultural nationalism favouring Indian culture over Westernization, thus it extends to all Indians regardless of religion. But on practical terms Hindutva relates with redefining of India and make it a Hindu country by the exclusions of other religions and minorities. (Deccan,2015). BJP stands with ideology of “Indenisation “and it is strongly opposed “westernization “which is inherent from Nehru tradition. BJP only works for its cherished gaol of Hindu Rashtra. The party considered as a most conservative party in Indian political system and belongs to the “Rightist “wing of Indian politics’ always tried to get success through Hindu Muslim rivalry. They use the name of religion in politics. Hindu term used for every person who lives in Hindustan, but they specify the term with linkage of religion term. (Chandra,2001).

Hindu, Hinduism, Hindutva not are not ordinary words but a vast civilization, unique race, and continuing process of history. Hinduism represents the concept or

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ideology of the so-called Hindu Identity. In 1998 General elections BJP proved itself as a strong party and defeated Indian National Congress. Got more seats than INC and fully confirms its existence as a major political party in Indian political system. This party has an agenda of Hindu nationalism, before BJP no party has taken strong stance ideology of Hindu nationalism and it became the reason behind current level of popular support of BJP in India (Chatterjee, 2012).

The BJP Hindutva ideology has been reflected in many of its government policies. It supports the construction of the Ram temple at the site of Babri mosque. This issue was its major poll plank in the 1991 general elections. The BJP favours the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution, which grants a greater degree of autonomy to the Jammu and Kashmir in recognition of the unusual circumstances surrounding its accession to Indian union. India Pakistan relations remain hostile during BJP government in different time because their ideology really effects on Pakistan India hostile relations. According to the BJP existence of Pakistan is illegitimate. This antagonism towards Pakistan remains a clear influence on the ideology of BJP. It made government three times under Atal Bihari Vajpayee, first from 16 May to 1 June 1996, and then from 19 March 1998 to 22 May 2004. Fourth term of BJP under umbrella of Narendra Modi on 26 May 2014 till present day. BJP has come to power for 4 times at centre. Aggressive policies of BJP are the result of its realist approach (Chakraborty, 2014).

### **Historical Background and Hawkish Ideology of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)**

Bhartiya Janata party (BJP) succeed in gaining popularity among masses of upper classes in northern part of India as well as became favourite party of lower castes because of appointment on prominent party positions of lower-caste members. Bhartiya Janata party (BJP) basically strengthens its roots as Bhartiya Jana Sangh (BJS), it was formed as a political part with tilt towards ideology of pro Hindu wing named Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in 1951 pioneered by Sharma Prasad Mukherjee. BJP started its mission for unified state in which only Hindu culture prevail. It was started by Syama Prasad Mukherjee, who is also member of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). RSS is a political wing with manifesto of Hinduism and talked about domination of Hindutva ideology that only wish for a pure Hindu nation. Important members of BJP also belong to RSS. Hindu supremacist organization, which is called by name as RSS, it was formed in 1925 and got inspiration from European ethnic nationalism and fascism. BJP refused to accept the emergency alert imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1975. BJP founded in 1980 and Vajpayee was its main founder along with BJS leader Lal Krishna Advani. (Bjornson, 2012).

## **Bhartiya Janata Party Profile and Performance from its Beginning to Till Present**

Bhartiya Janata party (BJP) is the promoter of Hindutva ideology. Their focus is on the building of India on Hindu values. They believe that only Hindu nation exist in India. They also want to mould the whole Indian culture in terms of Hindu values. BJP has a realistic approach. Hindutva is its prominent ideology. BJP's ideology was based on ethnic cleansing. They want to purify their race just like ideology of Adolf Hitler. Racism prevails in their practices. RSS is the ideological parent of Bhartiya Janata party (BJP). In 1980 BJP was succeeded to make their government and Atal Vajpayee became prime minister of the country. He fully promotes Hindutva ideology, but in 1984 Bhartiya Janata party (BJP) was unable to gain seats in Lok Sabha at that time. Vajpayee policy did not work and as a result Bhartiya Janata party (BJP) faced electoral failure. Then again Vajpayee promptly revived the hard-line ideology of "Bhartiya Jana Sangh" (BJS) as core ideology of party. Bhartiya Janata party (BJP) was against the status of secular India and after 1984 electoral failure. They started their election campaign based on Hindutva ideology and tried their best for gaining votes from fundamentalist Hindus. Bhartiya Janata party perceived its post-colonial securities and insecurities through the ideology of Hindutva group (Afzal, 2014).

Hindutva is Hindu's nationalism predominant form in India. This term was firstly used by Vinayak Damodaran Savarkar in 1923. This Hindutva group was formed after getting inspiration from RSS and their leaders "Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh" (RSS), "Vishwa Hindu Parishad" (VHP) and "Hindu Senna" were supporters of "Hindutva group". Hindutva means that all the masses which are living in Hindustan are Hindu and Hindu culture is most superior to any other culture or paradigm in Hindustan. Ethnic cleansing and purification of race is the core ideology of Hindutva group. It seems as 'almost fascist in the classical sense'. They want to build the hegemony of Hindu culture over all cultures which are prevails in Hindustan. Conservatism exists in their beliefs. They consider it's their pivotal responsibility to promote this ideology. State of being Hindu means Hindutva. National Indian culture and religious identity is the basic concept of Hindutva. (Cox, Daniel 2003). This pure 'Hindus' ideology has permanent effects on Bhartiya Janata Party ideology; BJP adopts this ideology in its practices either in national or international levels. BJP become aggressive in its relations with those who have anti-Hindu feelings. They only secure pure Hindu community and reject the security responsibility of other communities like Sikhs, Jains, Muslims, and Buddhists." RSS", HINDUTVA and "BJP", their ideologies can compare with Fascism or Nazism. They are followings Fascist ingredients and attempt to create a unified homogenous majority under the concept of 'Hindus'. Bhartiya Janata party (BJP) and Shiv Senna have common manifesto. Shiv Senna is a local Marathi organization founded in 1966 headed by political cartoonist BAL Thackeray on the bases of Hindutva ideology (Ashley, 2001).

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Shiv Senna collaborated with Bhartiya Janata party (BJP). Since 1989 Shiv Senna appreciated all initiatives of BJP which is according to the Hindutva ideology and purification of Hindu race. Bhartiya Janata party (BJP) and Shiv Senna both are the advocates of Hindu nationalism and Hindutva stratagem. BJP is the political right wing of RSS, central point of Hindutva culture in India (Chacko, 2004). Both never hesitate in using violence for their Hindutva agenda be it in the form of Babri masjid riots, Gujarat program of Muslims or feelings of hate and aggression directed towards Pakistan which is the foremost foreign demon of Hindutva. Minorities are suffering severely under policies of aggression from RSS and BJP side. Muslims, Sikhs, and the people belong to the lower castes are becoming the victim of their violence. Bhartiya Janata party (BJP) is the reason behind the rise of Hindu Nationalism with the help of RSS and Shiv Senna. Murders of innocent people on eating beef, consumption of beef as well as other meats have been banned in different states, Dalit's belongs to lower classes are in great danger because they are the victims of violence such as burning alive and being raped (Adrience, 2012).

Other Indian minorities primarily Muslims are facing hate crimes and state oppression. Government of BJP is fully against all other races of Hindustan except Hinduism. Policies and manifestos of BJP, RSS, Shiv Senna and Hindu Senna are inter-related with each other. They are the advocates of Adolf Hitler's ideology. They take stance on the purification of Hindu race from all other races. (Ahmad,2006) Minorities of Hindustan are suffering a lot because of their aggression. Sikh community all over the world including India is protesting the violation of their rights (Afzal, 2014). Government is violating their beliefs. Indian and educational academies across the world are protesting the attacks on civil and religious freedom by the current BJP government. Moreover, Hindu extremists started a GHAR WAPSI campaign against the liberals or deviated overseas Indians. Furthermore, right wing ideology prevails in all institutions of government. For instance, assault on a Sikh couple who made a tattoo belonged to Austria by fundamentalists in India and these extremists are supported by local police also because those dogmas prevail in public and private sphere through coercion method used by Hindu Senna, Shiv Senna, and RSS in India. Indian armies destroyed the sanctity of Sikh temples and ruin their books in Amritsar, Ludhiana and Jalandhar are the perfect examples of their hegemonic designs which ruined the image of secular India in the community of world (Ahmad, 2015).

Senna leader Uddhav Thackeray, a main advocate of in the promotion of Hindu norms made a speech called for imposition of the Uniform Civil Code (that would end the several rights for minorities). Shiv Senna and BJP Wants the promotion of Hinduism on extremist phenomenon without mingling RSS. Shiv Senna is popular for destruction in peaceful activities, violence against minorities, training suicide bombers, physical intimidation and for genocide. They mainly mishandle the peace keeping activities of Pakistani media and actors in India. For the sake of survival of Shiv Senna, they consider all these activities pivotal. Specially during

any cultural activity of India with Pakistan like any sports events, cultural exchange programs or any other, Shiv Senna mishandle peace because they don't want bilateral relations with Pakistan. Shiv Senna now a day is not only a political movement but also a social wing, they not only fulfil their goals through political means, but they form community with certain dogmas. They feel that opposition of Hindutva is equal to the opposition of India (Butt, 2016).

### **Role of Shiv Senna and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)**

BJP took initiative to become the part of the RSS wing backed by "Vishwa Hindu Parishad" (VHP) leading the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Soon, Advani got attention from those people of Hindustan who direly support the dogmas of Hindutva and succeeded to become the populous person of a country who laid a campaign for the sake of building of Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir in Ajothya where Babri Mosque was situated. Politics by the leaders of BJP mainly based on religious diplomacy under the ideology of Hindutva. This thing became support for party and helped in winning general elections of 1989 with 85 seats in Lok Sabha. Strength increased up to 120 in LOK SABHA and share of votes went up to 20.1 In the general elections of 1991. BJP promoted extremist policies only for the sake of power. They took hard stances against Muslims and other minorities; this stance was the reason behind their vote bank (Andy, 2014).

### **Minority Rights Violation in India during BJP Administration**

Bhartiya Janata Party is a political party with Hindu-supremacist ideology. They succeeded to gain power in 2014. Narendra Modi become India's 15<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister and took an oath for charge on 26 May 2014. They got 282 seats, making alliance with National Democratic Alliance. It was the first time BJP that he abled to achieve such majority in Lok Sabha and become majority political party in Parliament on its own strength. North Central India with Hindi speaking people was the major reason behind their success got votes from upper religious and middle classes as well as from Dalit. BJP adopt the slogan to redefine and recast India as a Hindu Nation. Hindutva ideology is against the culture of westernization. Political elites promised during their election campaign for implementations of pro-Hindutva ideology for the sake of Hindu Rashtra by excluding all other religions from Hindu Nation (Aziz, 2016).

In the case of India, the commingling of religion and politics is hardly novel. This mixing first began with state patronage of the Brahminical Vedic tradition in which state backing of religion ensured that clerical leaders would, in turn, protect the state. In India's earliest state formations, the rajas (kings) wielded political power but were reliant on the legitimation of brahmins (priestly caste) whom they compensated with guarantees of safety and material resources. One unique aspect of India's development is the degree of moral authority brahmins enjoyed independent of the power of the state—a stark contrast to China, for instance,

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where religious authorities were subservient to elites possessing coercive and economic power (Afzal, 2014).

When India obtained independence following the ouster of the British Raj in 1947, the country's new constitution established a secular republic that did not feature a strict church-state separation, as in many Western democracies, but rather a "principled distance" between religion and the state. The government, under this rubric, endeavoured to maintain a measured embrace of India's disparate religious communities without unduly favouring any one group (Bhartiya, 2014).

### **Anti-Minority Policies of BJP was the Reason Behind Victory of Modi in 2014 Elections**

The leader of extremist Bharat Janata Party (BJP) as well as PM of India "Narendra Modi" has set up slogans for all the Indians to follow the stance of anti-minorities, sliding triumph in the Indian Elections 2014. Success of Modi in elections of 2014 was also because of his anti-Muslim ideology. After becoming Prime Minister, with the support of fanatic coalition outfits preaching of anti-Muslim agenda is the core manifesto of Modi. Laws and acts adopted by Indian administration during Modi government showed clear discrimination against Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, and Dalits. Nationalist BJP empowering institutions like police and court to use their powers to harass, threaten and attack religious minorities with impunity. Communal violence year completed on 23 February, 2021 in Delhi that killed 53 people, 40 of them were Muslims. Instead, Anti-minorities activities speeded during their tenure. They fully provide support to all those authorities who are against secular status of India. They also undermining equal protection of the law without discrimination. Of conducting fair and impartial investigation against culprits BJP authorities ordered police to follow their instructions that incited violence against minorities. Authorities initiated investigation against Sikh farmers which have affiliation with separatist group. South Asia director at Human Rights Watch Meenakshi Ganguli said that "government has not only failed to protect Muslims and other minorities from attack but is providing political patronage and cover for bigotry" (Rahual, 2022)

### **Revocation of Article 370 and 35(A)**

The February 2020 attacks in Delhi had followed of peaceful protests by Indians of all faiths against the government's discriminatory citizenship law and proposed policies. BJP and their supports always discredit protesters especially Muslims and consider them as enemy by conspiring against national interests. Article 370 of Kashmir is guarantee special status to Jammu and Kashmir. "Allow state assembly to make its own constitution, separate set of laws for states resident such as citizenship, ownership of property, and fundamental rights and citizen from other states cannot purchase land or property in the state" (Arka, 2019).

But in August 2019 India prime minister Narendra Modi revoked the article of 370 and the changes is describing as only constitution of India, tricolour will be the only flag, no special power now, single citizenship, minorities will be eligible for reservation, India citizen of other states will now be able to purchase property in Jammu and Kashmir and RTI will be applicable. Kashmir remain in tension because of India tightens control cut off internet service and consorted media coverage of the situation. In Srinagar people always staying indoors because of continuous heavy military presence. Drones are flying above their homes and army is stand at every corner. India said that these restrictions are for the protection of Kashmiris and to prevent terrorists in Pakistan. Narendra Modi led the government like Nazi government before WW2. Modi also want the genocide of Muslims in Kashmir (Arzan, 2019).

### **Farmer Laws by Modi Government in November 2020**

Biased laws made by Indian government which are against the welfare of farmers caused severe restlessness among all the farmers in Punjab. Hundreds of thousands of farmers belonging to various faiths protesting on the government's new farm laws. Senior political elite of BJP blaming Sikh community and other religious minorities with allegation that they are against the peace of India. Separatist movement of "Khalistan" in Punjab also criticized by them on social media by BJP supporters. Prime Minister Narendra Modi while speaking in Parliament said that these all protesters are like "parasites" and calling them international criticism of increasing authoritarianism in India a "foreign destructive ideology" (Rahual, 2022).

### **Hatred Based Actions of BJP against Muslims**

BJP always considered Muslims as their enemies because of their ideological clash with them. They always gave Islamophobic remarks against Muslims at the time of world outrage against Muslims and Islam. Anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic sentiments have not just been limited to Sharma and Jindal but have been consistently aired by high-ranking members of the BJP and the government with impunity. Muslim community is not to allowing to slaughter cow because of consideration of Hindus with cow as sacred animal. Muslims were not restricted before administration of BJP but during their government they rebuked Muslims as well as threatening them brutally. Shiv Senna and RSS workers forced Muslims to chant their God names and their Bhajans. They also tried to convert Muslims towards Hinduism while considering Hindutva as supreme ideology (Basrur, 2017). They also distance itself from the sentiment without any legitimate accountability BJP leaders like Nupur Sharma and Navneet Kumar and many others gave controversial statements against Islam and Muslims. Islam is like a religion of extremism for them. Yogi Adityanath the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh also gave remarks of hatred towards Muslims as well their division on



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basis of religion. People called Muslims as criminals, mafias, rioters and apardhiyon during the address of CM of Uttar Pradesh. (Arka,2019). He himself referred Muslims as the “Taliban”. They planned to use state force against Muslim community. BJP workers often assaulted the Muslims without any reason, and no one dared to asked them for their act. Bihar BJP MLA Haribhusan Thakur Backhaul said that Muslims should be set ablaze just as Hindus burn Ravana effigies during the festival of Dussehra. In the start of 2022, the BJP MLA gave the remarks that voting rights should not be given to Muslims and they should be treated as second class citizens in India. The workers of BJP raised slogans “Muslims should be Murdered”. All these examples are the clear manifestation of the fact that “Minorities in India is not feeling saved during the brutal rule of BJP in fact they BJP using force to have deprived them from their fundamental rights which is against the Indian constitution (Arzan, 2019)

### **Impacts of BJP’S Policies on Secular Status of India**

BJP succeeded in gaining political dominance in country since 2014 elections. They launched the brand of Hindu Nationalism in India that called into question the future viability of country’s secularist traditions and commitment to diversity. After independence India managed to sustain the ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity. First Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru and ruling party Indian National Congress advocated the Indian brand of secularism to unite all the different communities and religions under one roof. Nehru often stated that diverse cultures and identities in India are the real beauty and strength of country. After that Hindu Nationalist belonging to the Bhartiya Janata Party and its different affiliates consistently envision India as a Hindu Rashtra not as a multicultural land. BJP’S landmarked victory in 2014 elections strengthen the vision of Indian nationhood. The story of history was different. In recent times circumstances was different (Rahual, 2022). Religion was considered separate politics but with the popularity of BJP in elections and their governance promotes the idea that religion is not separate from politics. Policies of BJP severely damage the status of secular India because they promote the Hindu Nationalism in terms of all spheres of life. Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and Dalits are forcing by supporters of BJP to follow Indian traditions. Hindutva forces attacking on secular tradition of India. Communal riots are on the peak in the BJP administration because of their hatred with other communities of India. People are suffering because of biased policies of Modi. They have insecure future India. Their liberty, freedom of expression and religious freedom is in danger. Muslims are not allowed to practice their rituals according to their religion. They considered as refugees in India and demanded to live their lives according to Hindu Dharam. Dalit community also facing problems within India. They are also considered lower class and live their life according to the instructions of supporters of BJP, RSS and Shiv senna (Milan, 2019).

## **Recommendations to Save Minorities in India**

The current administration of United States decided to make the issue of religious freedom throughout the world to protect minority rights. This is a cornerstone of a hope for hundreds of millions of ethnic and religious minorities throughout the world who are suffering persecution, ethnic cleansing, and genocide in different countries of the world. Minorities in South Asia especially in India hope to see positive changes in their lives and rights because of this great initiative. Status of secular Nation should be practiced by every political party in government irrespective of discrimination between different sects. Modi Sarkar should end their hatred-based actions against minorities. Indian government should take steps to end discrimination. (Milan,2022) Continuous education of health workers and proper grievance redressal system is needed to ensure that no discrimination is faced by masses at hospitals, schools' universities and on workplaces based on their caste, creed, religion, and gender. There is a need to have local grievance mechanism that would end such issues immediately. Indian Human Rights Activist Rajesh Kumar told that when constitution gave the equal rights to all and sundry then no government no ideology can snatch it from citizens of India. Article 29 of Indian constitution should be adopted and practiced by Modi Sarkar which guarantee protection of rights of masses having a distinct language, script, and culture. This article mandates that no discrimination would be done on the ground of religion, race, caste, language, or any of them (Naomi, 2022)

## **Conclusion**

To conclude we may say that BJP government is a biggest threat to all minorities in India. To make India Hindu Rashtra BJP is doing all this stunts. Their administration should review their policies to make India as nationalistic state. Constitution of India is clearly declared that India is a secular state and according to it no political party has right to use state power to act against this law. Masses of India also protesting aggressive acts of Modi Sarkar. Practice of protection of minority rights should be ensured in India to end all this drama. Minorities have equal right to enjoy all rights given them by constitution. It's up to the government that how they can provide them security by providing their fundamental laws. Minorities in India also playing their integral role in terms of state prosperity. State must provide them equal rights. BJP government may lose their winning position because of riots, discrimination, inequality and poor law and order situation.

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