

Marium Kamal*
Usama Zafar**

A Politics of Hate: The Ideological Evolution of the Shiv Sena in India

Abstract

Hate politics is what has been dominating the current Indian narrative under BJP's consecutive tenures, its roots are inclined towards RSS ideology and conservative Hindutva. The paper highlights the element of hate politics and the ideological evolution of Shiv Sena. The topic focuses on the evolutionary process of Shiv Sena and its power-oriented interest in the cost of others in Indian politics. The rigid Hindu extremist ideology is motivated by focused elite interests against the indigenous ideology of non-violence in India. Moreover, it highlights the communal violence and the ideological shift in Shiv Sena, and how minorities or others have been targeted for political manipulation. This research paper aims to uncover the actual ideological base structure behind Shiv Sena, and how Bhagat Singh's archival analysis is still relevant to contemporary communal violence. The paper is purely based on the historical inquiry method under the qualitative approach, it relates the archival concepts with the contemporary political and ethno-religious formation of Shiv Sena. Thus, the study is historical in nature that evaluates hate politics through the lens of Shiv Sena's activities and role in politics. It analyses hierarchal occurrences under its leadership, ideological inconsistency, communal violence, and otherization of minorities. Lastly, it relates economic sustainability as the key element to counter communal unrest in India.

Key Words: Hate politics, Hindu nationalism, *Shiv Sena*, Bhagat Singh, communal riots, religious extremism.

Introduction

The politics of hate is not new to the history of the Indian subcontinent, the political elite, religious authorities, and men in power have exploited the ethnic and religious sentiments to mobilize their illegitimate interest in the region. South Asia is the home to almost 200 crore people representing every major and minor religious belief-has also witnessed religious extremism, often supported by the state apparatus. However, this research paper focuses on the element of hate politics in *Shiv Sena* and its foundational structure and how its ideological base has been shifting with favored political interest against its own grounded narrative.

Shiv Sena is just one of many political parties that draws its ideology from the Hindu nationalist movement known as 'Hindutva'. Though this political party

* Dr. Marium Kamal, Assistant Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: mariumkamal2@gmail.com.

** Usama Zafar, M.Phil. Scholar, Centre for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: usama.02@yahoo.com.

was more inclined towards minorities and their socio-economic uplifting later, by the decade of 1980s, it emerged as an extreme right-wing violent party. *Shiv Sena's* origin may be traced back to liberal Hindutva ideology, but the organization has now embraced Savarkar-style Hindu rigid nationalism. The real founder of *Shiv Sena* is Keshav Sitaram Thackeray, who wanted it to be a left-wing party. Bal Thackeray modified *Shiv Sena's* ideology and its party structural dimension, towards more conservatism with anti-Muslim sentiments. In the subsequent years, Uddhav Thackeray revisited the original ideological perception behind *Shiv Sena's* foundation and worked to modify and restructure the party but was not that effective. *Shiv Sena* contributed disastrously to communal violence as a major source of disorder in India. Muslims and Hindus rose against each other and intolerance increased tension and instability in India. According to Bhagat Singh, communal riots brought humiliation and disgrace to India and its people.

Since the decade of 1990s, this radical party has built a reputation for promoting communal unrest and violence under the ideology of Hindutva. It is the ideology that *Shiv Sena* follows, but this ideology can be associated with different roots. Keshav Sitaram Thackeray, the founder of *Shiv Sena*, believed that Hindutva was a pure version of Hinduism in which everyone is equal regardless of caste or religion. However, Savarkar distorted Hindutva into an aggressive ideology in which India is only for Hindus and others should be left out. Although Keshav Sitaram Thackeray advocated for the non-discriminatory reform of Hinduism, Savarkar argued that there should be only one religion and one language in India. Savarkar is responsible for the transformation of Hindutva into a communal racist doctrine. Both Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sang (RSS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were on board with the Savarkar Hindutva's mission to eliminate non-Hindus from India, predominantly the Muslims. When Bal Thackeray assumed power as in charge of the *Shiv Sena* organization, the party's ideology began to shift toward 'communalism'. *Shiv Sena* resorted to violent tactics to strengthen its alliance with the BJP. He also started anti-Muslim riots in the decade of 1980s, which he kept going until he died. The incoming *Shiv Sena* chief, Uddhav Thackeray, has allied with the Nationalist Congress Party and the Indian National Congress due to its misalignment with BJP during the 2019 elections. Uddhav Thackeray's ideology is more influenced than that of his grandfather, Keshav Sitaram Thackeray. He didn't have any anger or hatred toward Muslims and even favored Muslim candidates for elections. During the two years when Uddhav Thackeray served as a Chief Minister in the cabinet, there were no incidents of communal violence.

Moreover, the research highlights the base thesis of Bhagat Singh's approach towards communal violence, and he further contributed to the causes of the communal riots in India. Bhagat Singh pointed towards the communal mindset, misunderstandings, communal politicians, the media, and lastly, the vulnerable economic conditions. He believed that the communal riots had brought humiliation and disgrace to India globally. Since most of the communal riots happened in economically disadvantaged parts of India, Bhagat Singh argues that the only solution is to improve the economic conditions of citizens.

This study examined the development of hate politics through the foundation and evolution of *Shiv Sena* in India. The research problem has been based on how

hate politics contribute towards communal violence and what is the role of religious political parties [*Shiv Sena*] in restructuring conservative Hinduism against others. The research is qualitative in approach based on the historical debate and the evolution of hate politics under *Shiv Sena* and the politics of communalism in India. The paper will discuss the key attributing factors in the conceptual understanding of communal violence in India through Bhagat Singh's archival studies. Secondly, it will focus on the formative phase of the philosophy of Keshav Sitaram Thackeray and how *Shiv Sena* ideologically and politically evolved in India.

The Conceptual Debate of Communal Violence in India

There has been a long-term trend of people being increasingly violent in the name of their religion. Approximately 3,400 communal riots occurred in India between 2016 and 2020, as stated by the Indian Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai. The similarities between each of these uprisings are starting to become specific. A mob armed with weapons and swords stormed a rally, where members of the crowd insulted people of other religions, threw stones, and said that outsiders were brought in, particularly for rioting. Meanwhile, some politicians and self-described religious leaders offer speeches encouraging the crowd to violence.¹ Rather than focusing on a single riot, this research examines the larger pattern.

In June 1928, Bhagat Singh published 'Communal Riots and Their Solutions'² in *Kirti Magazine*. Bhagat Singh provided an in-depth analysis; it comes as a shock to learn that little has changed in India since then. Everything Bhagat Singh said was spot-on and is still relevant today. At the outset of his article, Bhagat Singh admitted that the situation in India was worsening. As a result of their theological differences, people had begun to view their neighbors as rivals.³ He outlined four key factors in his article: First, the communal viewpoint of some persons; he mentions the Lahore riots as an example, in which people of various faiths massacred citizens of other faiths. In this section, Bhagat Singh explains that the reason for the communal riots was not hatred or revenge but rather self-defense. The senseless riots took the lives of innocent individuals, who were brutalized in the name of faith. According to Bhagat Singh, India's international reputation had been severely damaged by the communal riots, and the country's prospects looked dismal.⁴

His second justification is that people have a 'herd mentality'. Some religious groups are the most powerful because they keep up with armed gatherings or groups. Religion can bring people together and make them angry at other religious groups. Problems were raised in the manifesto of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, written by Bhagwati Charan Vohra and Bhagat Singh. They voiced their extreme dissatisfaction with how simple it is to incite people to anger and injure others' sentiments in the name of religion, citing examples such as "if a limb of a *Peepal* tree breaks, a Hindu is offended; even if the slightest piece of the *Tazia* breaks, a Muslim is angered".⁵ People in our country are killing each other in the name of religion, despite their insistence that human life should always be prioritized. In the manifesto, they explained how religious superstition and prejudice stood in the way of their progress.⁶ In his third point, Bhagat Singh criticizes the so-called 'communal politicians' for stirring up the crowds for personal benefit. He says that

some politicians have become aggressively communal, giving speeches that encourage and inspire their people to riot. It's become commonplace in politics, and politicians frequently defend it in the name of furthering their political agendas. Still, the community mindset was becoming the norm in the country. There was a lot of community spirit, so much so that even the people who were upset had to keep their heads down and be quiet.⁷

For his final and fourth point, Bhagat Singh directs the blame on the 'media'. He claimed that journalism was formerly considered a noble calling since it gave a platform to the voiceless. However, as time has passed, it has become increasingly commercialized to serve the interests of the powerful. The bold headlines on the front pages of the newspapers encouraged further hatred toward people in the name of religion. The publication of controversial material in newspapers has been linked to riots on several occasions.⁸ The media of today has strayed from its moral mission by focusing on yellow journalism rather than educating the public and fostering unity among all groups. Promoting feelings of harmony and mutual trust among citizens can help a nation come together as one.

As a further point, economic reasons have a far greater impact on the root causes of communal violence in India. For his argument, Bhagat Singh referred to Karl Marx's theory that economic disparity is the root of all evils in the world.⁹ People are easy to manipulate in times of economic inequality and limited resources, as seen by historical examples. Therefore, economic and financial difficulties can spark riots, or be channeled by other interest groups to further their own political goals and agendas. It's easy to incite people to fight, which can damage community relations [Hitler's popularity in Germany grew following the Great Depression. People started trusting the man who would eventually lead the country into World War II as a result of widespread bank failures, a lack of employment possibilities, uncertain economic conditions, and overall discontent].¹⁰ But Bhagat Singh wrote that the Indian economy had worsened and that this was the main reason why there were more riots between different groups of people, and he said that the problem had to be solved on an economic level.

According to Bhagat Singh, there was an urgent need for a better economic situation for the people. Mainly because the government didn't care about the people's economic situation.¹¹ When Bhagat Singh referred to 'the government', he was referring to the British Indian government, which was in power at that time. Millions of people on the Indian subcontinent were fed up with their dire economic situation and wanted a new administration, either to improve their lot or to remove the foreign rulers who had brought them to this point. Furthermore, Bhagat Singh stresses that class consciousness coupled with widespread awareness was the key to success. Religious and political elites will never address the economic problems of the oppressed people. When it comes to religious and political leaders' ability to manipulate and exploit the poor, Bhagat Singh spoke against them. The majority of the communal riots happened in economically depressed regions of India, where residents desperately wanted and needed reforms. The religious and political elite, the only contribution was to fuel mutual hatred. Those who have little to lose, such as the unemployed and the underprivileged, are often utilized by their masters.¹² Bhagat Singh used the example of Russia during the time of the Tsar to support his argument. During the

monarchy, Russia's economy was in shambles, which led to frequent riots and acts of community violence. There was extensive anti-Jewish violence in the Russian Empire from 1881 to 1884 and again from 1903 to 1906, and the administration at the time openly promoted it. Bhagat Singh notes a decline in communal riots during the Russian Revolution when the Bolsheviks came to power and stabilized the situation. There were more jobs available, and the general populace's financial status was better. Since human beings have self-awareness, they were not classified as Jews, Christians, or any other religious group.¹³

Bhagat Singh went on to identify another similar and excellent example of India, which was Calcutta. Even though trade union members did not take part in the Hindu-Muslim riots that broke out in Calcutta, the city experienced such violence. Hindus and Muslims who worked in the industries did not stop their jobs. Bhagat Singh explains this development by pointing to the trade unionists' class consciousness. They were aware of the goals of the group and stood side by side with one another. He argued that this was an excellent example of how awareness of one's social class could help prevent violence among communities.¹⁴

Concluding, Bhagat Singh emphasized that he had great aspirations for India's young generation. Today's youth in India are opposing communalism and violence and many of them are willing to speak frankly about their beliefs. Instead of identifying as Hindus, Muslims, or Sikhs, they just identified as humans. In his writings, Bhagat Singh expressed a great deal of optimism for the younger generation. In addition to this, he admired several new politicians, specifically those who were working hard to keep religion out of politics and who fought for independence.¹⁵

The Philosophy of Keshav Sitaram Thackeray

Keshav Sitaram Thackeray, an ardent follower of Hinduism, was a well-known Indian social activist [born in 1885], the year in which the Congress Party was formed. His ideas were greatly influenced by those of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule.¹⁶ He founded the Hindu Missionary Society in 1918 alongside a fellow social reformer named Gajanan Bhaskar Vaidya.¹⁷ They desired to convert any Hindus, who had turned to Islam or Christianity to Hinduism, this was essentially the prototype of '*Ghar Wapasi*'.¹⁸ The traditional Hindus of the time, however, were opposed to this. They questioned how those people would identify which caste they would belong to if they were to revert to Hinduism. Keshav Sitaram Thackeray had a strong anti-caste stance. He was convinced that the downfall of Hindu unity was caused by the Brahmin clergy.¹⁹ Keshav Sitaram Thackeray launched a magazine called *Prabodhan* [Enlightenment] by the following year. In the first issue, which was published in 1921, he established the fundamental guidelines for this magazine. "Hindu morals have been trapped amid world politics. To create a sense of brotherhood, we need to eradicate social differences between us and we need to protect our Hindutva our autonomy".²⁰

However, the term 'Hindutva' was first used by Keshav Sitaram Thackeray, not Savarkar. It was not the first time the term was used, Chandranath Basu used the term 'Hindutva' in 1892.²¹ In 1921, when Savarkar's mercy requests were eventually approved by the British and he was sent to the Ratnagiri prison. Savarkar composed the 'Essentials of Hindutva' in this prison in 1922. He highlighted that Hindutva is not the same as Hinduism and has no connection with

faith or traditions. Savarkar mentioned a nation that was unitarian. He argued that a community should have just one language and one God.²² Chief of the RSS, Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar admired the concept of radical Hindutva and asserted that “the foreign races in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture or language... And must lose their separate existence or merge into Hindu race, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing... not even citizens right”.²³ Savarkar was a strong admirer and supporter of Adolf Hitler, and as a result of being inspired by that, he transformed Hindutva into a racist ideology for the entire community. He defines a Hindu as someone whose homeland is India and who resides in India. He claims that while the concept rejects Muslims and Christians, and accepts Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Hindus.²⁴

Keshav Sitaram Thackeray never displayed any bigotry toward the Muslim and Christian communities. His goal was to reform Hindus, bring about Hindu unity, and promote a renaissance of Hinduism without favoritism or hatred. His magazine ‘*Prabodhan*’, became widely read over time. People began to refer to him as ‘*Prabodhankar*’, which is Sanskrit for a person who enlightens humans. Keshav also formed the ‘*Swadhyay Ashram*’ [A social organization raising public awareness of social issues] in 1921. They promoted public celebrations based on the female goddesses, such as Navratri, and routinely conducted ‘widow remarriages’ to improve women’s social standing. Additionally, he was strongly opposed to the custom of child marriage.²⁵ Keshav Sitaram Thackeray was ideologically sympathetic to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar since both men were committed to promoting social justice and equality.²⁶

In the year 1926, a significant *Ganpati* event was held in Dadar, Mumbai, members from different social classes contributed to this celebration. Brahmins made up most of the management committee. To convince the Brahmins to include lower-caste Hindus in the inauguration ceremony, Ambedkar, Keshav Sitaram Thackeray, and another social reformer, Rao Bahadur SK Bole,²⁷ proceeded there with a delegation of about a hundred individuals. After an intense and prolonged debate, they accepted, although the committee promised that the *Ganpati* festival would never again be organized in Dadar. Keshav responded to this challenge by launching the *Ganpati* celebrations, during the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj’s²⁸ reign the *Navratri Utsav*²⁹ was celebrated in each family, as well as in every palace.³⁰ He argued that caste shouldn’t be given any special consideration because the Deity *Bhawani* welcomes everyone. At the festivals that he planned and organized, he attracted thousands upon thousands of attendees, even the so-called ‘untouchables’ who were previously excluded from society. They gathered as a community for the festivities. During this time, he assisted a large number of people in arranging interfaith marriages.³¹

On the other hand, Savarkar’s ideas were more rigid and assertive in terms of ‘Hindutva’, he was not clearly against caste discrimination. Savarkar supported casteism in Hindu society in 1923, arguing that it is an organic part of building a nation. In 1939, he told Hindus that the Hindu Mahasabha would not back any kind of law that made it mandatory for ‘untouchables’ to be able to go into Hindu temples.³² He further mentioned that *Manusmriti* is a cornerstone of Hindu law.

Dr. Ambedkar, on the other hand, burned copies of the *Manusmriti*.³³ Keshav Sitaram Thackeray believes that *Manusmriti* is a surprise attack on Hindus.

In an interesting turn of events, Keshav was fairly close to the Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, who was a descendant of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. In the year 1902, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, who was only 28 years old at the time, made the controversial decision to reserve fifty percent of the jobs for the lower castes. This occurred several decades before India gained independence.³⁴

The Formation of Shiv Sena: Tendency towards Conservative Hindutva

Bal Thackeray [son of Keshav] was greatly inspired by Savarkar's ideologies. Bal Thackeray's political weekly magazine 'Marmik' was launched in 1960. 'Marmik' and the 'Marathi Manus' focused on the Marathi people's oppression and the countless violence perpetrated against them.³⁵ Highlighting unemployment from the public sector to the private sector, Bal Thackeray claimed that non-native South Indians are dominating others and asserting their positions in the financial circles. Many residents of Maharashtra felt they were being treated unfairly, so they wrote their concerns to the magazine detailing their experiences and unjust. In a column titled 'Vaacha Ani Thanda Basa' [read and keep cool], they revealed the identities of non-Marathi individuals holding executive positions at a variety of Mumbai-based businesses. They were known by the names *Lungiwala* and *Madrasi*,³⁶ and they also were behind the increased overall crime rate in the city.

This magazine's popularity increased in 1966 [over forty thousand individuals were reading it at the same time]. By the time and the under oppression of the Marathi people, Keshav proposed the idea of a new political party [*Shiv Sena*], to defend and secure their rights. The foundation of *Shiv Sena* party was formally established on June 19, 1966. Approximately one hundred thousand people showed up to the first rally, which was held in October of 1966. Keshav Sitaram Thackeray was the first person to address the party, while Bal Thackeray was the last speaker who closed out the event.³⁷ However, *Shiv Sena* evolved from an ethno-populist party into a violent organization over time. On numerous occasions, *Shiv Sainiks* engaged in violent activities, in February 1969, at least 60 people were murdered due to police firing as Shiv Sena supporters stopped the vehicles of then-Deputy Prime Minister Morarji Desai on his tour to Mumbai during a border dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka.³⁸

In the year 1970, conflicts between Hindus and Muslims were at an all-time peak in Bhiwandi, a region of Mumbai that is largely populated by Muslims. Despite this, *Shiv Sena* has chosen to move the *Shivaji Jayanti* procession³⁹, which would pass through an area where the residents were predominantly Muslims. *Shiv Sena* organized a procession by supporters of the Hindu rightist groups, around 4,000 Hindu people joined the celebration, resulting in a Hindu-Muslim clash and violence, killing 250 people. In 1973, Keshav Sitaram Thackeray's demise further alienated *Shiv Sena* from its founding ideology. In the decade of 1980s, Shiv Sena had moved away from the Hindutva of Keshav Thackeray, towards the Hindutva of Savarkar. Bal Thackeray associated Muslims with 'cancer' and said Hindus should work together to bring Islamism to its knees.⁴⁰ Since its start in 1989, Shiv Sena's daily magazine *Samna* has served as the political party's official platform.⁴¹ Shiv Sena became very well known throughout the decade of 1990s for its

involvement in the Hindu-Muslim riots that occurred in Mumbai in 1992 and 1993.⁴² An investigative commission named after *Srikrishna* was established to probe the Mumbai Hindu-Muslim riots. The commission concluded Shiv Sena's involvement in the Hindu-Muslim violence, due to which a thousand individuals lost their lives.⁴³ In the decade in the 1990s, the *Shiv Sainiks* [Shiv Sena's extremist workers] stopped India-Pakistan matches in 1991 and 1999 by destroying stadiums in Mumbai and Delhi.⁴⁴ They also protested against the screenings of Shahrukh Khan movies in theatres in 2010, because he had previously advocated for Pakistani cricketers to be allowed to play in India's premier 20-20 tournament, the Indian Premier League (IPL). Moreover, India is home to many devoted fans of legendary musicians like Ghulam Ali, Mehdi Hasan, and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, and the country's artistic and cultural traditions have long served as a unifying force. However, because of threats of violence by *Shiv Sena* and their *Sainiks*, Pakistani ghazal musician Ghulam Ali was forced to skip events in Mumbai and Pune in 2015.

Bombay was formally renamed Mumbai in 1995, after a campaign led by the *Shiv Sena* in the 1990s.⁴⁵ In 2008, *Shiv Sainiks* vandalized two institutes that were utilizing the previous name on signboards. Bombay was prominently featured in the names of these institutions. Some examples include the Bombay Scottish School. It is for the same reason that the highest court in Bombay is still referred to as the 'Bombay' High Court and not the 'Mumbai' High Court.⁴⁶

There were numerous cases of rioting, violence, and threats to citizens during the 1990s and the early 2000s that may be traced back to *Shiv Sena* followers and members. The *Asia Week* cited a statement by Bal Thackeray as stating "I am a great admirer of Hitler, and I'm not ashamed to say so. I do not say that I agree with all the methods that he employed, but he was a wonderful organizer and orator. And I feel that he and I have several things in common."⁴⁷ According to Bal Thackeray, India required an oppressor who was also able to act in a humanitarian manner.

Shift in *Shiv Sena's* Policies

Keshav Sitaram Thackeray and Savarkar were able to speak with one another; yet, the two were ideologically so distinct that it was impossible for them to ever work jointly. Whereas, Bal Thackeray had a great deal of respect for Savarkar.⁴⁸ Later, Bal Thackeray was overheard supporting a BJP candidate during a 1991 campaign event in Pune, where he reportedly said that Nathuram Godse's [a Hindu nationalist who on 30 January 1948 assassinated Mahatma Gandhi] actions should be celebrated rather than condemned.⁴⁹ In general, the *Shiv Sena* was considered to be a very right-wing political party or organization. When it first came to power in the early 2000s, the *Shiv Sena* was seen as even more right-wing than the BJP. Even though *Shiv Sena* only held power in Maharashtra once [from 1995 to 1999] and did so with the help of the BJP, and Bal Thackeray never held any sort of government office, his influence over the state was tremendous.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, Bal Thackeray passed away in 2012, and his son Uddhav Thackeray took over the party headship. Whereas BJP ascended to power in 2014 and Narendra Modi was elected as Prime Minister. In the year of 2019 Maharashtra state elections, *Shiv Sena* and the BJP worked together. But things didn't go accordingly, *Shiv Sena* was quite disappointed with the BJP due to the

elections' unpredicted results. Uddhav Thackeray stated that the BJP has misled them on multiple occasions, their promises were not maintained, and their treatment of our people was highly objectionable.⁵¹ Yet BJP agreed with *Shiv Sena* to give the position of Chief Minister of Maharashtra for at least 2.5 years to their leadership.⁵²

Uddhav Thackeray was selected for the role of Chief Minister when the Maha Vikas Agadi administration was established as the new governing coalition at the state level. Around two years, everything looked to be operating as usual, but hidden planning was being made for massive upheaval. Unpredictably, Eknath Shinde, a member of the *Shiv Sena*, joined forces with a large number of members of the legislative opposition and traveled to Guwahati. They spent around eight days at a five-star hotel, during which time they were successful in convincing other MLAs to side with them and resign their allegiance to Uddhav Thackeray. During their stay, it has been reported that they built up a tab for \$7 million in expenses. It is important to keep in mind that during this period, Assam was dealing with the terrible effects of floods. They made a comeback, struck an accord with the BJP, and formed a new government. Eknath Shinde was promoted to the position of Chief Minister, but Devendra Fadnavis, also a member of the BJP, was given the title of Deputy Chief Minister.⁵³

Uddhav Thackeray's points of view are remarkably similar to his grandfather [Keshav Sitaram Thackeray], in contradiction to his father, Bal Thackeray. In 2014, he stated that he has nothing against Muslims and that the *Shiv Sena* only opposes Muslims who engage in 'anti-national' activities. The *Shiv Sena's* viewpoint had become more moderate over time. In the 2022, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation election (BMC) elections held in 2017, *Shiv Sena* nominated several Muslim candidates, two of whom ended up winning.⁵⁴ The year 2019 indeed marked a turning point, as *Shiv Sena* began associating with the National Congress Party (NCP).

In the last two years of Uddhav Thackeray's government in Maharashtra, there were no incidents of communal violence. The Palghar incident was a notorious event that occurred during his presidency.⁵⁵ In the wake of the lynching of two monks and a driver on suspicion of being child kidnappers, the media went into an uproar. Some, including Arnab Goswami and Kangana Ranaut, attempted to give the incident a communal spin by suggesting that the Hindu community was under attack. The Home Minister later clarified that none of the 101 persons arrested were Muslims and that there wasn't any communal aspect to the incident; yet, some people continued coloring it in such a light.⁵⁶

Conclusion

Communal violence in India is a direct result of ethno-religious divergence and clash. Hate politics is widely seen as a root cause of India's communal violence. Even though there is a long-standing history of animosity between Hindus and Muslims in India, it now appears that the two communities are more divided than they have ever been. Savarkar used Hindutva as an aggressive ideology, arguing that India should be reserved for Hindus only and that all others should be forced out. The true founding father of the *Shiv Sena*, Keshav Sitaram Thackeray, believed in Hindutva as a purist manifestation of Hinduism. *Shiv Sena* rejected the principled Hindutva of its founder and embraced the more

opportunistic Hindutva, under Bal Thackeray, which cares solely about gaining and maintaining power and securing political interests. The research finds that the *Shiv Sena* was widely held responsible for the communal unrest in the Mumbai town of Bhiwandi in 1970, the riots there in 1984, and its involvement in the conflicts in Bombay in 1992-1993. In December 2003, only days before a match between Pakistan and India was to take place at Agra Sports Stadium, the cricket ground was vandalized by *Shiv Sena* activists. A lot of important, unproven, and sometimes biased news is shown on live TV to raise the ratings. Politicians often start riots to align themselves with a certain group of people and split the votes of an opposing political party.

Thus, the basic cause of all communal crises is the widespread communal environment and the communal antagonism that has developed between different groups by the political elites through hate politics. Moreover, the shift in *Shiv Sena's* ideological foundation has been the constant element that further confirms its manipulating behavior and due control of events for power capture. However, Bhagat Singh has asserted that class consciousness and economic stability can minimize communal conflict. He had a lot of hope for India's young people, for the sake of the Indian great future, the youth of today must come together in solidarity to oppose the extreme narrative and religious divisions.

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