

Hindutva Under Modi's Regime: Consequences for Regional and International Security

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ABSTRACT

In the wake of independence, Indian founding fathers realized that in a country highly divided into communal differences based on caste, creed, religion, ethnicity, and regionalism of conflicting nature, only secularism could work as a great cementing force for the diverse communities of India. That dream appeared short-lived and space for secular ideology faded away creating a vacuum and providing Hindutva with an opportunity for its growth by filling the vacuum in the Society. Over time, it has appeared as a dominant social movement than ever before and has, ultimately attained political dominance as a unique wave in the electoral success of a political party of Hindu nationalists, the BJP, under the leadership of Narendra Modi. As the domestic policies and strategic decisions under the Modi regime have been mostly influenced by the Hindu extremist ideology of RSS, the BJP government has made this narrative a social reality with its overarching implications on India's political landscape and its subsequent reflection on regional and international peace as well. Besides, an exclusive and non-accommodative strategy of Modi-led BJP in the guise of Hindu majoritarian norms has currently led India's transition into a destabilized parochial polity with regional consequences. The article attempts to search out historical evolution of Hindutva ideology, its features and dominance in the period of the BJP government from 2014 onwards. It also highlights the emerging nature of society in India as well as the threat to environment of the region.

Key Words: Modi Regime, RSS, Sangh Parivar, Hindutva, Communal Violence, Destabilized Polity, Sensitive Region, Regional Security.

Introduction

Being aware of the communal sensitivities, the leadership of the Congress tried to create 'unity in diversity' by establishing a political system based on democratic principles and Indian brand of secularism which was not akin to the European notion of secularism (Bhargava, 2002). This notion was one of the three competing concepts of nationalism, i.e., composite cultural (secularism), territorial (the idea

of Akhand Bharat) and religious nationalism(Hindutva ideology) presented by Hindu ideologue since the time of the Indian national movement (Varshney, 1993). In the wake of independence, Congress, as a ruling party, incorporated secularism in Indian constitution for the equal treatment of religious minorities. Though under various articles, the constitution provided guarantees for the protection of minorities especially religious communities yet there were some incompatibilities i.e., the contrast between articles 44 and 48. Article 44 describes equal treatment for all religions while article 48 projects the ‘Sanctity of Cow’, indirectly giving special respect to Hindu mythology. Such contradictory and confusing points created room for varying interpretations of secularism especially making it easier for Hindutva Ideologues in giving the controversial articles new meanings suitable for them (Rahman, 2017).

Whereas, Congress party has started to use religion by cultivating the concept of Ram Rajya in politics after the demise of PM Nehru; *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) has accelerated its speed, catapulting itself to the forefront by playing religious card publically in politics. The politicization of religion started promoting religious nationalism and helped it in reaching the highest level when a movement for demolition for Babri Masjid was being launched by the Sangh Parivar and at last, it was demolished in Ayodhya on 6th December 1992. Then there appeared the worst communal riots in 2002, in which an organized pogrom against Muslims took place while Narendra Modi was Chief Minister of Gujarat. Those riots portrayed his image of a hardliner Hindu nationalist (Venkatesan, 2004), and rose his status as a BJP’s leader of first-rank who remained the C. M. Gujarat for the period of 2001 to 2014 (Reuters, 2013).

On other hand, *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)* was expanding its influence in every segment of society as a Hindu nationalist organization and was spawning *Sangh Parivar* (i.e., family of organizations affiliated with Hindutva ideology) from the decade of 1960s (Palshikar, 2015). With a sustained campaign for ethno religious mobilization in the 1980s and '90s, RSS made Hindutva a mainstream ideology by infusing it across the Hindu community (Rajagopal, 2001). Those were the decades when Simultaneously, Hindutva started filling the vacuum left by the secular ideology of Congress as an alternate social and political force. (Bhatt & Mukta, 2000). From those days BJP started achieving unprecedented electoral success due to the active support of RSS. The party starting with 2 seats in 1984, reached on the goal post, winning 282 seats in 2014. After this victory, it began to implement the real political and cultural agenda of Hindutva. As its modus operandi, the Modi-led BJP openly held an anti-secular stance; however, it avoided indulging in more controversial issues in its 1st period. Later on, politics of polarization, being the main strategy of RSS, was followed forcefully by highlighting conflicting issues, upsetting the communal peace, dismantling old social fabric, manufacturing myths, creating Islamophobia, building a Ram Temple, abrogation of article 370 to end the special autonomy given to Kashmiris, and enforcement of ‘Uniform Civil Code’ to deprive Muslims

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of their *Personal Laws*. During this period, the violence against the minorities (Muslims and Christians) increased manifolds in scope and intensity.

It is pertinent to mention that India has been experiencing communal violence since its independence. Such incidents kept on increasing in frequency and intensity over time. However, a strikingly grim aspect of the Modi regime is that the communal violence is usually taken indifferently without any punishment under this regime and in some instances, involvement from state officials, ranging from inciting attacks by hate speeches upto intentionally ignoring proper investigation to set free the criminals. The environment of discrimination has further been legitimized by new policies and laws enforced state governments in present days (CSSS & International, 2017).

To sum up, Hindu religious nationalism has appeared as the most influential force during the BJP rule under the leadership of Modi than ever before. It has evolved itself into many dimensions with new expressions which operate far beyond the core ideological modal of the '*Sangh Parivar*' on achieving electoral success (Anderson, 2015). This article attempts to comprehend the permeation of Hindutva nationalism into new spheres such as ideological, societal, political, and regional etc. It also highlights the nature, modus operandi and effectiveness of Hindutva inspired complex networks and the threat posed by them, analyzing their intentions, capabilities and opportunities during BJP rule under Modi's leadership.

Theoretical Framework

As the numerous organizations of *Sangh Parivar*, indoctrinated with Hindutva ideology are highly resilient and complex as well. Complexity theory would be used to comprehend their evolution, relationship and outcome (Marion & Uhl-Bien, Complexity Theory and Al Qaeda: Examining Complex Leadership, 2003). This inter-disciplinary theory holds that the elements (agents) having similar needs or common purpose make bond to create a complex network, by establishing interdependent relationships, to achieve their required agenda because the strength and impact of such network are always greater than the sum of its components (Kauffman, 1995, p. 24). This bonding denoted as 'coupling' by Kauffman, maybe lose moderate or tight for the level of dependencies (Marion, *The Edge of Organization: Chaos and Complexity Theories of Formal Social Systems*, 1999, pp. 159-160). As the RSS expanded its access in Indian society, it spawned a network of groups seeking Hindu supremacy, called *Sangh Parivar*, a network of Hindutva associations (Palshikar, 2015).

At present, there exist numerous groups affiliating with *Sangh*, that are violent paramilitary associations and saffron terrorist organizations such as *Shiva Sena*, *Abhinav Bharat*, and *Bajrang Dal*, etc (Marshall, 2004). Ideology of these associations is same as that of Hindutva, They often make alliances with local groups and then these volunteer alliances create suitable horizontal and

perpendicular couplings to uphold the Hindutva agenda. Ultimately, in 90's Hindutva as an ideology first came to mainstream importance in public, (Basu, 2016, p. 12). Due to very complex and self-organized system having basic features of a successful network coupling, (interdependent bonding); adaptation, (have evolving nature); correlation, (the process of compromises or competitions based upon need); aggregation, (sets of agents or 'aggregates' united for a common purpose) (Holland, 1995); and recursion, (to develop many redundant pathways to contribute in network's resilience absorbing attacks on its parts) (Marion & Uhl-Bien, Complexity Theory and Al Qaeda: Examining Complex Leadership, 2003). Applying Complexity Theory as a yardstick, the evolution, fitness and modus operandi of various Hindu aggregates like Sang Privar have been examined in this paper. The paper also utilizes the Adversarial Threat Analysis Framework (ATAF), (Iqbal D. K., 2019), to assess the threat posed by Hindutva-inspired groups, examining their characteristics of ideology, capabilities, opportunities and support base etc

Hindu Nationalism: A Historical Pretext

The present elevation of Hindutva in Indian the society and politics is not a matter of a day, instead, its emergence and evolution have long traces in history back from early 20th century (Pande, 2015). So, Hindutva is an exclusionist ideology of the early 1920s that was presented by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in 1923. From the day first, the main goal of this ideology was to convert India state into a pure *Hindu Rashtra*. For the purpose, Keshav Baliram Hedgewar formed a Hindu nationalist organization RSS in 1925. The RSS started its work as an ideological and cultural body, having no political ambitions, with the main objective of energizing Hindu nation by constructing social character, getting Hindus united that were divided by caste, and creed etc, and improving their physical ability with the help of training and various exercises, creating training institutions (Vaishnav, 2019).

Golwalkar, who was a founding member of RSS, and the ideological successor of Savarkar, believe that Hindus are true Indians because India is their *pitrbhumi* (fatherland) and *punyabhumi* (holy land) for them. The Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist communities also fulfil the criteria, while the Muslim, Christian, Jew and Parsi are 'others' or 'foreign races' because they do not consider India as their holy land (Savarkar, Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?, 1923, p. 113). He stressed that these foreigners must adopt and admit splendor of Hindu language and culture; ; must give honour to Hindu religion; or stay in the country as a subordinate citizens without any privileges and rights (Golwalkar, 1939, p. 47).

It is pertinent to note that Modi considers MS Golwalkar (*RSS's second sarsanghchalak, (1940-73)*) as his "*Pujniya Shri Guruji*" (guru worthy of worship). (Modi, 2014). The Golwalkar is 2nd most impressive personality while Swami Vivekananda is the first; putting influence on the life of Modi as he

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mentioned in a book “*Jyotipunj*” (beams of light), in which he described the life history of sixteen RSS men who inspired him (Dar, 2021). Though a few BJP politicians show dissent on some points of Golwalker's ideology yet it is only for world consumption. As Nivedita Menon, while exploring deep fault-line within the Hindutva conglomerate, particularly a political strife in the BJP and the Shiv Sena, mentions that whoever wins this battle, the result will be the same, the victory of Hindutva (Mohammad-Arif & Naudet, 2020).

The Hindutva leadership believes that the invaders and imperial powers subjugated and exploited the Hindu majority after getting control over the land. Particularly, the Muslim rule in India caused huge destruction for Hindus because of vast religious suppression, and economic deprivation. They highlighted this narrative for creating hatred for Muslims and tried to unite Hindus that were divided in numerous section, as the division is mentioned by the founder of RSS, V.D Savarkar, (Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*, 1923). This very narrative has created characteristics of present Indian state which has become an autocracy based on Hindu majority, especially in second tenure of Modi government. In other words, Hindu Nationalism is a bitters response to composite cultural nationalism and negate its ideals. Hindu nationalism projects itself every sphere of life in religious context and tries to make a religious society for establishment of a strong Hindu nation (Ahmed D. R., 2020).

Characteristics of Hindutva Ideology

a) A Violent Ideology

Hindutva is a violent ideology intending to create Hindu supremacy. Violence is its core belief for attaining its goal of establishing a Hindu *Rashtra* by reconverting Christians and Muslims into Hinduism or receding their citizenship or pushing them out from India (Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*, 1923).

Hindutva inspired members of Sangh Parivar are not only violent extremists but they are alleged terrorists involved in terrorist attacks (Marshall, 2004), such as Jalna Mosque bomb blast in Aug. 2004; Malegaon in 2006; the Samjhota Express terrorist attack, Feb. 2007, Ajmer Dargah bombing Oct. 2007, and Mecca Masjid blast in May 2007 etc and other unreported incidents which are higher in number according to Indian journalists. While a 28% increase has been noticed in communal violence inflicted by Hindutva terrorist groups from which Shiv Sena and Bajrang Dal, etc, remained prominent. from 2014 to 2017, the frequency and intensity of such riots have grown later on (CSSS & International, 2017). Strong connections have emerged between militants involved in terrorist activities and Hindutva outfits. In addition, several cases of zealots of Sangh outfits involved in bomb-making have come to light due to accidental explosions from various places (Bidwai, 2008).

Even present Hindutva leadership loudly defends the idea of defensive violence as an inherent right. For example, the founder of Shiv Sena, Bal-Thackeray, once told in an interview on television, That since terrorism of Muslims is growing, so Hindus have to counter it with terrorism and they needed suicide groups armed with bombs to protect Hindus and India (Politicians indulge in hate speech with impunity, 2009).

b) A Fascist Design

The evolution of Hindutva shows its global ideological engagements, going back to European Fascism, where its links can be traced with Nazism and Fascism from earlier days as mentioned by Casolari while exploring the roots of Hindutva. He has mentioned B. S. Moonji's tour of Europe in 1931 and his long stay in Italy, where he met with Mussolini and visited some important military schools. In return, he established a military training school named Bhonsala Military School (BMS) in the 1930s, to impart training of fighting skills to young recruits of the RSS and affiliates (Casolari, 2000). Having the same ideals, MS Golwalkar, who was the second supreme leader of RSS, praised the Holocaust and was of the opinion, it to be an effective way to deal with the minorities of India (Nayar, 2018). Many other researchers like Bhatt (2001), Hansen and Jaffreot (1998), and George (2016) have presented the idea that RSS is an entity of Hindu fascists to the core; however, a few writers are not fully agreed with the point (Banaji, 2018). Dr Benjamin Zachariah, an expert on Indian history, says that RSS is a fascist movement which has been continuously running since its establishment in 1925. The language of its leaders still has not changed; they are still using the ideology of Savarkar or Golwalkar for indoctrinating their members (Chakrabarty, 2020). Similarly an eminent scholar, Desai also labelled Sangh as an aggregate of fascist groups. She further adds that enthusiasm of RSS members with which they have taken part in Modi's campaign refers that Modi regime is one of the fascist government (Desai, 2016, p. 72).

c) Transnational Links

Hindutva organizations have transnational links with militant organizations of neighbouring countries eg., Sri Lankan *Bodu Bala Sena*, in Myanmar the 969, Nepal Defense Army (NDA), and *Ranabir Sena* (RS), both terrorist groups to safeguard the only Hindu Kingdom in Nepal. Similarly Abhinav Bharat kept close links with prior monarchy of Nepal (Khan, 2013). Besides that Indian sponsorship of anti-Pakistan TTP and JuA etc is evident with sound proofs as presented by Pakistan after the investigation of each terrorist attack. (*Geo News*, July 24, 2021).

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d) An Expansionist View

Hindutva has also an expansionist design that is reflected by website of RSS on which it produced maps of *Akhand Bharat* that include all the areas of the Empire of Chandragupta Maurya. Carrying the dream of greater India, BJS passed a resolution in 1965, saying that “*Akhand Bharat* will be a reality, unifying India and Pakistan.” In September 2007, Lt. Col Purohit, a founding member of *Abhinav Bharat*, openly defended the idea of Hindu Rashtra and Akhand Bharat (Jaffrelot, *Abhinav Bharat, the Malegaon Blast and Hindu Nationalism: Resisting and Emulating Islamist Terrorism*, 2010),

Similarly, BJP leadership, such as Modi and former secretary-general of Congress, Ram Madhav asserts that subcontinent would again become one country named *Sanskritik Bharat or Akhand Bharat with consent of people*. According to a few scholars like Dhamija, RSS as well as BJP have, later, given up the idea. The fact is that most of the politicians of BJP avoided mentioning *Akhand Bharat* but the RSS and Sangh Parivar are still religiously pursuing the idea by their statements and activities (Dhamija, 2018).

Rise of the Sangh Parivar

Hindutva organizations began moving to the political arena when the Ram-Janam-Bhoomi movement started gathering momentum in 1980 to acquire the site of Babri Masjid situated in Ayodhya (UP). For this purpose, an aggressive violent campaign was started by *Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)* in the leadership of LK Advani to mobilize masses for the construction of a *Ram Mandir* temple at this place. During communal violence, about 2000 to 3000 people, mostly Muslims were killed mercilessly with the collusion of police; thousands were displaced; or fled away until armed forces were deployed to control Hindutva mobs (Banaji, 2018). On other hand, RSS was expanding its access in every segment of society as a Hindu nationalist organization and was spawning Sangh Parivar groups such as from militants groups like *Shiv Sena* and *Abhinav Bharat* to a right-wing organization of student, *the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP)*; cultural organizations i.e., *Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)*; charity-based NGOs eg. *Sewa Bharati*; various trade unions eg. *Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh*; farmers' unions eg. *Bharatiya Kisan Sangh*; and Female groups eg. such as *Rashtriya Sevika Samiti* and *Sadhvi Shakti Parishad*, from the decade of 1960s (Palshikar, 2015).

Simultaneously, in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, an organized cultural campaign utilizing modern techniques and social services movements were launched to acquire goodwill for Hindutva ideology and its agenda (Oza, 2013). Furthermore, Muslims were projected as an enemy of Hindus for creating threat perception, as well as Hindutva narrative was instilled into public consciousness through popular cultural productions, i.e., films, cultural stages, etc (Murty, 2009). By infusing the concept of Hindutva across the Hindu community, the RSS was

using its supervising influence to highlight Hindu identity combining all aspects of life (Rajagopal, 2001). Meantime, the worst communal riots of 2002 broke out in Gujarat after a few months of Modi's appointment as Chief Minister in 2001. The state government and law enforcement agencies were complicit in this heinous act of the Muslim pogrom (Oliver & Harding, 2003). Modi was considered a symbol of terror. Consequently the UK and USA refused him to give entry visa at that time. However, in domestic politics, this massacre projected him as an ardent hardliner among religious nationalists. It also raised him to a leader of first line in BJP. Thus he remained CM Gujarat from 2001 to 2014 (Timeline: The rise of Narendra Modi, 2012). What was the cause and who was responsible for triggering the 2002 pogrom is debatable as fact-finding commission of state under BJP government and that of Union government presented contradictory reports about the cause of fire (Sarkar, 2002)?

This forceful campaign of ethno religious mobilisation started by the Sangh Parivar and RSS paid much benefit to the BJP. As the party had only two seats of *Loke Sabha* in 1984, its number of seats increased upto 88 in 1989, upto 120 in 1991, upto 161 in 1996, while upto 178 in 1998. Due to its expanding electoral base, BJP reached power under PM Vajpayee in New Delhi, in the late 90s. The party's first two stints were short-lived. However, starting from 1999, it completed its full term and then with the more active support of Sangh it made a huge leap under the leadership of Modi by winning 282 seats in the elections held in 2014. (Friedlander, 2016).

Capabilities of Hindutva Affiliates

Under Modi regime, Hindutva inspired groups have rapidly increased their capabilities concerning qualities and number of fighters, various institutes of training, their financial resources alongwith various types of and weapons according to Indian journalists. For instance, Bhonsala Military School (BMS) is now producing dozen of batches per annum of Hindutva militants like Col. Purohit who has also imparted training at BMS. Similarly, VHP has established another wing of radical Hindu women group named *Durga Vahini* (A type of Army) that includes thousands of Hindu women who are being trained for combating (*BBC News*, November 09, 2014). There are about fifty known and many more hidden training camps run by *Hindu Swabhimani*, in which history of Hindu subjugation is taught along with training of various fighting skills (Rana, 2016). According to an estimate, the RSS have six million Hindutva radicals that are spread all across the Bharat who could be instantly mobilized and used for communal riots.

Under Modi's regime, the Indian curriculum is being changed for radicalization of next Hindu generations, to continue supply of extremists, who would be willing to do or die for the sake ideology. Moreover, there are almost 25,000 Hindu seminaries organized by RSS in India that are propagating

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intolerance and even hate in minds of students whose number is five to six millions (Iqbal D. K., 2019).

Support Base Available for Sangh Parivar

It is a fact that with an organized cultural campaign of RSS, the concept of Hindutva had become mainstream ideology across the Hindu community during the '80s and '90s (Rajagopal, 2001). However, RSS influence reached in power corridors during Modi-led BJP rule. As almost half of his cabinet ministers are from RSS who had links with Sangh, being workers of its students' cadre, ABVP (Sharma, 2016). The key ranks of the BJP establishment are filled with people ie, home minister Amit Sha and NSA Ajit Doval etc having strong *Hindutva* background. An obvious indicator, perhaps, of BJP link with Hindutva ideologues is the appointment of a Yogi Adityanath as chief minister UP, who is monk, founder of *anti-Romeo squads* (moral police) and *Hindu Yuva Vahini*, a Hindu militant organization.. This group is involved in fights against so-called *Love Jihad*, and in the *Ghar Wapsi* movement, (Katju, 2015).

During the Modi rule, Hindutva affiliates are shaping various policies under eight think tanks, that are funded by RSS. These are Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation, Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF), Forum for Integrated National Security, India Policy Foundation (IPF), Public Policy Research Centre Forum for Strategic and Security Studies and Centre for Policy Studies, that have uninterrupted reach and contacts with strategy formulating institutions. Such accesses has provided RSS with opportunity not only to influence but also formulate Indian policies on everything ie, commerce, industry, food security, education and national defence etc (Frayer, May 3, 2019). The RSS which has been banned by the Indian government on three separate occasions (1948, 1975, 1992) and Sang Parivar which has at least thirty six extremist affiliates are now themselves the establishment of India (Andersen & Damle, 2018).

Keeping in mind the current domination of RSS and Sangh Parivar in the society, polity and politics of India, it can be easily concluded that the environment is now much conducive for the growth of Hindutva groups and the implementation of an exclusive Hindutva agenda based on violence.

BJP under Modi (1ST Tenure)

During his first tenure, Modi avoided indulging in more controversial issues. However, He showed aggressive Hindu nationalism had attempted to cultivate patriotism by highlighting national security a major issue. His foreign policy was based on internal and external security, and defence modernity under the hegemonic design of RSS. Meanwhile, victimization of minorities by the radical

elements of Sangh Privar called vigilantes, working as a form of cultural policing, continued with the collusion of the state apparatus (Jaffrelot, A de facto ethnic democracy? The obliteration and targeting of the Other, Hindu vigilantes and the making of an ethno-state, 2019).

Such Hindutva vigilantism appeared in various fields. They attacked Muslims accusing them of persuading Hindu girls for marriage and then for conversion from Hinduism to Islam, labelling this action as *love jihad*. So an organized movement of *Ghar wapsi* (homecoming) for converting Muslims and Christians towards the Hindu faith was started in response to *love jihad*. For the protection of the cow, Hindutva activists formed an organization named *Gau Raksha Dal* for monitoring roads to prevent Muslims from taking cows for slaughtering. This group was one of related organizations of the *Sangh Parivar* like the *Bajrang Dal*, a violent group that was created in 1984, for the Ayodhya movement (Jaffrelot, India's Democracy at 70: Toward a Hindu State?, 2017). The *Gau Raksha Dal* has been following extra-judicial methods of imposing its will, which is spreading vigilante cruelty, lynching, and violence of mobs. In the years of 2015 to 2018, more than 46 Muslims were beaten to death by *Gau Raksha Dal*. There were 1,620 reported incidents of atrocities against the Christians on labelling them as the 'Pope's soldiers', between January 2014 and March 2018 (We're Indians Too, 2019).

Concerning to violence against Muslim, a joint report by UK-Bases Minority Rights Groups International (MRG) and Centre for Study of Society and Secularism of Mumbai said that almost 700 incidents of communal violence were reported in India during 2017, in which 86 persons were killed and 2321 were injured excluding unreported cases (Bhowmick, 2017). In most of the violent incidents, as well as in major terror attacks, the politicians and the state apparatus allegedly remained in collusion to walk the perpetrators free (Iqbal M. , 2019). Those criminals were not only acquitted in such cases but have also been rewarded. For example Pragya Thakur, who was yet under trial for Malegaon bomb blasts case of 2008, was given a ticket to contest the 2019 general election by BJP and later, was appointed to a defence panel in parliament but this appointment was cancelled due to protest of opposition (Varadarajan, 2019). Indian government had aggravated tensions already sensitive border with Pakistan on LOC, with China on LAC, alongwith Nepal and Bangladesh. This strategy was used to strengthen electoral support within the country. Pakistan has an unresolved Kashmir issue along with other territorial conflicts and water disputes. The Indian leadership started threatening Pakistan to stop its water up to a maximum level to punish it (Bhatti, Mustafa, & Awan, 2019).

The planned subversive activities were started under the supervision of Indian NSA Ajit Doval in Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan, former FATA and Karachi etc. In recent research work, it is mentioned that India is involved in spy activities sponsoring the Bloch and Pashtun insurgencies in Pakistan. These facts have been consolidated through off the record admissions of Indian intelligence

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officers posted in Afghanistan (Paliwal, 2017, p. 282). Paliwal (2017: 284) has further added that India is playing a proxy war against the state of Pakistan while sitting in Kabul.

Such as, 'criminal chiding the judge' even Indian government has been launching false propaganda campaign to malign Pakistan as a harbinger of terrorism as exposed by European *DisinfoLab*. Executive Director of DisinfoLab, of Brussels Alexander Alaphilippe told, they have exposed a largest and widest network. The network was basically established to malign Pakistan, and exert itself on policy-making process of UNHRC and EU parliament as reported by Abid Hussain & Shruti Menon quoting the *DisinfoLab*. (*BBC News*, Dec 10, 2020). New Delhi's bilateral relations with other neighbours also remained in flux, from strained to hostile like Nepal's blockade in 2015 (Khan, 2013).

The Second Term of Modi

In wake of a false flag operation, (as latterly exposed by the Republic TV anchor Arnab Goswami) of Pulwama in February 2019, the Indian attack at Balakot in Pakistan; the prompt response of Pakistani Air Force shooting down two Indian fighter jets; and military stand-off on the border for intentionally arousing the level of threat perception, leading the region towards instability (Alam, Bhatti, & Awan, 2020). In that hyper tense situation of anti-Pakistan, and anti-Muslim rhetoric, the second term has started with heavy mandate given to BJP, in general elections of 2019. It made Modi regime overconfident to re-address all the controversial matters, which have been declared in election campaigns but ignored in its first tenure. Thus, it started to polarize Indian society from the first day and has put it at the crossroad of transformation according to RSS aspirations, in leadership Modi, Ajit Doval and Amit Shah. India is now on the path of an exclusive and totalitarian state where Hindutva is at fore front in decision making process, (Ahmed D. R., 2020). The heavy mandate also enabled BJP to form own government, amend Indian laws at will, and propagate Hindu Nationalism openly contrary its first tenure when it could not do so without allies support which was not available in these matters. Moreover, Modi government has now aggressively followed the Hindutva programme, because of institutionalization of Hindutva has been finalized by grounding it in political, administrative, social and cultural spheres (Mahmudabad, 2019).

On 5th August 2019, abrogation of Article 370 was the first attack of this regime when a brutal clampdown was placed, all communication sources were curtailed, and political leaders were arrested in Indian held Kashmir (IHK). An additional armed force consisted of 38,000 personals was sent to IHK for internal security; repression and suppression of Kashmiris are continuing unabated; blatant atrocities and human rights violations are being inflicted by Indian soldiers which are severely affecting their honour, lives and property. In response, the local

insurgency movement is gaining fresh momentum in IHK. The Kashmiris people especially educated youth are joining the resistance movement. The Indian unilateral measure, while defying all the UN resolutions and bilateral agreements, the annexation of Kashmir has not only to worsen the already precarious situation of IHK but also created a new threat to peace and stability of the region, (Alam, Bhatti, & Awan, 2020).

The BJP authorities have later started granting domiciles in IHK to non-Kashmiris under the policy of J&K Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) 2020, to turn Muslims into a minority and to change the demographic proportion in IHK. This was another important step to fulfil the long-standing agenda of RSS (Tripathi, 2019). To enforce more severe punishments on the Kashmiris on labelling them terrorists who oppose Indian occupation of disputed Kashmir, already existing anti-terror law was amended in 2019. Similarly, under a new policy implemented in April 2020, authorities started to bury Kashmiris in unmarked graves far away from their villages. This policy has enhanced protests and insurgency in the disputed region (*The Dawn*, February 9, 2021). Owing to a continued insurgency in the territory, India is constantly blaming Pakistan for helping insurgents. However, impartial analysts suggest that most of insurgents are local Kashmiris that are not coming from Pakistan, (Mustafa, 2019).

In the meantime, judicial decisions were also creating miseries for the Muslims not to mention the brutal administrative measures. For instance, Supreme Court has legitimized the unlawful demolishing of *Babri Masjid*. This long-awaited verdict has not only encouraged Hindu militants who demolished the mosque but also has satisfied the will of the majority despite its weak legal claim (Vanaik, 2019).

Likewise, legislation of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in December 2019 is a 2nd major reckless step of Modi which has dreadfully threatened the security of Indian Muslims because they will have to prove their citizenship once again after residing in India from generations. It has initiated a resistance on national level in the country because it is a discriminatory step even contrary to article 25(A) of the Indian constitution and an aggressive beginning towards making Hindu *Rashtra* (Raina, 2019). Contrary to Amit Shah's claim of swift Registration in NRC, it will consequently strip the citizenship of millions of Indian Muslims (Salam, 2020).

On the other hand, the Hindutva strategy of violence is now being pursued more blatantly on the state level. The state violence to suppress Shaheen Bagh protests against CAA that began on December 15, 2019, is one of the violent incidents, in which 30 people were murdered in Delhi. Similarly the brutal police action on students of Jamia Millia University who were peacefully protesting against the CAA and then on the students of other universities, ie, Muslim University of Aligarh, as well as Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), who were protesting against the privatization of higher education as well as the CAA. The

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professors of JNU such as Jayati Ghosh and her colleagues were also victimized by persecution on raising voice against unlawful police actions (Mahaprashasta, 2020).

The victimization of intellectuals and journalists is continued, for example, Rajdeep Sardesai (anchor of India Today TV) and Vinod Joshi (editor of Caravan news) are facing charges of sedition over their reporting the two-month-long protest of farmers, demanding the withdrawal of new agriculture laws (*The Dawn*, February 2, 2021).

The state violence against intellectuals extends even up to foreign researchers like Wendy Doniger, Sheldon Pollock, and Audrey Truschke etc who do not take the line of Hindutva proponents beyond India's borders, as they are subjected to insulting abuses on social media by Sangh's activists (Moses, 2018). A Swedish environmental activist and journalist GRETA has been charged with conspiracy and provocation while she was reporting the violence against farmers agitating on agriculture laws (*The Dawn*, February 27, 2021)? So, the task of scholars and media persons to raise voice against Hindutva activities is very difficult because they have to face serious consequences not only in India but also across the globe (Mathur, 2020).

Though Muslims and Christians were a prime target of violent groups yet this pool of killing is now being expanded to Hindu critics of Hindutva, RSS-BJP rule, including the killing of an author, Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare (a vocal critic of *Hindutva*), MM Kalburgi and Gauri Lankesh (critics of Modi led BJP government). Responsibility for all these incidents is allegedly put on Hindutva groups because those people were hurting Hindu sentiments according to Hindu activists (Iqbal D. K., 2019).

The astonishing thing is that each time Modi has done so, his support has raised, even as the promised benefits such as stability, economic growth, development and national strength except a stronger wave of Hindutva, the growth of right-wing extremism and 'saffron terrorism' have not reached to the people (Leidig, 2020).

Impact on Indian Society and Regional Security

Today India is a very different country under the Hindutva umbrella from that of the initial decades. It was once a state where people were united in their diversity is now a society divided. India is now a country where Muslims have been excluded through CAA; Kashmiris have been deprived of their constitutional autonomy; peacefully protesting people are beaten such as farmers for defending their interest; Doctors for protesting on new practitioners law; the student for protesting against attacks on intellectuals; to say nothing of the women who speak up against India's recent rape culture, and the Dalits who fight caste oppression (Krishnan, 2021). The people are constantly resisting such

discriminatory measures despite facing state violence. For instance, nothing seems to have changed in IHK vis-a-vis destabilization, instead, Indian harsh measures have catapulted the valley to further precariousness and a more uncontrollable level (Roommana, 2020). Such use of force has always reciprocal effect compelling people to follow non-political methods. There is a sure chance of Muslim rage bursting into violence, turning the youth towards arms. The current sudden increase in Hidutva violence may create a new surge in Islamic radicalization (Ramachandran, 2020).

It is now evident that Modi's 2nd term is not only limited in changing the domestic prospect of the society, but creating deep impact on South Asian regional security and that of the World as well. New Delhi's geopolitical ambition along with the hegemonic design is a constant threat to the peace and stability of neighbouring countries (Khalid, 2021). It intends to keep the neighbours particularly Pakistan destabilized by sponsoring terrorist attacks and promoting subversive activities, in other words imposing Hybrid or 5th generation war, (*The Dawn*, February 7, 2021). Indian involvement to sponsor terrorist activities and terror financing in Pakistan has been exposed time and again by Pakistani officials with 'undoubted and concrete' evidence as it was announced after an investigation of the Lahore car bomb blast. PM Imran Khan has again asked the world community to act against Delhi for its 'rogue behaviour' towards its neighbours (*The Dawn*, July 5, 2021).

Most of the analysts are highlighting the security threat in the region on changing autonomous status of IHK, apprehending that firstly, prevailing Indian crackdown might badly backfire putting the whole region into instability (Kugelman, 2019). Secondly, contrary to Modi's desperate attempt on eliminating Kashmir's autonomous status on August 5, 2019, to make Pakistan irrelevant to Kashmir, India has made it even more relevant along with Kashmiri peoples. Both parties have now no option but to resist and erase the Indian expansionist hegemonic design (Hussain, 2021). Thirdly, the Indo-Pak confrontation is likely because an exhausted India could think of limited war against Pakistan, after accusing it of supporting Kashmiris freedom movement for diverting attention from the internal precarious situation in IHK. If such situation appeared in two nuclear armed countries, it would cross ultimately thresh-hold of traditional weaponry upto nuclear technology, Consequently, it will devastate the region and probably will impact the world as well, (Alam, Bhatti, & Awan, 2020).

On the other border, after Indian reinforcement of military infrastructures along the LAC (*BBC News*, June 16, 2020); and inclusion of disputed areas ie, Ladakh and Aksai Chin into new maps of India, while China has to give a befitting response to prevent India from its unilateral illegal measures. Consequently, serious confrontation with the Indian army in the Pangong Tso region and Galwan valley occurred later on various occasions. (*The Global Times*, June 17, 2020), Despite deescalating attempts, the situation is very critical and if it is accelerated by any misadventure, according to defence analysts, it would be very dangerous

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due to advanced and electromagnetic warfare technology of current age, (*The Global Times*, June 21, 2020).

Despite the real threat perception in the region, India is heedless to alarming bells and repeating dangerous rhetoric on the myth of Indian invincibility as mentioned by. Dr N. C. Asthana IPS (Retd), the scholar of security affairs, in his new book. He writes that India can not win war against Pakistan due to the existing realities of word politics and military power. Explaining the point he says, in any adventurous war, the moment Pakistan will sense losing conventional war against bigger military of India military it will immediately turn to nuclear warfare. (Asthana, 2020).

Sensitivities of the Region and Security Situation

South Asia is already a sensitive region that faces long-standing issues and is usually described as the most unsafe region in the world owing to rising wave of radicalism militancy and terrorism. It is also known as nuclear flash point through the Globe because three hostile nuclear powers in the region under the current anarchic international system (Waltz, 2000).

Having several ethnic, communal, religious and territorial conflicts and resultant military confrontations among players of the region along with nuclearization of regional states (Ahmed & Bhatnagar, 2008), there are multi-dimensional interests of Major Powers in the region with an Indian-centric approach (Flake, et al., 2017). Those interests might be of strategic nature, of political influence or economic field. Currently the involvement of major powers have been increasing because of the US role of reducing Chinese influence and its containment through Indian Ocean by deepening ties with New Delhi, as US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has publically said (Harris, 2017). A similar viewpoint is currently given by President Biden that the interstate civil war in Afghanistan would consequently affect not only the region but the whole world because the bigger powers are also stalking holders of the issue (*The Dawn*, July 9, 2021).

The geo-strategic importance of south Asia has increased with US forces withdrawal from Afghanistan. According to defence analysts, the American troop's withdrawal is a tactic of shifting of goalposts as a shift from direct to indirect intervention as hinted by Indian FM Jaishankar (*The Washington Post* July 28, 2021). Whereas, it is a fact that indirect interventions always tend to allow proxies to act more dangerously. Afghanistan is one place where proxy war by regional and big powers will continue as it has been happening in the past (Noor, 2021).

On the other side, despite the LOC ceasefire deal of February 25, 2021, the hostile relationship persist between India and Pakistan, for having numerous core issues such as the Kashmir conflict and many roadblocks in the way, being marred

by lingering tensions rooted in religion and identity-related issues which have now been aggravated by existing dominance of Hindutva ideology in India. Keeping in view, the current geopolitical situation of the region such as the Indian alliance with the US; the Pak-China close relationship; the Indo-China border conflict; unresolved Kashmir conflict; Afghanistan crises; US-China tensions; and China's resolve to resist US supremacy etc, one can not underestimate the security concerns of the region without changing the contexts in which these tensions operate (Hussain, 2021).

On observing the disastrous situation of the region, in his first news briefing of 2021, the UN Secretary-General has again urged Pakistan and India for serious mutual discussion to address conflicting issues, because confrontation between the Pakistan and India countries will not only be absolute catastrophe for them but whole world. He stressed the need to fully respect human rights in IHK and further said that things are not going in the right direction, for tensions are escalating in the region, and offered his good offices for resolution of issues peacefully which cannot be solved military means. Referring to his previous statement the Secretary told that he wanted to decrease tensions through implementation of UNSC resolutions effectively, (*The Dawn*, January 30, 2021).

Conclusion

It is evident from the historical perspective of Hindutva that it has the inherent ability of dynamism and efficacy to change its facets without giving up core views. At present, Hindutva has projected itself as a combination of Hindu fundamentalism and fascism. It is a combination of Hindu way of life, its religion and politics. Thus it is an ideology as well as a movement of RSS that is a profoundly religious and aggressively political form of extremist Hindu nationalism

The RSS has spawned the *Sangh Privar* having numerous outfits and groups indoctrinated with Hindutva ideology. These groups have created suitable couplings by establishing interdependent relationships under a highly complex network which has put a more impressive impact on society, politics and polity because the strength and impact of such network, as truly stated by Complexity theory, is always greater than the sum of its components. Besides, the Sangh has strengthened itself by enhancing its capabilities manyfold by utilizing available opportunities and support base provided by BJP government following the RSS agenda under the Modi regime. Consequently, Hindutva inspired groups are now in dominating position in every sphere of life. While keeping in view the Capacity and capabilities of RSS and Sangh zealots, according to the Adversarial Threat Analysis Framework (ATAF), are capable of posing threat to the already fragile Indian social fabric..

This potential impact of Hindu nationalism does not necessarily end within India's borders and is not limited to changing the domestic landscape of Indian

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society. It is not only creating an impact on Indian society and South Asian regional security but the world. New Delhi's aggressive posture with a hegemonic mindset and the desire for domination over its neighbours are a constant threat to South Asian stability and security which is already the most hazardous region and also a nuclear flash point in the world due to increasing trends of militancy and terrorism; major powers' multi-dimensional interests of strategic nature; hostile relationship of India with Pakistan and with china; unresolved Kashmir issue; and Afghanistan crises, etc.

In sum, looking forward with the Indian expansionist mindset and its aggressive foreign policy, regional peace and stability would remain in a critical situation and have serious consequences for the world due to its spiraling effect.

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