

**'HUM MANDIR WAHIN BANAYENGE':
UNDERSTANDING THE IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS OF
THE SANGH PARIVAR IN THE AYODHYA MOVEMENT
(1983-1992)**

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled '**Hum Mandir Wahin Banayenge**' : Understanding The Ideology And Politics Of The Sangh Parivar In The Ayodhya Movement (1983-1992), submitted by **Sutapa Das** is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of **Master Of Philosophy** degree of this University. The work presented is original and has not been submitted in part or full for any other degree of this or any other University to the best of my knowledge.

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INTRODUCTION

In a developing multi religious country like India with low literacy rate and the potential for mass mobilization, the scope of using religion as a political instrument is considerable. Communal or community based religious formations and political parties based on religion have exploited this potential. As political consciousness rises, religion as sectarian beliefs becomes an effective social communication channel. Ayodhya movement is the glaring example of it. The Ayodhya movement is being spearheaded by a plethora of organisations, the patriarch of which is Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS), the real controller of all other organisations. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is its political wing; Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), is the organisation translating the Hindutva political agenda on emotive, religious grounds; Bajrang Dal consists of lumpens, who execute the violent acts against minorities; Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram is engaged in promoting Brahmanical norms against Adivasis, and Rashtrasevika Samiti is the women's wing,

subordinate to the male organisation, RSS. In addition there are other organisations like Sarawati Shishu Mandirs which inculcate the young mind with a brahminical version of Hinduism and hatred or distrust towards minorities. These are collectively called the Sangh Parivar (SP).

The Ayodhya movement distinctly exposed how the belief and ethical system of Hindu Philosophy were consciously and systematically given obscurantist and reactionary interpretations by Sangh Parivar which not only led to widespread communal riots, mutual distrust and hatred but also challenged the very concept of secularism and nationalism on which the unity and integrity of our country is based. It is to be noted that believers experience and see faith in a variety of ways. Sangh Parivar seeks to erase this variety, homogenize the ways religion and religion communities look at Hindu culture and thus transform faith into a communal and totalitarian phenomenon.

The Ayodhya movement reveals how through country wide signature campaigns, the Santh Yatra, Shri Ram Jyoti Yatra, Shri Ram Shila Pujan, Shri Ram Paduka Pujan, Advani's Rathayatra, the actual shilanyas by a Harijan, 'Religion as faith' is transformed to 'Religion as ideology'.¹ Ram emerges here as the prime mobilizing and emotive force where different sectarian Bhakti cult present in Hindu culture is erased

¹ For details see, Rushtam Bharucha, *The Question of Faith*, (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1993).

in favour of a broader 'Hindu culture' which is then made equivalent and identical to Indian culture or Indianess and Indian Nationalism.

My dissertation is a modest attempt to show that the basic problem regarding Ayodhya Movement in the popular culture lies in this totalitarian phenomenon. Along with this hierarchization and ultimately exclusion of other religions in terms of their validity, authenticity and appeal in the public sphere creates social tensions and communal riots.

In the Ayodhya mobilization, Muslims are always shown as destroyers. My interview with Champath Rai, the Sayukth Mahamantri of VHP ² confirmed how this narrow image has been systematically and symbolically portrayed to draw legitimacy and rightfulness to initiate Ayodhya Movement. For example on 25 September, 1987 Ramjanaki Rathayatra was organised from Sitamarhi. The procession was extremely symbolic. In the words of Champath Rai "Ram's idol, carried in a vehicle, was placed inside a jail like structure with upper part of the structure resembling a temple. Public meetings were organised and when people asked why Ram is locked in such a jail like structure, they were told the history of Islamic aggression and were asked to participate in the movement to free Ramjanmabhoomi"³. The movement through symbolic

² Interview, Rai, Champath, (August 31, VHP Office, R.K Puram, New Delhi,2002).

³ Ibid

action like this, public meetings, propaganda and communal narration of history tried to create an impact on the minds of the people at the grass root level.

My dissertation is also an attempt to show the danger posed by this movement in the intellectual sphere, where to counter the historicity of a particular event, the Sangh Parivar have put forward their own historical and archaeological evidence, stressing those very criteria of truth, objectivity, authenticity and rationality which is the basic premise on which secular academia base itself. But when their validity of evidence is put to question they take a vacillating stance where faith is utilized as the ultimate trump card. This happened, for example, when a proposal to set up a Historian's Committee to analyse the history of Babri Masjid was initiated, at a strategic juncture. The validity of historical evidence was categorically denied -"with the Hindu it is the matter of faith that Bhagwan Ram was born where the Babri Masjid is. No government or court can sit in judgement over it."⁴ However despite their ultimate resort to faith, the effort to make rational argument and authenticate their premises and sources as far as possible continues.⁵

⁴ *Organiser*, (April 15,1982.)

⁵ See Appendix of My Dissertation.

This dissertation also addresses the question as to why the movement gathered so much momentum in the late 20th century and not earlier despite the incentives in the colonial period and during the days of Partition. I would like to argue through my dissertation that this is because, the movement and ultimately the demolition could take place because of the juxtaposition of multiple factors. The factors like the communal ideological build up beginning from the pre-independence period through the writings of Savarkar, Golwalkar etc., the partial explanation of social reality like Partition by stressing only on the Hindu holocaust, certain political development of our time, the economic scenario, the non functioning of the state law and order machinery and most important of all the mass mobilization strategy adopted through the communal appropriation of faith and religiosity of common Hindu masses, all played a role.

I have divided my chapters in the following heads:

❖ **The Legendary significance and The Historical background of the Ayodhya movement**

The chapter begins with the legendary significance of Ram along with a brief outline of the controversies related to Ayodhya movement. The chapter ends with the brief survey of existing literature on Ayodhya movement.

❖ **The Ideological base of the Ayodhya movement**

The chapter tries to trace how Hindutva, a distinct communal ideology coined by Savarkar and carried forward by Hedgewar, Golwalkar and later ideologues of Sangh Parivar forms the ideological base of Ayodhya movement. The chapter also looks into how this communal concept got intertwined with the concept of modern secular state like secularism through reinterpretation of the term.

❖ **Mobilization, Contemporary Politics, law and the Ayodhya movement**

This chapter is divided into several heads showing the multiple dimensions in which Ayodhya movement can be studied and understood. Mobilisation played a prime role in the Ayodhya movement. The first part of the chapter highlights how by manipulating religiosity and faith of Hindus, Sangh Parivar indulged themselves in various methods of mobilization by utilizing modern technology like print and electronic media to traditional verbal campaign, slogans, inflammatory rhetoric. It is through this method of mobilization, where concept of modern secular state like nationalism and secularism was deviously mixed with religiosity and the faith of the Hindus, the Sangh Parivar attempted to define

and defend the Ayodhya movement in the name of 'Cultural Nationalism'.

The next part of the chapter looks at , how with the help of politico-rituals the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) moves from periphery to the centre of Indian politics. The chapter also brings out how with the entry of BJP, the entire scenario of contemporary politics of Indian changes in the 20th century and also how each contemporary government tried to tackle the movement till the demolition.

Pointing to the recurring communal riots since the initiation of the movement which took horrifying shape in Bombay and Surat region after 6th December, the last part of the chapter expose and analyzes the role of the state and the law and order machinery both as silent participants and often indirect initiators of the movement and even the demolition.

❖ **Women, The Ayodhya movement and Politics of The Sangh Parivar**

The last chapter after specifically looking at women's role in Ayodhya movement tries to locate her position within the broader framework of Hindutva by exploring Sangh Parivar sources and

analyzing the rationality of such position in relation to gender identity in contemporary world.

Finally my conclusion tries to provide an explanation of why the Ayodhya movement could gather so much momentum. By looking at the series of communal riots, it questions the justification of such movement and what should be the duty of us as peaceful citizens to prevent such a movement from developing as a Frankenstein monster again and again.

Sources and Limitations

My primary source material of this work has been derived from various publications of the Sangh Parivar from books, articles published in various journals, periodicals, magazines and newspapers. My source also includes interviews both direct and indirect i.e, in the form of questionnaire, I have also used various booklets, pamphlets published by Sangh Parivar.

It is not my endeavor in this exercise to investigate questions of history regarding the existence of Lord Ram or whether Ramjanmabhoomi temple was actually destroyed by Babar to build the Babri Masjid. Neither would I deal with each organisation of the Sangh Parivar separately. I shall confine myself to the understanding of the politico-ideological dimension/discourse of the Ayodhya movement.

One important aspect, 'Caste', is completely left out from the discussion because it needs separate treatment which is not possible in this work.

CHAPTER-I

LEGENDARY SIGNIFICANCE, CONTROVERSY AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AYODHYA MOVEMENT

Ayodhya is considered to be a holy place by both Hindus and Muslims. Hindus believed it to be the birth place of Rama, while for the Muslims it is the cemetery by the Saryu river in Ayodhya where Shea, the grandson of Adam is believed to be buried.¹ Ayodhya is also traditionally known as the birthplace of several Jain tirthankaras or religious teachers, and is considered a place of pilgrimage by the Jains also.²

According to Hindu belief, the Ayodhya of Ram is said to have existed in the Tretayuga of the Hindu calendar ie., some 900,000

¹Gyanendra Pandey, "Ayodhya and the State," *Seminar* 36, (December, 1989) p.40.

²R.S Sharma, *Communal History and Rama's Ayodhya*, (Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, May 1990) p.19.

years ago.³ It was only from the Gupta period onwards that the present day Ayodhya came to be associated with the legendary Ayodhya of Rama, when he came to be regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu.⁴

With the rise of Buddhism in the fifth and sixth centuries BC, Ayodhya was displaced as the capital city of Kosala. Scholars identify Ayodhya with Saketa where Buddha is said to have resided for some time.⁵

Ayodhya is said to be 'rediscovered' by 'Vikramaditya'. Some scholars identify Vikramaditya with Skandagupta of mid 5th century AD, when Buddhism began to decline as a result of a Brahmanical resurgence,⁶ while other scholars opine that it is Chandragupta II who took the title of Vikramaditya or sun of prowess.⁷ Again some scholars argue that the claim that Skandagupta shifted his capital to Saketa (Ayodhya) is baseless.⁸ Whatever may be the contentions regarding the historicity of Ayodhya, it is no doubt regarded as one of

³ In the Hindu cyclic theory of time, the cyclic was called a Kalpa equivalent to 4,370 million earthly years. The Kalpa is divided into fourteen periods; each of these periods is divided into seventyone Great intervals and every Great Interval is divided into four Yugas (period of time) Satya, Dwapara, Treta and Kali. The Yugas contain 4800, 3650, 2450, 1200 god-years (one god year being Three hundred and sixty human years) with corresponding decline in the quality of civilization. We are at present in fourth Yuga called Kaliyuga when the world is full of evil and wickedness. Though we have several millennia before the end of the world, it is nonetheless imminent, For details see, Romila Thapar, , *A History of India* Volume 1, (Baltimore, Maryland, Penguin 1988) p.161.

⁴ R.S Sharma, op cit., (1990)p.19.

⁵ 'The Babri Masjid Dispute', *Spotlight on Regional Affairs*, 10/7-8 (July-August 1991) p.8.

⁶ Gyanendra Pandey, op cit, (1989)p.40.

⁷ Romila Thapar, op.cit.(1988) p.140.

⁸ Sher Singh, 'What History says about Ayodhya'in Engineer, Asghar Ali, *Babri Masjid Ramjanmabhoomi Controversy*, (Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1990.) p. 79-80.

the seven holy places of Hindus due to its association with Ram. Of the 6,000 Hindu Shrines in Ayodhya, more than 4,000 are connected with Ram.⁹

The exact location of Ayodhya, is also controversial. Archaeological excavations at Ayodhya which is on the right bank of the Saryu river in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh shows that “the earliest settlement at Ayodhya did not go back prior to the stage of the Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW) culture” i.e. circa 700 BC. Thus if Ramayana episode is to be considered as historical, it has taken place not before 700 BC.¹⁰ Again if Valmiki's description of Ayodhya is to be believed, then it must be some thirteen to fourteen miles south of the river Saryu in Nepal.¹¹ The locational controversy is unsolved even today.

The Muslim conquest is another most crucial stage of controversy. Sangh Parivar claims that there was a 11th century temple dedicated to Ram and Emperor Babur's general, Mir Baqi pulled it down and built the mosque on its ruins. Did a temple really exist before the mosque was built is thus the core of the controversy today. B.B. Lal who formerly headed The Archaeological Survey of India never once mentioned any evidence of any temple at the

⁹ Spotlight on Regional Affairs, July-August 1991, pp.7-9.

¹⁰ See 'B.B. Lal's Report on Archaeology of Ramayana Sites Project' in Asghar Ali Engineer, *Politics of confrontation : The Babri Masjid Ramjanmabhoomi Controversy Runs – Riots* (Ajanta, Delhi, 1992) p.268-9.

¹¹ P.S. Sridhara Murthy, , *Rama, Ramayana and Babar* (Dalit Sahitya Academy, Bangalore, 1988), p130.

disputed site. However in October 1990, he made a surprising claim in the RSS magazine 'Manthan' of having found the pillar bases of what may have been temple at the site.¹²

Again poet Tulsidas, whose *Ramcharitamanas* popularised the story of Rama all over Northern India "does not refer to any temple of Rama in Ayodhya, let alone the Ramajanamabhumii temple."¹³ Tulsidas, who was so devoted to Rama and who started writing a magnum opus of Ayodhya, was certainly expected to refer to Ram temple, it existed there (or to Ayodhya being a tirtha if it was really so in his time. (early part of 17th century) on account of its association with Ram. Thus we see that till date, neither historical and archaeological evidence nor did voices of faith tells us anything concrete.

In the 18th century Ayodhya became a major Hindu pilgrimage spot under the patronage of the Nawabs of Avadh, Shuja-ud-dullah and Asaf-ud-dullah. This Hindu revivalism consolidated further after the British take over of Ayodhya. It was at this time, the Nimhoris, a Hindu sect laying their claim over the Babri Masjid contended that

¹² See comments and argument against B.B. Lal's claim 'on Archaeological Evidence of Demolition of Mandir', Joint statement of Thapar, Gopal and Panikkar of JNU," in Asghar Ali Engineer, op.cit. p.273-4. Also see, Romila, Thapar, *Archeological Finding in Ayodhya* in Engineer, Asghar Ali, 1990 op.cit., pp.277-8. Also see Sharma, R.S. *Communal History And Rama's Ayodhya*, op cit., p.25-28.

¹³ R.S. Sharma, op.cit. (1990) p.23.

In October 1984, the VHP tried to make the mosque – temple question a national issue Sri Ram Janma Mukti Yajga Samiti was formed on July 27, 1984 with the aim of ‘liberating’ the disputed site and Sri Ramjanaki Ratha (Ram-Sita Chariot) began to tour the Uttar Pradesh towns to mobilize public opinion. With the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the Ratha Programme of joining the Hindu Convention at Delhi was temporarily cancelled. ²⁰

The explosive situation again emerged in 1985 when Shah Bano controversy²¹ was raging across India. The District and Sessions Judge of Faizabad, K.M. Pandey, ordered the opening of the locks of the Mosque and indirectly allowed the priests to enter. The situation became extremely chaotic with the Sangh Parivar celebrating the courts decision and Muslims protesting it strongly.

However most critical stage so far as the Ayodhya movement was concerned came just before 1989 elections which witnessed the most organised preparation and mobilization method to demolish the mosque and build a Ram temple on the same spot. I will be dealing with this aspect in my third chapter in details.

²⁰ 'Vishwa Hindu Parishad's Liberation Agitation', in Asghar Ali Engineer edited, op cit.,(1990), p. 228-30.

²¹ When the Supreme Court ruled that the divorce of a Muslim lady Shah Bano, on the basis of Islamic custom is not valid, it gave rise to anger and resentment among Muslim groups. On May 1986, Rajiv Gandhi government introduced the Muslim Women ('Protection of Rights on Divorce') Bill which debarred court to interfere in the Personal Laws of Muslims.

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE AYODHYA MOVEMENT

There is no dearth of literature is dealing with Hindutva and the Ayodhya movement. In this paper I would like critically present the historiography through which we can trace and understand the crystallization of Hindutva as a organized political discourse, leading to the growth of Ayodhya movement and ultimately demolition of the Babri Masjid on 6th December 1992.

Kenneth Jones article in **'Politicized Hinduism: The ideology and program of the Hindu Mahasabha'** in Robert D Baird edited, *Religion in Modern India*, (Manohar, New Delhi, 1981) traces the historical context of the growth Hindu Mahasabha and it's contribution towards the process of development of Hindutva as a distinct ideology through the most prominent ideologue, V.D. Savarkar. The article point out that the Hindu Mahasabha came into being as a result of the confluence of two major trends, namely the minority complex of the Hindu majority and their newly awakened and militant religious and cultural consciousness.

Johnes argues that, "As a result of centuries of foreign domination the Hindu community ,in spite of it's majority status took on many of the attitudes that are typical of suppressed minorities."²² He further says, "their (Hindus) fear and helplessness was

²² Kenneth Jones, 'Politicised Hinduism: The Ideology and Program of the Hindu Mahasabha',in Robert.D Baird,,edited, *Religion in Modern India*,(Monohar, New Delhi,1981) p 448.

strengthened by the challenges of two proselytizing and converting religions, Islam and Christianity."²³ The issue of numbers became the vital question specially with the introduction of All India Census in 1871. According to him, "the census became a decennial tally sheet which registered not only the progress and decline of each religious community but also helped to change the very concept of Hindu from a religion to that of a community."²⁴

In fact Kenneth Jones article points out how through a series of letters appearing in *Bengalee* under the title "A Dying Race" by Lt. Col. U N. Mukherjee, past census trend was projected to demonstrate not only that the Hindu community were declining in relation to other religious groups but that in a predicted number of years they would disappear altogether. Jones also brings into notice Lalchand's writings "Self Abnegation in Politics" which also claimed to express the general anxieties of the Hindu community.

Jones' article also shows how the founding of the Muslim league in 1906, the recommendation of the Morley-Minto constitutional reforms which introduced communal representation, unrest in Punjab and Bengal and the alleged defacto alliance between the Muslims and the British colonial government heightened the Hindu communal fear and anxiety.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

The article also mentions a series of communal riots which worsened the Hindu Muslim relation. In the 1920's communal violence became a regular feature. The article mentions the communal violence of 1921 in Malabar, of 1922 in Saharanpur, of 1924 in Kohat. Along with these riots, the assassination of Swami Shraddhananda, a prominent Arya Samajist and Hindu Mahasabha leader in 1926 and similar events soured the Hindu-Muslim relationship and produced an atmosphere of heightened religious conflict, fear and anger especially among the Hindu. Jones argues that all these developments not only justified but also rendered the presence of the Mahasabha, as a defender of the Hindu faith and community, an imperative.

Jones points out that even in the 1930's the Hindu Mahasabha's position was quite ambivalent specially in relation to untouchables and most importantly Indian Nationalism and to the British. From 1933 onwards the ambiguity fades with the coming of Bhai Paramanand and V.D. Savarkar and it becomes "a movement of explicit 'Hindu nationalism' opposed both to the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League"²⁵

Jones highlights Savarkar's definition of Hindutva, Hindu and how this ideology shaped the future programme of Hindu Mahasabha in Mahasabha attempting to homogenize the Hindu community in one solid block. However, the Mahasabha performed poorly in the

²⁵ Ibid, p462.

elections after independence from 1957-62, which led to the ultimate decline of the Sabha.

Jones disagrees with the notion that the Mahasabha indulged in reactionary and revivalistic movement bent on defending orthodoxy and the traditional elite. He feels such an assessment simplifies and ignores the egalitarian aspects of Hindu Mahasabha and the notion of rights and duties of citizens in the ideal nation-state visualised by the Mahasabha. He further argues that the Hindu Mahasabha's ideology, concern for community predominated over defense of tradition or status quo and that the degree of radicalism and militancy stemmed from the perceived threats against the Hindu community.

However, Jones failed to notice that it is through this radicalism and militancy that majority communalism as a distinct ideology began to get shaped. Jones himself highlighted how the idea of entering in an open struggle with the 'Islamic State' apparently appealed to Savarkar and that he gave a call to *Hinduise all politics and Militarize Hindudom* to establish a Hindu National Front.

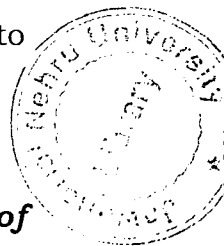
Mahasabha created the structures of the *Nizam Civil Resistance movement* with centres at Poona, Nagpur and Akola under the overall direction of Savarkar. According to Jones, in this movement "All the values of militant Hinduism and of communal unity were demonstrated publicly against a government which stood in their

minds for centuries of Islamic dominance.”²⁶ The rigid communal ideology can also be noticed from the fact that the Hindu Mahasabha declined Shyama Prasad Mukherjee’s suggestion to abandon communal politics and form a new organization with a new name to challenge the Congress.

It is most significant fact is that the article completely silent about another closely linked organisation, the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS). Going through the article one may feel that Hindu Nationalism as an ideology and its implementation both took place quite independently under the aegis of Hindu Mahasabha. But without discussing RSS’s role it is not possible to provide a holistic picture of how Hinduism was politicised which in turn contributed to the development of the communal ideology.

It is here **Craig Baxter's – *The Jana Singh: A Biography of An Indian Political Party*, (Oxford University Press, 1971)**, bears significance. Tracing the electoral build up of the Jana Sangh, the biography recognizes both Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS as it's true antecedents. Baxter notices that it is through the merging of Mahasabha’s political thought with organizational strength of RSS that Jana Sangh came into being in 1951. Though Baxter’s book does not directly look into the aspect of communalism and it is more concerned in locating the electoral development of the Jana Singh till,

²⁶ Ibid, p469.



1967, but through the speeches the book quotes of the leaders of Hindu Mahasabha like Bhai Paramanand to that of RSS leader M.S. Golwalkar, one can easily perceive the way Hindu communal ideology began to take form from the 1930s.

Baxter quotes the speech of Bhai Paramananda in the Ajmer Session of Hindu Mahasabha in 1933- "Hindustan is the land of Hindus alone and Musalmans and Christians and other nations living in India and only our guests."²⁷ Baxter also highlights view on Urdu language- "Urdu is a foreign language which is living monument of our slavery. Urdu is the language of the Melecchas which has done a great harm to our national ends by attaining popularity in India."²⁸ Baxter did not fail to notice that these statements could cause the Muslims nothing but consternation and I want to point out it is in this way communalism of one community breeds communalism of the other community.

Baxter like Jones also noticed the rigidity of the Hindu Mahasabha in wanting to remain an exclusively Hindu organization leading Shyama Prasad Mukherjee to come out of the Mahasabha to form the Jana Sangh. Again quoting the speeches of M.S. Golwalkar from his book "*We or our nationhood defined*", Baxter says that "the

²⁷ Quoted in, Craig Baxter, *the Jana Sangh: A biography Of An Indian Political Part*, (OUP,1971) Gupta,N.L, P18.*Nehru on Communalism* (Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee,1965.) p 21.

²⁸ Quoted in, Craig Baxter, *the Jana Sangh: A biography Of An Indian Political Part*, (OUP,1971) p19 from, Rajput,A.B, *The Muslim League, Yesterday and Today* (Ashraf,Lahore,1948) pp54-55.

RSS has provided much of the ideology of the Janasangh, much of it parallel to the ideology characteristic of the Mahasabha in the Savarkar and Paramanand period and after It (RSS) has also provided the Jana Sangh with a remarkably strong organisation."²⁹ Baxter also remarks that Nehru's opposition to the RSS as fascist was consistent with the secularism and his general anti communal outlook.

However, in spite of recognizing the RSS as the parent body and Jana Singh's ideological similarity with the Hindu Mahasabha he still denies to regard it Jana Sangh, as a communal party though he as a precautionary measure says that "there are degrees of communalism."

Baxter points out that unlike, RSS, Jana Sangh follows, open membership. He points out that Jana Sangh is not so rigidly Hindu as the Mahasabha or the Ram Rajya Parishad nor does it stand solely for the interests of its community as does the Muslim League or the Akali Dal. Thus Jana Sangh is 'national', the protector of Bharatiya Sanskriti. But what is Bharatiya Sanskriti according to Jana Sangh? In elucidating it Baxter contradicts his own argument. The definition of Bharatiya Sanskriti is given as "the ancient Hindu culture of India and by extension this must exclude much of the "foreign" culture brought into India by Muslims and Christians. it asks of Christians and Muslims that they throw off their alleged extra territorial allegiances, even though these allegiances if they exist at all are

²⁹Craig Baxter, Ibid, p33.

religion and not political. It asks them to accept the heroes and mythology of the Hindu past, a demand which may be repulsive to their monotheistic beliefs.”³⁰ Baxter also points out, in spite of its open membership, the party is almost exclusively Hindu in membership control and support.

In spite of recognizing all the communal aspect of the party it is not understandable how Baxter can take a moderate view to say there are only degrees of communalism. I would like to state that Jana Sangh’s position is not only communal but also ambivalent. Baxter says that the Jana Sangh would like to import western technology and use western capital while barring the entry of Western Secularism and Liberalism. It is in this contradictory trend that pushed Hindu communalism towards a diluted version. This dilution became more of a necessity with the Jana Sangh's merging with Janata Party in 1970s.

Since Craig Baxter’s book does not extend beyond 1967, it is not possible to give the full picture of the development Hindu communalism which we find in **Christophe Jaffrelot’s** voluminous book ***The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India (1925-1990)*** , **(Viking, Delhi 1993)**. Taking the foundation of RSS in 1925 as the beginning, Jaffrelot’s book tried to show how through twin strategies

³⁰ Ibid, p.312.

of moderation and militancy conditioned by certain specific political and sociological condition, 'Hindu nationalist movement' as a distinct political ideology developed.

Jaffrelot noticed that the moderate combination relied on an ideological rapprochement with the Hindu traditionalists, mobilisation on socio-economic and populist issues and co-option of notables while the radical combination was based on a strategy of identity building, ethno-religious mobilization and the network of activists (like Sangathanist modus operandi by RSS). He correctly perceives that the oscillations between these two sets of strategies depended on several factors like the Hindu feeling of vulnerability that was aroused by the actions of the minorities, the attitude of the Congress party, and the role of the activist network and religious leaders of the 'Hindu Nationalist Movement'. He points out, till 1950s the Hindu Nationalist Movement remained a minor political force in comparison to the Indian National Congress though it did however make its efforts of ethno-religious mobilization (through the manipulation of Hindu symbols such as the birth place of Ram in Ayodhya and the communal exploitation of issues such as forced exodus by Hindus from Pakistan in 1950).

Jaffrelot points out that till 1960s, Hindu traditionalist elements tended at the local level to appropriate the Hindu nationalists propaganda theme, while the Congress at the center

displayed a vigilant Secularism, which along with socio-economic development which became the pillar on which India as a nation was to be built up. Secularism was also valued and treasured by the Leftist, the main opposition of the Congress at that time. Jaffrelot noticed, while Jana Sangh relied on to manipulate Hindu symbols, most of the few religious figures involved in politics sided with the Ram Rajya Parishad, the Hindu Mahasabha or the Congress.

Making the case study of Madhya Pradesh, Jaffrelot correctly perceived the twin constraints of Jana Sangh - constraints in its party-building system and constraints in relation to the dominant political ideology at that period of maintaining a secular stand. Jan Sangh tried to over rule these constraints by merging with Janata Party.

Jaffrelot noticed that though involvement in the Janata Party brought the Jana Sanghis into a political culture based on Gandhian notions of social reform and decentralization which echoed aspects of RSS ideology and integrated the ex-Jana Sangh leaders in mainstream politics ultimately giving them access to power at the center, the contradiction began to appear between the efforts of Jan Sangh leaders to maintain parity with the conservative Gandhians in the Janata Party (like Morarji Desai) and the assertiveness of local and state cadres who remained attached to its Hindu Nationalist identity. Jaffrelot feels, it is this inherent tension, an uncompromising

behavior to move towards reforms that would favour the OBC and the involvement of RSS members of the Janata Party in Hindu-Muslim riots which seriously weakened Janata Party from its secular appeal thus breaking up the party in 1980. Thus Jaffrelot's book successfully shows that by the early 1980's the failure of Hindu Nationalist leader's to integrate their movements in a larger structure because of its specific party building technique had left it isolated.

However, the wider political context was then more favourable to the Hindu communal forces and enabled them to return to their original combination of strategies. The militant proselytizing and separatist activities of certain minorities evoked a new feeling of vulnerability within Hinduism and many religious leaders responded to it by joining what Jefferelot calls the Hindu Nationalist Movement but which is better described as the Hindu communal movement, as communalism and nationalism are polar opposites in a multireligious country. Jaffrelot pointed out that the Congress under Indira Gandhi's regime itself appealed to ethno-religious sentiments by giving patronage to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's(VHP) Ekatmata Yatra and the inauguration of Bharat Mata Temple at Haridwar. Jaffrelot feels Congress in this way legitimised Hindu fundamentalism and communal organisations. Pointing towards the way the Congress handled the Shar Bano affair, their decision to unlock the disputed structure in Ayodhya and their allowing of the Shilanyas ceremony to

go ahead, Jaffrelot opines that there was a gradual erosion of the secular notion in the Congress. Thus we see according to Jaffrelot, “in the 1980s it was the central government (i.e. Congress) which resorted to a communalised form of politics”³¹ and “Hindu Nationalist discourse was legitimised”³² due to this. What I want to argue is it is this understanding- that Congress has become communal made the Communist Party and V.P. Singh to ally with Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP) to keep Congress out of competition in 1989. And it is this which actually legitimized BJP more than anything else leading to its rise to political power. The reflection of this became prominent in this election where it increased its seat from two to eighty.

However I fully agree with Jaffrelot that not only political but sociological factors also played a significant part in BJP’s electoral success. In fact Jaffrelot points out how BJP kept up its momentum by combining ethno-religious mobilization for example *Rathayatra*, which appealed to sectional interests. The party also received support from many members of the upper castes who felt threatened by the implementation of the Mandal commission report.

Jaffrelot finds Hindu nationalist ideology as some how structurally different because of its ethnic or cultural conception of the Nation. It is this aspect which distinguishes Hindu Nationalism as

³¹Christophe Jaffrelot, , *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India (1925-1990)*, (Viking, Delhi 1993), p.527

³² Ibid,

distinguished from Universalism of Indian Nationalism's ideology, with its projection of all individuals and all communities living within India as a Nation.

However, I find, in this type of explanation there is a little space for the development of the culture of Indian Nationalism. Indian Nationalism is presented by Jaffrelot as a rather flat political Nationalism that cannot influence the development of an exclusivist, combative Hindu sense of ethnicity. It is this understanding which made Jaffrelot to describe the extremist strategy of the Congress Nationalists, like Tilak and Aurobindo as the product of their Hindu leanings.

Jaffrelot by going into detailed analysis from 1920's to the demolition act, tries to find the relation between Hindu Nationalism and Communalism. For Jaffrelot, Hindu Nationalism emerged as a distinct ideology in the late 19th and early 20th and it was only in 1920's that this ideology was consciously articulated largely through the written work of V.D. Savarkar Jaffrelot regards, it is the instrumentalism of these elites, which is the key to the development of the Hindu Nationalism as Communalism. Thus Jaffrelot's book regards communalism as the 'product' and not the 'process' of 'Hindu Nationalist Movement', the product which can only be made possible through the handiwork of elites. In spite of highlighting the active role of the mass specially in the Shilanyas ceremony and demolition of the

Babri mosque, it is not understandable why the book fails to give due regard to those who actually executed and participated in the movement. The question is could Babri Masjid be demolished by the leaders of the movement. without karsevaks

While Jaffrelot regards the movement as Hindu nationalism, **Mark Juergensmeyer** in his book *Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*, (OUP, Delhi, 1994), regards it as 'Religious Nationalism'. In Juergansmeyers' understanding the 'religious nationalists' see the failure of democracy and socialism, both western models, leading them to conclude that Secular Nationalism has failed and so they view religion as a hopeful alternative, which can provide a basis for criticism and change.

According to Juergensmeyer differences among various religious leaders are immense but they all share one thing in common – they perceive Western Secular Nationalism as their enemy and they hope to revive religion in the public sphere. Juergensmeyer hesitates to call this movement fundamentalist. He finds this term less descriptive and more accusatory, he also regards it as an imprecise term for making comparisons across cultures. He points out, there is a global revolt against Secular ideology that accompanies modern society. Juergansmeyer feels that Fundamentalism does not carry any political meaning and conveys the idea of solely being motivated by religious beliefs rather than broad concerns about the nature of

society and the world. According to him, the term Religious Nationalism conveys the main meaning of religious and political interests and also holds that there is no clear distinction between religion and politics, as this distinction is a mask of western thinking. But it is unable to explain why communal riots became regular phenomenon during its intense mobilization phase specially from 1980s onwards.

By looking at Ramjanmabhoomi issue in particular, **Peter Van der Veer** also regards the Sangh Parivar's movement as Religious Nationalism. In his book ***Religious Nationalism : Hindus and Muslims in India***, (OUP, Delhi, 1996). Veer noticed that the temple - mosque controversy did not evoke strong feelings between 1949, when the image of Rama was installed, and 1984, when the VHP started its agitations. By transforming the mosque in Ayodhya from a local shrine into a symbol of the 'threatened Hindu majority' Veer rightfully concluded that VHP has been instrumental in the homogenisation of a 'National Hinduism' Vajpayee regarded the issue as a matter of "National Honour".

Veer holds that the political success of the BJP depends squarely on its alliance with two Hindu nationalists movements, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), an organisation of religious leaders, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) a militant youth organisation. The alliance allows it to use religious discourse and

mass-scale ritual action in the political arena. The Party's programme laid great emphasis on Hindutva. The term 'Hindutva' equates religious and National identity. An Indian is a Hindu, an equation that puts important Indian religious communities, such as Christians and Muslims outside the nation. The argument for the term stressed that Hindus form the majority community in the country and that, accordingly, India should be ruled by them as a Hindu state (Rashtra).

Providing the detailed description of the founding of the VHP, Veer says it is in 1989 that BJP made Ayodhya an "absolutely central" issue. I completely agree with Veer that 1989 was the crucial juncture of the Ayodhya movement. I also agree with Veer that at least from this point onward and probably already in 1986 – the political agenda of the BJP cannot be separated from that of the VHP. There is a direct co-ordination of rituals, agitation and political maneuvering by the high command of the BJP, the RSS and the VHP who in fact overlap to a significant degree. Veer clearly points out this overlapping when he mentions, that Vijaya Raje Scindia is a Vice President of the BJP, and a leader of the VHP, Lal Krishna Advani and Atal Behari Vajpayee are leaders of the BJP, but have a background in the RSS, an important leader of the RSS, M. Pingle has the VHP as the background.

Veer further points out, the VHP leadership also draws extensively on the experience of retired members in the higher echelons of the Indian bureaucracy, such as former Director General of Police, former chief Judges, and former Ministers. Thus it is not simply an 'extremist' organisation, far removed from the mainstream of Indian Society. Veer did not fail to notice that such support of persons with strong links to the bureaucracy is critical in planning and execution of mass-scale demonstrations. Though I agree to a great extent with the way Veer tries to analyse the Ayodhya Movement, yet I have my reservation with the term 'Religious Nationalism'. I think the flaw of using such term lies in the fact that Veer regards VHP as an organisation of religious leaders, what I want to argue is that VHP constantly manipulated religious symbols, religious rituals and religious leaders to serve their political goal of establishing a Hindu rashtra. One can understand this by looking at their mass mobilisation method specially from 80's onwards with which I have dealt in details in my third chapter.

Sumit Sarkar's article 'The Fascism of Sangh Parivar', in *Economic and Political Weekly*, (January 30, 1993) is very direct in its approach. He directly characterise Sangh Parivar as being Fascist. According to Sarkar, the Sangh Parivar movement may not look exactly parallel to German Fascism, but a closer look at the pattern of affinities and differences helps to highlight the offensive

nature of the movement. Sarkar noticed, the drive for Hindu Rashtra has put into jeopardy the entire Secular and democratic foundations of our Republic. He opines it is only Hindu Communalism, and not Muslim communalism which has the potential of imposing fascism in India. Sarkar points out that fascism was introduced in Italy and Germany through a combination of carefully orchestrated street violence (with a mass support) and deep infiltration into the police bureaucracy and the army, with the connivance of centralist political leaders. For Sarkar, the methodology adapted in destruction of mosque is reminiscent of the same method. The mosque (Babri Masjid) was demolished in five and half hours in total violation of Supreme Court order. The Central Government did not even lift a finger till the mosque was totally razed to the ground. Countrywide riots followed. The collapse of law was painfully obvious, the temporary temple was built illegally and this structure is protected. Sarkar points out the hypocrisy of the Sangh Parivar leaders where the BJP alternates between occasional apology and more frequent aggressive justification of the demolition act. While their brother organisation, the VHP added Delhi's Jumma Masjid in the list of Hindu monuments and denounced the Indian Constitution on being anti-Hindu.

Sarkar not only notices the similarity in the pattern of 'Sangh Parivar Movement' with Fascism of Italy and Germany, but also the

differences. He says, unlike the Fascism in Italy and Germany which came into power within a decade or less of its emergence as a political movement, 'Hindutva' had a long gestation period, which has given added strength and stability to the movement and given scope for their idea to become a part of the social commonsense.

Sarkar correctly point out that the real base of Sangh Parivar consisted of the predominately upper caste traders, professional petit bourgeoisie of cities and small towns mainly in Hindi heartland along with the upwardly mobile land holding groups in the countryside.

Sarkar also brings into notice how through sustained propaganda work the Sangh Parivar had succeeded in creating a communalised commonsense where Muslims became equivalent to the Jews or the Blacks in contemporary White racism. Sangh Parivar always tried to label the Muslim in India as unduly privileged. Sarkar find this charge completely absurd. He logically argues, in Germany, Jews had been fairly prominent whereas Muslims are grossly under represented in business, bureaucracy, army, police, private enterprises etc.

Again, Sarkar rightfully points out that, like Hitler in Germany the Sangh Parivar arrogantly proclaims to be the representative of Hindus, and since the Hindus are in majority their democratic credentials remained intact above board . I feel it is this arroganc and

racial pride, drawing inspiration from Nazi Germany, which was most prominent in Golwankar's writing *We or Our Nationhood Defined*. This position was repeatedly articulated by the later ideologues of the Sangh Parivar. Again, since Sangh Parivar regards itself as the representative of Hindus, anybody deviating from its line is condemned as being anti-Hindu or at best as being pseudo secular.

However, Sarkar does not fail to highlight the apparently tolerant nature of the movement. Thus unlike Jews who had to face the gas chambers, the Hindutva line by regarding National identity was Hindu identity is 'kind and generous' and offered a second class citizenship to the Muslims. However, even this distinction is no longer tenable after the recent events in Gujarat where an effort was made by the Hindutva forces to physically wipe off the minorities.

David Ludden ed. *Making India Hindu; Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*, (OUP, Delhi, 1996). adopts an interdisciplinary approach in analyzing and understanding the complexities of 'Hindu Nationalism'. The book is divided into three sections containing the perspectives by anthropologists, historians, political scientists, ethnomusicologists and religious studies experts.

The first section of the book entitled "Mobilizing Hindutva", analyzes Hindu nationalism in relationship to the broader context of contemporary Indian Politics. The article by **Victoria Farmer** and

Zoya Hasan look at the activity of 'Hindu nationalism' in comparison to the decline of Congress hegemony, while **Richard. H Davis** and **Amrita Basu's** contributions, examine Hindu nationalist strategies for maintaining cohesion and combating adversaries within the context of electoral politics. Richard H. Davis' make an elaborate description of Advani's Rath Yatra and examines conflict between Hindu nationalists over its soft and hard core imagery.

The second section of the book entitled "Genealogies of Hindu and Muslim" analyzes Hindu Nationalism in relationship to the broader history of Indian politics. While **Tanika Sarkar** and **Mushirul Hasan's** article puts into question the understanding of "Hindus" and "Muslims" as historically stable descriptive categories, **Peter Manuel** and **William Finch** show how difficult it is to make historical distinctions between 'Hindus' and 'Muslims' as separate communities.

The third section of the book entitled 'Community and Conflict', adopts comparative methodologies (both spatial and temporal) to explain how Hindu nationalism 'contests' the Nation. **Santra Freitag's** article shows how the state was alienated from the society in India during 19th and 20th centuries. She argues, it is this alienation, which made the public sphere as a sites of struggle possible. She then shows how Hindu nationalists exploited this site to win elections and public opinion. **Richard Fox's** article shows that the communal identity of Hindus and Muslims are the product of a

modernity which produces antagonism by obliterating the pre-modern world, at the same time failing to fulfill its promise of economic prosperity. **Peter Van deer Veer** criticizes the standard narration of riots. He argues, it is mistaken and misguided to treat this form of violence as a mask for material conflict. Regarding violence as a total phenomenon, he says, it is impossible to make, secular and religious distinction during riots. Sumit Sarkar however makes a bold statement that Hindu Nationalism arose from a perceived threat to upper caste hegemony. For Sarkar, Hindu nationalism is an ideology of reaction or conservatism constructed against the chaotic threats by women, peasants tribal and lower castes.

The book is successful in providing an in depth understanding of the political, social and economic dimension of the communal conflict / antagonism in India. It's interdisciplinary approach and comparative framework makes it possible to bring together diverse views and approaches in which the Sangh Parivar's movement needs to be understood and tackled.

In sum it may be noted that it may seem that it is the presence of different religion which is the root cause of all the problems. However, the existence of different religion does not lead to communalism and communalisation of the body politic, nor does it lead to communal riots. As a matter of fact, communalism is an ideology which makes use of different religious communities and

inculcates among them a narrow and sectarian outlook. It skillfully manipulates of the religious sentiments of the people through an ideological build up, intense propaganda and mobilisation for political goals. This is what the Sangh Parivar did in the Ayodhya movement. This survey of literature is an attempt to provide understanding of this aspect.

CHAPTER-II

THE IDEOLOGICAL BASE OF THE AYODHYA MOVEMENT

The demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya on 6th December, 1992 and the violent riots that rocked the nation should not be portrayed as an unfortunate event that has caused religious fundamentalism and militant communalism. *Ayodhya episode in fact is a result of a long process of communalisation which was the result of a strategy employed by the Sangh Parivar.* What happened at Ayodhya was a well orchestrated laboratory experiment of the communal ideology that the Sangh Parivar conceived and promoted for a long period. Girilal Jain, the former editor of The Times of India, regarded the Ayodhya episode as '*a historical watershed*' adding that "the energies unleashed at Ayodhya had been at work for two centuries"¹. He perceived it as a civilizational revival, which is gradual, complex and many sided affair, taking place in the country and Ayodhya, a major development in this process, was the result of "something that

¹ Girilal Jain, *The Hindu Phenomenon*, (UBS Publisher's and Distributors Ltd, New Delhi, 1994) pp.133,116.

was already growing- the two hundred year old movement for self renewal and self affirmation by Hindus".²

Leave aside supporters and sympathizers like Girilal Jain, even the ardent critics had to admit that "this (the destruction of Babri Masjid) was not simply the consequence of spontaneous vandalism. Behind the action lay a long history of **Hindutva politics** which celebrates aggression and violence, declares war against other communities and scorns at legal and democratic norms.³ Thus the present event was the product of a long process of historical development in which an ideological formation had taken place.⁴

Ideologues and The Ayodhya Movement

The contemporary meaning of Hindutva has its root in the writings of V.D. Savarkar of Hindu Mahasabha, particularly in his pamphlet - '*Hindutva: who is a Hindu?*' written in 1923.⁵ The heart of Savarkar's ideology is Hindutva. Savarkar categorically pointed out that Hindutva is different from Hinduism-⁶

Hindutva is not identical with what is vaguely indicated by the term Hinduism. By an 'ism' is generally meant a theory or a code more or less based on spiritual or religious dogma or system. But

² Ibid, p.117.

³ Tapan Basu, et al, *Khaki Shorts , Saffron Flags, A Critique of the Hindu Right*, (Tracts for the Times of India, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1993) p.vii.

⁴ Ibid, p. 114.

⁵ V.D Savarkar., *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* (1924), (4th edition, Gokhole, Pune, 1949) p.3.

⁶ Ibid, pp.3-4.

when we attempt to investigate into the essential significance of Hindutva we do not primarily and certainly not mainly concern ourselves with any particular theocratic or religious dogma or creed. Had not linguistic usage stood in our way Hinduness would certainly been a better word than Hinduism and a near parallel to Hindutva. Hindutva embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole being of our Hindu role.

Thus Savarkar's 'Hindutva' is something distinct from Hinduism and it is a tool for achieving superiority of the Hindu race. Savarkar provided a clear cut explanation of what he meant by the term Hindu. According to him a Hindu is a – ⁷

“person who regards the land of Bharatvarsha from Indus to the seas as his Fatherland as well as his Holyland- that is the cradle land of his religion

Thus we see, Savarkar places Hindus in a particular geographical setting, He also provides a racial connotation to the term. This racial connotation becomes more clear when he says- ⁸

Hindus are not merely the citizens of the Indian state because they are united not only by the bonds of love they bear to a common motherland but also by the bonds of a common blood... All Hindus claim to have in their veins the blood of the mighty race incorporated with and descended from the Vedic forefathers.

⁷ Ibid, pp.3-4.

⁸ Ibid, p.68.

Although it can be argued that Savarkar by no means was the first to attempt a racial construction of the traditional religious community, he was undoubtedly the most articulate. It was his discourse that attempts to theoretically construct a Hindu political community which shared the same racial bonds and historical memories.⁹

But Savarkar did not stop at this concept of common father land and a common racial bond, rather for him, a Hindu was also one “who inherits Indian civilization as represented in a common history, common heroes, a common literature, a common art and architecture, law and jurisprudence, rites and rituals, ceremonies and sacraments, taint and festivals”.¹⁰ Thus Hindus are portrayed as inheritor of a common cultural heritage.

All these essentials could be summed up by stating in brief that he is a Hindu to whom Hindustan is not only a *Pitribhu* but also a *Punyabhu*. If by *Pitribhu*, he denoted and connoted *rastra* and *jati*, then through *Punyabhu* concept he tried to include *Sanskriti* and *Samskar* that makes a land a Holy land. Thus, the fundamentals of Hindutva are a common nation, a common race or origin and a common culture. It is a bond of common territory, common blood and

⁹ See, Purshottam Agarwal, 'Savarkar, Surat and Draupadi' in Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia edited, *Women and the Hindu Right : Collection of Essays*, (Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1995) p.41.

¹⁰ V.D Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* op cit,.. p. 81.

common civilisation. These three taken together constitute Hindutva and form the bedrock of Hindu rashtra.

Savarkar emphasised that in India, Hindus are a rashtra (nation) and not merely one of the various religious communities. The non-Hindus are on the other hand, only communities therefore minorities. He says “Although the Muslims and Christians have inherited along with Hindus a common fatherland and a greater part of the wealth of common culture – language, law, custom, folklore and history, (they) are not and cannot be recognized as Hindu... Their Holyland is far off in Arabia or Persia”.¹¹

For Savarkar, Hindus share a common country, race, religion and language . It is this common inheritance which entitled them to claim themselves as true nationals. Savarkar points out-¹²

One in national glory and one in national disasters, one in national despair and one in national hope, the Hindus are welded together during aeons of a common life and common habitat. Above all the Hindus are bound together by the dearest, most sacred and most enduring bonds of a common Fatherland and a common Holyland, and these two being identified with one and the same country our Bharatbhumi, our India, the National oneness and homogeneity of the Hindu have been doubly sure.

¹¹ V.D Savarkar, *Hindutva, Who is a Hindu*, opcit, p.92.

¹² See, V.D. Savarkar, *Hindu Rashtra, Darshan* (a collection of the Presidential speeches delivered from the Hindu Mahasabha Platform, Lakshmi Ganesh Khare, Bombay, 1949.) p.10, also See, *Commemoration Volume*, (Savarkar Darshan Pratishthan, 1989).

Again independence for Savarkar did not mean the political freedom from the British. Thus he says-¹³

The real meaning of Swarajya then, is not merely geographical independence of a bit of earth called India. To the Hindus , independence of Hindusthan can only be worth having if that ensures their Hindutva- religious , racial and cultural identity.

From Savarkar's ideology, it is evident that the Indian nation had to be necessarily a Hindu nation and the Hindus alone were the true sons of the soil. According to Savarkar-¹⁴

“... to the Hindus than being their fatherland as well as their Holyland, the love they bear to Hindus than is undivided and absolute”. In this ideology, “there is no conflict between Hindutva and nationalism. Moreover, the non Hindus are a menace”.¹⁵

Thus, Hindus according to Savarkar were a race who by definition followed a particular religion and it is by this very definition “Hindus were constituted in opposition to Muslims and Christians whose very identities were constituted as always posing a threat of disloyalty. Although Muslims and Christians were also constituted in racial terms, it is clear that the threat that they pose lay in the fact that their Holyland is other than in India. Again despite the continuous emphasis on the racial differences, it was the difference of

¹³ *Indra Prakash, A Review*, (1938 edition) p.152.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p 151.

¹⁵ See, *Election Manifesto*, (Hindu Mahasabha, New Delhi, 1957) p.17.

religion that remained as a constituting movement of the opposition identities¹⁶. Purushotram Agarwal points out- “In religious discourse the community is defined in terms of a shared creed or dogma. In the political discourse of communalism, the community is defined primarily as a race. Religion, instead of being a defining criterion thus is transformed into a fetish owned by an already defined community”¹⁷.

Savarkar’s idea of Hindutva and definition of a Hindu may seem arbitrary, inconsistent and often confusing, but what is significant is that, it helped in developing the Hindu communal identity and consciousness. Savarkar provided homogenized version of Hindu and tried to overlook or deny its existing caste and sectarian barriers. That Savarkar's effort was successful is clear by the fact that the Sangh Parivar leaders also mouthed the same desire. For example the RSS ideologue H.V. Seshadri says-¹⁸

We first concentrate on instilling a sense of belong to one single harmonious Hindu fraternity. The spirit of oneness results in dissolving all differences such as caste, creed, sect, language etc. Common cultural and national festivals, common spiritual and community based programmes, shramadan (Karseva) by the village youth for improving community life, efforts towards raising moral

¹⁶ See, Brenda Cossman, and Ratna, Kapur ‘Secularism: Benchmarked by Hindu Right’ , *Economic and Political Weekly*, (September 21, 1996) p. 2617.

¹⁷ Purushottam Aggarwal,, opcit, p.40.

¹⁸ HV Sheshadri, ‘Parivar Performs as ever’ , *Organiser*, (Feb, 14, 1993) P.3

and cultural standards by fostering positive and perennial Hindu values.

Thus like Savarkar, later ideologues of the Sangh Parivar also believed that homogeneity was the essential pre-requisite for all round development of Hindus. With the emphasis on Hindu sanskriti and samskaras as the most crucial and decisive essentials of Hindutva, Savarkar and the Hindu Mahasabha neatly divided people into two distinct groups Hindus and non Hindus and placed the non-Hindus under the disturbing cloud of suspicion, fear hatred and hostility.

The ideological dimension provided by Savarkar determined the agendas to be taken up by the Hindu Mahasabha in the pre-independence and the Sangh Parivar in the post independence period through the consolidation of the Hindu community, through *Sanghathan*, the defence of its religion, the Hinduization of politics, the militarisation of Hindudom, the establishment of a Hindu rashtra, and the reconversion of the former Hindus through Shuddhi. Savarkar emphatically declared that “every political question in India is either religious or cultural, and every religious or cultural question is political”¹⁹ Thus Savarkar linked polity with religion and culture and set the stage for the future Ramjanmabhoomi – Babri Masjid controversy.

¹⁹ *Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya*, vol. 6, (Maharashtra Prantic Hindu Sabha, Pune 1964) p.560.

The communal ideology of Savarkar was carried forward by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar. He felt that a committed and disciplined cadre, inspired and challenged by the nation's glorious past heritage and traditions was a necessary condition to sustain Savarkar's ideology and to achieve political independence of Bharat. He believed liberation and rejuvenation of Hindus was a prerequisite for securing, the political freedom of the nation. So he wrote-²⁰

The Hindu culture is the life breath of Hindustan. It is therefore, clear that if Hindustan is to be protected, we should first nourish the Hindu culture. If the Hindu culture perishes in Hindustan itself, and if the Hindu society ceases to exist, it will hardly be appropriate to refer to the mere geographical entity that remains as Hindustan.....it is to fulfill this duty of protecting the Hindu society that the RSS has come into existence.

He further pointed out that-²¹

The essence of national freedom lies in the redemption and revival of the Hindu dharma and Hindu culture. The basic malady was the absence of historic community consciousness and unity among Hindus. The need of the hour was to recharge the Hindus with the true spirit of national character and cohesion is as to bring about a national resurrection and for this, creation of a cadre inspired by unadulterated devotion to national integrity and identity was necessary

Thus Hedgewar founded Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh

²⁰ Narayan Hari Palkar, , *Dr. Hedgewar* (in Marathi), (Pune, 1964) pp. 115-116.

²¹ Ibid

(henceforth RSS) in Nagpur on twenty seventh September 1925, on the sacred day of Vijayadasami which traditionally symbolises the victory of good over evil. With the RSS, Savarkar's communal ideology reached its high watermark. The Sangh put ideology into action through its cadre based Sanghtan. It emphasised the racial superiority of the Hindus... It preached the gospel of Hindutva and Hindu Rashtra.²² Thus Hedgewar through RSS aimed to build up a well disciplined and loyal cadre of Hindu young men for the rejuvenation of the Hindu rashtra.

However, till the Hedgewar era, there was no written constitution of the RSS. The first written exposition of the ideology of the Sangh was provided by Golwalkar through '*We Or Our Nationhood Defined*' written in 1939. The Sangh's written constitution came up in the wake of the ban on the organisation after Gandhi's assassination by Nathuram Godse.²³

Golwalkar's vision of a Hindu nation included five components-²⁴

The idea contained in the word nation is a compound of five distinct factors fused into one in a dissoluble whole, the famous five writers: Geographical (country), Racial (Race), Religious (Religion), cultural (culture) and linguistic (language).

Golwalkar elaborated in details the meaning he ascribed to

²² See B.R. Purohit, *Hindu Revivalism and Indian Nationalism*, (Sagar Sathi Prakashan, 1965) p.144-145. Also See, D.R. Goyal (1979), *Rashtriya Swyam Sewak Sangh*, (Radha Krishna Prakashan, New Delhi 1979).

²³ From the preamble to the constitution it may appear that Sangh is a pure cultural organization of the Hindus, the myth which was shattered in the subsequent period.

²⁴ M.S. Golwalkar, *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, (Bharat Publications, Mohal Nagpur, 1939) p.18

each of these categories. Country according to him is described as “hereditary territory... relating to which [a people] has certain indissoluble bonds of community”.²⁵

A race in the other hand is defined as “a hereditary society having common customs, common language, common memories of glory or disaster, in short, it is a population with a common origin under one culture”²⁶.

Infact, Golwalkar was very much impressed by Nazism. He wrote “Germany has . . . shown how well – nigh impossible it is for races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by.”²⁷

So far as religion is concerned, Golwalkar regards it the very life breath of a people, where it governs every action of the individual as well as of the society as a whole.²⁸

Speaking in same vein as Savarkar, he pointed out that those who argue that religion has no place in politics fails to understand the real meaning of religion: According to him-²⁹

Religion, in its essence is that which by regulating society in all its functions makes room for all individual idiosyncrasies, and provides suitable ways and means for all sorts of mental frames to

²⁵ Ibid., p.20.

²⁶ Ibid., p.21

²⁷ Ibid., p.27.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 21

²⁹ Ibid, p.23.

adopt and evolve and which at the sometime raises the whole society as such from the material through the moral to the spiritual plane.

Thus according to Golwalkar religion cannot be ignored in individual or in public life. Again, Golwalkar feels that the religion and culture for the Hindus is virtually indistinguishable. Thus he says-³⁰

Where Religion Forms the very life-breath of a people, where it governs every action of the individual as well as of the society as a whole, where in short, it forms the only incentive to all action, wholly and spiritually, it is difficult to distinguish these two factors

Finally language is defined as a essential component of every nation. "Every race, living in its own country, evolves a language of its own, reflecting its culture, its religion, its history and tradition."³¹

In Golwalkar's vision, only Hindus qualify under each of the categories and thus constitute a Nation." Hindustan, the land of the Hindu... a definite geographical unity" "Hindu Race is united together by common traditions... memories, ... culture, ... language ... (and) customs", and these constitutes a race."³²

Golwalkar further elucidates his stand on religion, race and culture-³³

This great Hindu race professes its illustrious Hindu religion, the only religion in the world worthy of being so denominated, which in its variety is still an organic whole ... Guided by this Religion in all

³⁰ Ibid, p. 21.

³¹ Ibid, p.26.

³² Ibid, p.40.

³³ Ibid, pg41

walks of life, individual, social, political, the Race evolved a culture which despite the degenerating contact with the debased 'civilizations' of the Mussalmans and the Europeans, for the last ten centuries, is still the noblest in the world.

Thus, in Golwalkar's analysis, race and culture are constituted in the end through the category of religion. Although Golwalkar tried to insist that the category of Hindu is broader than that of Hinduism, but like Savarkar's ideology, the religion of Hinduism remains the constituting moment of this broader political category, whereas other two categories of country and language can in turn be seen to be the derivative of this religion category. In fact, just like Savarkar, from Golwalkar's elaboration of his categories, we can draw the same conclusion that it is the common religion of Hinduism from which the cultural definition of the Hindu nation is derived.

Again like Savarkar, the Muslims and Christians are cast as 'foreign races' – only Hindus are the true sons of the soil, the true children of Bharat mata.

Again, only a Hindu son is a true patriot and can feel the pain of Partition because -³⁴

They (Muslims and Christians) are born in this land, no doubt. But are they true to its soil?.....No. Together with the change of their faith gone are the spirit of love and devotion for the nation.

³⁴ M. S Golwalkar, *Bunch Of Thoughts*, (Bangalore, 1966) P.127-128.

Thus in Savarkar and Golwalkar's ideology religious minority's existence as a citizen of the nation are completely derived. We see only Hindu culture is regarded as truly indigenous. The composite nature of national culture is completely denied.

However, the door is not entirely closed to religious minorities and provides a chance to make a conditional entry into the Hindu nation. It was said - ³⁵

All those(non Hindu minorities)..... can have no place in the national life, unless they abandon their difference, adopt the religion, culture and language of the nation and completely merge themselves in the national race. So long, however, as they maintain their racial, religion and cultural differences, they cannot but be only foreigners... the strangers have to acknowledge the national religion as the state religion and in every other respect inseparably merge in the national community.

Thus Golwalkar demands mental allegiance from the minorities, which can only be possible if they adopt 'national religion' which is 'Hindu religion'. Unless and until they do so they are subjected to suspicion and threat to the integrity of the nation and are not eligible to be the citizen of Bharat.

Golwalkar vehemently pointed out -³⁶

They (minorities) must cease to be foreigners or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation claiming nothing,

³⁵ M.S Golwalkar, *We Or Our Nationhood Defined*, opcit., P.45-46.

³⁶ Ibid, p.52.

deserving no privileges far less any preferential treatment – not even citizen's rights.

Thus we see, 'Hindutva means Indianess. It means establishing a Hindu rashtra – a Hindu state, based on a Hindu way of life.³⁷ It is this ideology which forms the backbone of the Ramjanmabhoomi Liberation Movement of the Sangh Parivar.

The concept of Hindutva is constituted largely in relation to whom they oppose – Muslims and Christians. The attack on the minorities goes to the very core of the concept of Hindu rashtra and Hindutva. From Sarvakar to Golwalkar to the contemporary ideologues, it is this attack on religious minorities, or the effort to assimilate these minorities back into the folds of Hinduism that has given Hindutva and Ayodhya movement its political character. Ayodhya can be seen as a political terrain where "Hindutva continues to be a political category that is distinct from religion of Hinduism, but which relies on religion in constituting the political category of Hindu".³⁸

The political character of Ayodhya movement becomes ample clear when the Sangh Parivar says -³⁹

This (Ayodhya movement) does not aim at adding one or more temple to the long list of thousands of temples already existing. It's

³⁷ For more details see, A.K Roy, 'Hinduism : A Geocultural Concept', *Manthan*, (Vol. XIII, Nos. 1-2 May – June, 1991).

³⁸ Ratna Kapur & Brenda Cossman, 'Secularism, Bench Marked by Hindu Right', op cit., p. 2619

³⁹ *Manthan*, (Volume xii, Nos 1-2, May- June, 1991) p.6.

aim is to establish the supremacy of the age-old Bharatiya ideal of positive secularism over the intolerant theocratic ideology of medieval Islam its aim is to make the present and future generation of Muslim Bharatiyas to take pride in their pre-Islamic ancestry and to dissociate themselves from the medieval invaders and formal rulers from the glorification of their misdeeds in the name of Islam.

The Sangh Parivar further questions “what is the sense in constructing a magnificent Ram temple without demolishing the present dilapidated structures except to perpetuate the bitter memories of the medieval age tyranny and vandalism?”⁴⁰

Thus we see, the programme of demolition of mosque is regarded as a necessary action to erase what the Sangh Parivar feels the moment of Hindu slavery and to assert the pride of national culture which according to them is equivalent to Hindu culture.

According to the Sangh Parivar, “the movement for building the temple at Ayodhya has become basic to the very survival of the nation’s civilization the creation of a new sense of nationalism and also the correction of historical wrong.”⁴¹ In the Ayodhya movement, Nationalism is constructed by the Sangh Parivar on religious categories and political activities are given the status of religious functions. Drawing nourishment from the ideological base created by Savarkar Godwalkar, the message conveyed in the Ayodhya Movement and in the demolition of the Mosque is clear –In Hindu Rashtra there

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Saradindu Mukherjee, ‘A Controversy for Nothing’, *Manthan* op.cit. p.112.

is no room for a separate non-Hindu identity. All must become Hindu or they will be made so.⁴²

The Ayodhya Movement and the Sangh Parivar's version of Secularism

What is significant is that, in spite of this narrow definition the Sangh Parivar claims they are secular. Secularism has at least two distinctive meanings: one emerging from John Holyoake's coinage of the term in 1850, in which there is a place for religion in public life, and the Charles Braulaugh in which there is clear separation between matters of religion and the state.⁴³ In India, Nehru's vision – 'Dharma Nirapekshata – based on a strong belief of separation of religion from State politics.⁴⁴ Gandhi also understood by secularism separation of religion from politics. Gandhi's version – 'Sarva dharma Sambhava' – was based on the principle of equal respect of all religions.

The Sangh Parivar cast itself in favour of Gandhian secularism. The BJP says it believes in 'positive secularism'.⁴⁵ which they claim meant Sarva Dharna Sambhava and which they say does not separate the state from religion. The Sangh Parivar provides their

⁴² For details see, 'Lessons from Ayodhya and an opportunity', *Frontline*, (January 1993) pp. 115-117.

⁴³ For a more detailed history of term, see, 'The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance' by Nandy, Ashis X, *Alternatives III*, (1988) pp.177-194.

⁴⁴ Pradeep Kumar, 'Nehru, Congress and Secularism' 27:39 *Mainstream*, (June 24, 1989). The term 'Secular' was not inserted in the constitution by the constituent assembly. 'Secular' was inserted in the constitution by the 42nd amendment passed in 1976.

⁴⁵ See BJP manifesto. Speech delivered by L.K. Advani in Parliament on November 7, 1990.

own understanding of secularism in the name of Gandhi and makes a false distinction between Gandhi And Nehru on the question of secularism.

The Sangh Parivar is an ardent critic of Nehruvian secularism. They falsely accused Nehru of dismissing culture and religion as irrelevant. According to the Sangh Parivar it was a big blunder, just as it was the blunder of Marxists, who dismissed religion as the opium of the masses. The Sangh Parivar feels that religion is the strong element in national culture and cannot be dismissed as irrelevant. But the Sangh Parivar does not believe in composite existence of religion or culture. Rather for them 'India is indeed a Hindu country. Indian culture is Hindu culture and all talk about composite culture is hogwash.'⁴⁶ They feel secularism which Nehru had made popular came in very handy for garnering electoral support of the minorities for the continuity of the Congress rule in the country.⁴⁷ They brand all those who believe in Nehruvian secularism as '*Pseudo Secularist*'. It is necessary to mention in this context that in the Indian political system consensus on the value of secularism the evils of communalism has reached such a general agreement that literally all parties, including the most communal, reject the label of 'communal' and project themselves as 'Secular'

⁴⁶ Jay Dubashi, 'Ayodha-front piece of new history', *Organiser*, (Dec.5. 1993) p.5

⁴⁷ B.M. Sinha, 'Nehruian Secularism fails', *Manthan*,. op.cit. p.46.

Three essential postulates of a Secular state in the Sangh Parivar's view are ⁴⁸

(1) The state must not discriminate between its citizens on the basis of religion or form of worship (2) There should be uniform laws for all citizens (3) All citizens should be equal before the law.

No wonder in this ideology any laws or policies which provide special treatment to minorities are opposed as 'pseudo secularism' or 'appeasement of minorities.'

If we delve deep into the Sangh Parivar version of secularism, we will realize that equality signifies equality of Hindu community and it is against this norm that all other communities need to be judged and verified.

It needs to be mentioned at this juncture that, there has been considerable criticism by the extent to which the Indian constitutional and political framework upheld secular values. Some scholars find that secularism in India does not mean a wall of separation between religion and politics, but rather the equal respect for all religions. The concept of secularism, in India emerged in the context of religious pluralism as against religious authoritarianism in the west ... it was religious community, rather than religious

⁴⁸ Balraj Modhak, , 'An open letter to the President, Prime Minister, Party Leaders and Editors, *Organiser*, (Republic day, nationalism special, 1993) p.52.

authority, which mattered in the Indian context.⁴⁹ Whereas other scholars argue that the equal respect for all religions has been responsible for communalising politics.⁵⁰ The concept of *Sarvadharmā Sambhava* has failed to transcend the categories of communalism and that this approach to secularism has been an underlying cause of communalism of Indian politics. This approach has given rise to a majoritarian politics in which representative politics based on adult franchise have become a contest in which communities are mobilized in a competition of votes, and in which the majority community must always win. The major lacunae in the conceptualization of secularism in India 'Lies in the definition of secularism... in that secularism has not been clearly defined in forms of separatism of religion from politics, either in its Constitutional form or in conventions of the political process'.⁵¹

Again toleration forms a natural part of this Secular Hindu culture. According to the Sangh Parivar - "the freedom to follow one's

⁴⁹ Asghar Ali Engineer, 'Secularism in India – Theory and Practice' in Heredin and Mathias eds. *Secularism and Liberation : Perspectives and strategies for India Today*, (Indian Social Justice, New Delhi, 1995) p.81.

⁵⁰ For details see, P Upadhyaya, 'The Politics of Indian Secularism, Its Practitioners, Defenders and Critics', (Occasional Papers in Perspectives in Indian Development, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, number XI, January 1990) Also see the Politics of Indian Secularism, *Modern Asian Studies*, (Vol. 26, No.4, 1997) p.815.

⁵¹ Ibid My aim is not to enter into a lengthy decision and debate over the term secularism. I would like argue that the basic flaws lies in implementation of either Nehruvian or Gandhian secularism in its actual form in the Indian polity. This has lead Sangh Parivar to make communal appropriation of the term. For detailed study on the concept of secularism see, Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a secular State*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1964) , see also, Partha,Chatterjee, 'Secularism and Toleration', *Economic and Political Weekly*, (July 9, 1994). See , G.S Sharma. ed *Secularism: Its implications for Law and Life in India*, (Bombay, 1966.)

religion necessarily requires tolerance in the essence of Hindu culture and secularism is based on the bed rock of tolerance.⁵²

Thus Hinduism is secularism *par excellence*. Paradoxically, it is precisely this argument that is used by the Sangh Parivar to deny any allegation that they believe in Fundamentalism or Theocracy⁵³.

Because Hinduism is tolerant - because it represents 'secularism par excellence' - by definition it cannot be fundamentalist or theocratic.

Despite its appearance, the Sangh Parivar does not have equal respect for all religions: Since not all religions are as tolerant as Hinduism, then not all religions are worthy of equal respect. So without any real respect or accommodation for any other religion, it is doubtful how much the Sangh Parivar actually believes in Sarva dharma Sambhava.

We see, Savarkar so also Golwalkar's articulation linked religion, culture and nation together.

The Ayodhya movement and Cultural Nationalism

It is this linkage which let later ideologues to claim that the Ayodhya movement in actually the an effort to establish 'culture nationalism'. As H.V. Seshadri pointed out- The Ramjanmabhoomi

⁵² P.C Alexander, 'Secularism - Natural to Hinduism', *Manthan*, opcit, p.56.

⁵³ Ratna Kapur, Brenda Cossman, 'Secularism, Bench Marked by Hindu Right', Op.Cit., p. 2623.

campaign it must be remembered embodied the noblest cultural values of Hindutva and the call for redeeming the nation's honour.⁵⁴ He further added⁵⁵ "As for 'minorities', Hindutva alone furnishes the secure basis for the joining the national mainstream. Hindutva, which represents *cultural nationalism*, rises above all the religious differences and yet allows full scope for every genuine aspirant to pursue 'spiritual sadhana'.

Thus Hindutva was given superior status by the Sangh Parivar and projected as the true representative of cultural nationalism.

As some scholars have noticed, religion and culture have been closely linked in India so that religious community is also described as a cultural community, organized around common beliefs, value systems and modes of living.⁵⁶ In fact the Ayodhya movement can be seen as an effort by the Sangh Parivar to put the concept the culture to be more precise Hindu Culture as the central political discourse of India today. But this projection of the Sangh Parivar that Hindu religious communities form homogenous cultural community and are only truly national is distressing. This view simplifies our understanding of 'culture'. It overlooks the fact that culture has many dimensions material, ideational and social and these cut across

⁵⁴ H.V Sheshadri, , 'They also condemn and criticize', *Organiser*, (Dec.5, 1993) p. 7

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Sarah Joseph, 'Identity, Culture and Community', *Economic and Political Weekly*, (April 24, 1993) p.807.

the boundaries of religion. The Sangh Parivar's constant assumption of every aspect of culture which has emerged in Indian till the Muslim invasion, as only authentic and Hindu is a narrow view of understanding the evolution of culture and tradition in India. The Sangh Parivar believes the true expression of this culture is to be found in the early philosophical texts and beliefs, knowledge systems and the practices. The Vedas, The Upanishads and philosophy of Gita were regarded By Sangh Parivar as the expression of highest wisdom of India.

The Sangh Parivar stressed the importance of Sankskrit and regarded it as the offshoot of Indo Aryan family of language. Originating in the country, Hindu culture was seen as the natural and true culture of India..

Savarkar and Golwalkar's effort brought about a radical change in Hindu consciousness. Through continuous repetition of views of Savarkar and Golwalker, Hindutva was developed by the Sangh Parivar as a coherent and powerful pattern of concepts. We witness in the the Sangh Parivar's ideology, emergence of a self confident and aggressive Hindu community. While non Hindus are presented as spurious, faulty and underdeveloped and of recent origin. The Hindu dharma is portrayed as the most ancient perfect, comprehensive, universal and spiritual religion. The nationalistic ideology set up by them is basically of a religious character. Bharatvarsha is elevated to

the rank of a deity -Mother Goddess and Nationalism (*desh bhakta*) to that of spiritual faith.(Shradha). Bharat Varsha is a Hindu Rastra and only Hindus are true sons and truly secular, who bears an organic as well as emotional relationship with this land. Muslims are portrayed as the symbol of these who disrupted this sacred integrity and divided this 'holy land'. It is this ideology which is carried over into a struggle for Ram's land. It is this ideology which emerged ideologically and electorally as a viable alternative to the Gandhi - Nehru legacy of a democratic state, professing adherence to social welfare and multi culturalism. The Ayodhya movement, the demolition of Babri Masjid and electoral success of BJP aftermath may be seen on the enactment of this communal ideology.

CHAPTER-III

MOBILIZATION, CONTEMPORARY POLITICS, LAW AND THE AYODHYA MOVEMENT

The importance of ideology lies in the fact that it appears to have an explanatory value. But in any popular movement, successful execution of the ideology is not possible unless consent is built around it. One of the most effective means of consent building is a sustained campaign and mobilization strategy. Sangh Parivar took this path in the Ayodhya movement.

Initially the main mode of mobilization was character building by means of slow and patient work at the grassroots level, symbolized by the daily drill of RSS shakhas. Political goals were long term and conceived in terms of influence, rather than direct control.¹

¹ RSS did play a crucial role in Indian politics of 1960s to 1980s. RSS was the active supporter of anti Congress agitational politics in 1974-75 which saw a countrywide campaign against the Indira Government led by Japayprakash Narayan. RSS members (under the aegis of political wing Bharatiya

Owing to the number of developments, this approach changed to a direct bid for electoral power.² This shift from 'cultural character building' to a reliance on extra parliamentary politics of an openly and aggressively Hindu communal type, signals the ascendancy of the VHP and a shift in strategy of the RSS, particularly in respect of Hindu mobilization mode, with retaining of Hindu identity by means of discrete commodified images, and the exhortation of discrete acts of support from consumption to Karseva.³

The VHP established in 1964, as one of the leading front organisation of RSS, sharing similar concerns and aspirations as the Rss, promoted the consolidation and defense of Hindus and the promotion of Hindu religion.⁴ Initially the organisation worked largely in North East India, proselytizing against Christian missionaries. With the Meenakshipuram incident of 1981 when some Harijans were converted to Islam, the VHP focus was turned against Muslims. Two apex bodies - the Marg Darshak Mandal and Dharm Sansad was created "to enlarge and formalize the institutional links with men of religion across the country".⁵ Thus "the Sanyasis became the vehicle

Jana Sangh) did enter Central ministries with Janata triumph of 1971. RSS learnings of the Jana Sangh members became the crucial issue in Janata split in 1979.

² Again, RSS did develop some connections with Congress during Indira Gandhi's last year when Congress displayed considerable eagerness to compete for the Hindu vote. The electoral debate of BJP in 1984 was often attributed to the fact that the RSS switched some of its support to the Congress.

³ See, Arvind Rajgopal, "Communalism and the Consuming Subject", *Economic and Political Weekly*, (February 10, 1996) p.341.

⁴ See, Sumit Mitra, "Hinduism: Road to Revival", *India Today*, (November 30, 1983)

⁵ See, Basu Tapan, et al *Khaki shorts, Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right*, (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1993) p.64.

to articulate Hindutva's ambition of organizing a Hindu identity and state."⁶

The movement to liberate three Janmabhoomis (at Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura) was initiated through two dharm sansads held in 1984 and 1985. Through its network and volunteers, it reached two crore people across the country. About fifty lakh inland letter cards and envelop which show India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh under a saffron flag were sold by Delhi unit of VHP alone.⁷ Thus we see a massive mobilisation attempt by the VHP. Political participation of the Hindu community was the chief aim of VHP because this is the only way through which Sangh Parivar's aspiration of building a Hindu rashtra could be fulfilled. According to the VHP, "Hindus must recapture the political power for the purification (of the present polluted land). Then only Ram Rajya (Kingdom of Ram/God) can be reincarnated in this land." ⁸ VHP categorically says, "Bharat is a Hindu rashtra and the non-Hindus can only pollute this nation of the Hindus".⁹

VHP portrays that prior to the arrival of Muslims and British, Indian society was the ideal Hindu society and that "the inhuman behavior such as speaking lies, stealing and selfishness has been

⁶ Ibid, p.65.

⁷ For details See, C.V Mathew, *The Saffron Mission: A Historical Analysis of Modern Hindu Missionary Ideologies And Practices*, (ISPCK, Delhi, 1993)

⁸ *Hindu Vishwa*, (Bhadrapad, 241) p.34-35.

⁹ Ibid

brought in, introduced and spread in the holy, pure and beloved motherland of the Hindus by Islamic and British invasions".¹⁰

The VHP also feels that "Hindus have been successful in getting rid of British, but not the Mughal Empire"¹¹. Even today VHP holds the same regret.¹² Thus to establish a Hindu rashtra and to drive away the Muslims, the VHP indulged in a collective mobilization of Hindus under the auspices of Ram Janmabhoomi Liberation Movement. The movement attempted to 'liberate' the birth place of Ram to rebuild the Ram temple at the very site of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. The VHP issued the controversial issue of the liberation of Ram Janmabhoomi at Ayodhya to promote Hindu solidarity and Hindu cause while serving a blow to Muslim assertiveness.¹³

For the mobilization purpose, VHP made the innovative use of small icons derived from calendar art, the sticker, badges, the slogan, the bhagwa dhvaj, video cassettes, leaflets, pamphlets, etc.

Various Modes of Mobilization

Stickers played an important role in the mobilization process. Stickers in a variety of garish colours used traditional religious symbols (like Om, Saffron Flag, Ram Lalla, Ram as armed etc.) flooded North India. Stickers played a crucial role in the dissemination of

¹⁰ Ibid, p.33-34

¹¹ Ibid

¹² My interview with Champat Rai, Sayukth Mahamantri of VHP confirmed this. He says "India today is politically free but not culturally, which we feel is due to the presence of Muslims in India."

¹³ See, Anderson and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron : The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism*, (Boulder Co: West View Press, New Delhi 1987) p.135, 238.

Hindu communal ideology and transforming the character from objects of worship to signs of one's Hindu identity.¹⁴

Dissemination of communal ideology was also attempted through the widespread distribution of various leaflets and pamphlets. These pamphlets often ask readers not only to read it but also to distribute it among friends and neighbours¹⁵. Crudely printed pamphlets like: *Ramjanmabhoomi Mandir Itihaas aur Sakshya*, *Shri Ramjanmabhoomi: Sachitra Pramanik Itihaas*, *Shri Ramjanmabhoomi Ka Tala Kaise Khula*, *Shri Ramjanmabhoomi ka Rakt Ranjit Itihaas*, *Shri Ramjanmabhoomi ka Sampurna Itihaas* etc. are often freely distributed to provide Sangh Parivar's version of historic authenticity and narrativity of Ram's birthplace and Muslim onslaught.

The cover page of most of these pamphlets contains iconic representation of Ram with a pseudo-photographic depiction of the non-existent Ayodhya temple. Three types of iconographic representations are generally found. One is Ram Lalla (Baby Ram), Ram as warrior, radiating a mood of *ugra rasa* (elemental anger) and Ram as king in *santa rasa* (Peace and tranquility) as a source of stability and reassurance.¹⁶ What is common in all the three images of Ram is the presence of bow and arrow. "While Ram as a Kshatriya

¹⁴ *Khaki shorts, Saffron Flags*, op.cit., p.62.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.60

¹⁶ For details regarding iconographic representation of Ram in Sangh Parivar's Literature see Anuradha Kapur's article in Gayenendra Pandey edited *Hindus and Others. The Question of Identity in India Today*, (Viking, New Delhi, 1993).

king is rightfully a warrior figure, the new element that makes all the difference here is the unstated reference to the fact that the weapons are meant for the destruction of Muslims".¹⁷

Modes of mobilization did not remain restricted to print media but also extended to audio-visual production. Much of the VHP's ability to present its 'world view' as natural was due to the impact of the televised 'Ramayan' serial.¹⁸

It is important to mention here that, in commodified image system in electronic communications, production and consumption are alienated from each other, so that "consumers have no direct input into the production process".¹⁹ Although consumption is private, it is an act duplicated numerously and simultaneously, thereby allowing a social character to be imputed to it and it is here the crucial ideological force of televisions 'representation' lies".²⁰ Television secures the social time of viewers and creates a space which is shared by all the viewers collectively. Thus television is a key locus of collective activity. It comes to 'stand for' the society and serve as a crucial locus of consent.

The effect of serials like Ramayana must be understood in this

¹⁷ *Khaki Short, Saffron Flags* opcit, p.62.

¹⁸ *Khaki Shorts, Saffron Flags*, opcit, p93

¹⁹ Arvind Rajgopal, *Economic And Political Weekly*, opcit (1996) p334

²⁰ *Ibid*

context. Ramayana was able to cut across diverse social strata, provoking a range of understandings of its significance but "uniting them in the event of serials transmission".²¹ The serial offered an opportunity to appeal to "a shared symbolic background in more ways than one, portraying as it did images of an idealized golden age behind and above contemporary deviations".²² It invoked images of *Ram Rajya* as stood in memory and myth. The idealized past presented in the serial may be utopian but the "serial was able to project Ram's life and character as a national ideal".²³

The VHP borrowed this theme in its audio-visual propaganda. In all the video cassettes like *Bhaye Prakat Kripala to Pran Jaye par Vachan Najaye* to Sadhvi Ritambhara's audio cassette, three themes run in common - a mythical tale of hero Ram, the importance of building a temple at Ayodhya in Hindu life and 'Muslim barbarism' with Babar's invasion. Often these cassettes borrowing catchy filmy tunes make dramatic presentations of 'Ram's life', urge the killings of VP Singh and Mulayam Singh Yadav. One such cassette is '*Ram Ke Naam le*'.

A cursory study of the audio cassettes of Ritambhara will help in understanding how through her speeches she whipped up blatant

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

²³ *Khaki Shorts, Saffron Flags*, opcit, p93

anti Muslim sentiments.²⁴ She vehemently points out that it is due to the consequence of the distorted politics that has been practiced in this country for the past forty years where the Hindus are being looted and beaten. Those very people who were born of our own blood are betraying us today. She outrightly opposes the notion of Hindus don't have a history. She points out "Hindus have a history and those people who think that Hindus are coward and impotent and that is why they face alien rule for the centuries are mistaken. We Hindus, are the progeny of those brave people who foiled the sinister designs of the people from Mohammad-bin Qasim to Mohammad Ali Jinnah to convert India into an Islamic Nation". She advises the Muslims to follow Rhas and Rahim Khan (medieval bhakti saints) - that "Rahim who searched in the dust of India the dust of Ram's feet". She says, "O Muslims live like the descendents of Rahim and Rhas Khan and we will honour you, but if you call yourselves as *Babar Ke Aulad* (Babar's Children) then we bear no relationship with you" Projecting how tolerant the Hindus are, she comments "The Hindus have never desecrated any mosque but the Muslim invaders have always destroyed Hindu temples and made our mother and daughters impure".

Highlighting the importance of Ram in every day culture she

²⁴ I have taken the translated version of Ritambara's speech from Ashish Joshi, *Constructing the Millitant Hindu and the Ramjanmabhoomi Movement(1986-1990)*, Unpublished Dissertation , (Centre for Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1992).

remarks "we greet each other saying 'Ram Ram' we say 'hey Ram' when we are in trouble, we begin and end our lives with Ram and even in a funeral process. Ram nam satya hai, is chanted". She then defends Sangh Parivar's extra-parliamentary, street fighting tactics saying "V.P. Singh wants proof of Ram and therefore the youth and the masses of the country should take to the streets and show him the proof of Ram. Concomitantly she asserts "any one who opposed Ram cannot be an Indian". Ritambhara's fiery and inflammatory speeches no doubt played a contributory role in mobilising support for the Kar Seva in Ayodhya.

Along with speeches, slogans like "Garv se kaho hum Hindu hain!", "Jis Hindu Ka Khoon Na Khaula, Woh Khoon Nahin Paani Hai", "Bachcha Bachcha Ram Ka, Mandir Ki Wai Kam Ka" ,Babar Ke Santan Ko Chun Chun Ke Mareng "Lathi Goli Khayenge, Par Mandir Wahin Banayenge" , "Hindutva Ne Pukara Hai, Garam Khoon Hamara Hai", "Jan Jan Ki Yah Pukar, Ram Bina Jivan Bekar" , "Jo Hindu Hith Ka Kaaj Kavega, Woi Desh Pe Raaj Karega" etc. coupled with religious slogans like "Shri Ram" and "Har Har Maladev" created a terrific charged atmosphere. Such charging and mobilization strategy was not sudden.

Since the early 80s 'VHP invented a series of political rituals that were meant to encompass every corner and each individual of Hindu in India.²⁵ The starters being Ekamata Yajna in 1983.

VHP conducted Ekamata Yagna in 1983 (November 16 to December 16) in an attempt to arouse the Hindu community consciousness and strengthen Hindu solidarity. It was also used for raising funds for missionary work.

Three main yatras (processions) were organised. One from Haridwar in the North to Kanya Kumari in the South, second from Ganga Sagar in Bengal to Somnath in Gujarat and the third one from Katmandu to Rameshwaram.

Each yatra was headed by two decorated chariots, one carrying a big portrait of Bharat Mata and the other on enormous pot filled with *Ganga jal* from Gangotri. Apart from these yatras there were many sub-yatras. Altogether these yatras covered a total distance of 85875 km through various parts of India. About sixty million Hindus participated in this. Over twenty five million rupees was raised for these yatras.²⁶ According to the VHP, the purpose of these yatra was to enhance national unity and integration, to create an awakening for unification, with no discrimination, for protecting Hindu heritage and or putting on end to the conversion of Hindus to alien faiths, to create

²⁵ For details see, *Hindu Vishwa* (Paus, 2040), p.6-7

²⁶ See, *Hindu Viswa*, (Karthik 2040). For further details See, *Ekamata Yagna*, Yugabda - 5085 (VHP Head Office, R.K Puram, New Delhi, 1983) Also See, Anderson and Damle opcit, pp.135, 238.

on atmosphere of Hinduism in the Indian society, to constitute courage and unity among Hindus in their encounter with Christians and Muslims. In other words to rejuvenate the Hindus against the weakening attempts resorted to by the Christians and Muslims and various political parties.²⁷

The success rate of Ekmata Yagna encouraged VHP to take up a direct and aggressive mobilization program to build the Ram temple at the site of Babri Masjid, through Shilanyas ceremony (1989) and subsequent rath yatra.

Shilanyas Ceremony And The Contemporary Politics

The Shilanyas ceremony just prior to 1989 elections witnessed the preparation and mobilization to demolish the mosque and built a Ram temple with consecrated bricks brought from all over India and other countries. The Shilanyas ceremony can be looked upon as the first successful attempt in *nationalising Ayodhya movement* by the Sangh Parivar. The Shilanyas ceremony followed by Advani's Ratha yatra added a new chapter of power game based on manipulation and mobilization in the contemporary vote bank politics of India. It made it possible for the BJP to move from periphery to the centre of Indian politics.

Just a few days before the 1989 general elections the VHP

²⁷ For details regarding the aims and objectives of Yagna see, *Hindu Vishwa*, (Paus 2040) pp.6-7

performed Shilanyas (laying foundation stone) for the Ram temple on November 9, 1989 on the disputed land of Ayodhya, which was temporarily declared to be undisputed. 'Shri Ramjanmabhoomi Mukti Sangarsh Samiti' was formed for this purpose. The Samiti sent out instructions to all districts of the country to get Shilas (bricks) of normal size with 'Shri Ram' inscribed on it locally. These bricks should be prepared by mixing Ganga water with ordinary water so that their purity remains out of question. These bricks were to be distributed in each of the five lakhs and twenty eight villages of our country where they were to be consecrated in yajnas on September 30. The same day, the yatra was to begin to reach Ayodhya in November 9. Young volunteers numbering over 10,000 were to be raised to make any sacrifice to guard the Shilanyas ceremony.²⁸ A target of collecting Rs. 25 crores for building the temple was fixed²⁹ with each household expected to contribute a minimum of Rs. 1.25³⁰. In the mean time, a resolution of the RSS National Executive declared that "the holy birth place of Lord Shri Ram enshrined in the hearts of crores of Hindus from time immemorial cannot be made a subject of judicial probe.... All our patriotic people regard as the sacred duty to remove every sign of wanton aggression (of Muslim rulers like Babur) and construct an imposing temple with their (Hindus) profound faith

²⁸ For details see, *Organiser*, (Deepavali/Ramjanmabhoomi Special Numbr, 1989). Also see *Organiser* (July 23, 1989), p.6.

²⁹ P.K Ray, *Organiser*, (Independence Day Special, 1989) p.18.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p16.

and devotion to Shri Ram.³¹ Similar resolution was also passed in the BJP National Executive Meeting held at Palampur on June 1, 1989.³²

However if we carefully look at the time when Shilanyas ceremony was organised and resolution were passed which was just before the general election we can understand that Ram mandir movement was not guarded in love for Ram or Ramayana. Sangh Parivar were not even remotely concerned with the religious and spiritual well being of the Hindus, rather they were obsessed with mobilizing Hindus as a political force to subordinate and terrorize the non-Hindus. Their Dharma is not Hinduism. Their inspiration comes more from Hitler than Ram. Their cadre openly proclaims "we should do to Muslims what Hitler did to Jews".³³ The RSS-VHP-BJP have hijacked Ram and portrayed him as a national warrior hero as opposed to a Hindu God full of compassion.³⁴ The reclaiming of what they called Ram Janmasthan is not justified on religious grounds but presented as a struggle between national and anti-national forces.

According to the Sangh Parivar, the Babri Masjid was to be demolished because it was built by an invading outsider on the place of Ram, the National Hero's Janmabhoomi. Advani says "it is wrong to put Ram against Babar. There is nothing sacred about Babar. He was

³¹ Ibid, p.18.

³² See L.K Advani, quoted in B.K. Kelkar's article, *Organiser*, (Aug 27, 1989)

³³ See Madhu Kishor, 'In defence of our dharmas', *The Telegraph*, (Cal. 25 December 1990).

³⁴ For greater details regarding iconographical change of Ram See Anuradha Kapur, 'Diety to Crusader: The Changing Iconography of Rama' in Gyanendra Pandey, edited, *Hindus and others. The question of identity in India today*, op cit,.

an invader who came from outside. Babur and Akbar can not be glorified for political reasons".³⁵ Ashok Singhal, the General Secretary of VHP also supports the same argument. He says -³⁶

It (A mandir for Ram) is concerned with National Pride. I can understand even an Aurangzeb who is after all an Indian by virtue of birth in this country, but who was Babar? He was an invader from Persia .All those who claim masjid to be a memorial for Babar are anti nationals, I would say it is an insult to our nationalistic pride if we do not build the mandir in Ayodhya by demolishing the existing structure.

Again Muslims were expected to join the Hindus in devotion to Ram to prove that they are not anti national. Advani categorically points out "The future of Islam does not depend on Babri Masjid. It depends on accepting 'the facts of history' and thereby respecting the feelings of crores of Hindus in India."³⁷ Since Hindus comprise 85% of Indian population, the Sangh Parivar claims that the disputed shrine should be handed over to the Hindus and the restoration of the idol (of Ram) would be a point of honour and sentiment with the Hindu public.³⁸

This assertive impositions deliberately overlooks the fact that even among Hindus there are innumerable sects whose chosen

³⁵ *Oranizer*, (August 27, 1989) .

³⁶ See, A.shok,Singhal, 'Mandir No Political Issue', *Tribune*, (Chandigarh, 7 December 1990).

³⁷ *Organiser*,(August 27,1989).

³⁸ *Tale of two temples in Ramjanmabhoomi*, (BJP pamphlet Ashok Road, New Delhi, n.d) p. 13.

deities are other than Ram and who would feel no less offended if compelled to forsake their own form of worship as is being demanded by the Hindutva forces.³⁹ The centrality given to Ram worship crucially ruptures devotional patterns in non-Hindi belt regions. For example in Bengal while a particular version of Ramayan is a familiar and cherished epic, there is no tradition of Ram temples or Ram worships, the chief deities being Durga, Kali and Krishna in different forms. “By making devotional traditions of North Indian Hindus obligatory upon all Hindus everywhere, regional and local patterns of beliefs are being arbitrarily violated.”⁴⁰

While campaign for handing over the disputed shrine was going on, Dharma Yatra was initiated to ‘awaken the masses’ to the need of construction of Ram temple on Ayodhya. Along with this a Virat Hindu Sammelan was held in Delhi on September 22, 1989 for further mobilization of Hindu mass. On the preset date of November 9, the Shilanyas was held in the complex of Ramjanmabhooobi – Babri Masjid at a site little away from the disputed structure. The shilanyas ceremony marked the culmination of forty days long country wide programme of shilapujan in the nearly fifteen lakh sites across the country. Shilapujan were held at over hundred spots and bricks were

³⁹ Praful Bidwai *The Times of India*, (New Delhi, 6 January, 1991).

⁴⁰ *Khaki Shorts, Saffron Flags* op cit., p. 57.

carried to Ayodhya in decorative trucks. According to the district authorities, nearly a million people had come to Ayodhya for the ceremony and visited the Shilanyas site.⁴¹

Through Shilanyas ceremony, VHP attempted to emotionally involve and integrate the Hindu society to Ayodhya movement. The Shilanyas ceremony provided tremendous moral boost to Hinduva forces. According to RSS leader, H.V. Seshadri, Shilanyas “Portrays a marked and significant turn in our national situation”.⁴²

As one of the prominent ideologue of Sangh Parivar, Jay Dubashi pointed out⁴³-

The whole purpose of Ramjanmabhoomi movement is to change the history of India, nothing less, nothing more. The Ayodya movement is therefore a historic movement, far more historic than Gandhi’s Dandi March or Quit India Movement. Freedom does not mean flying your own flag or having your own government. Freedom means making your own history, writing it with your own blood on the pages of time.

Thus Sangh Parivar tried to alter our understanding of India’s struggle for Independence.

The VHP’s program of Hinduization and anti Muslim propaganda continued unabated even after Shila Pujan, through a series of symbolic acts like Ram Jyotis, Ram Paduka, Ram Prasad,

⁴¹ For details see *Organiser*, (October 4, 1989) p.5. Also see, *Organiser*, (September 24, 1989)

⁴² H.V Seshadri *Organiser*, (December 17, 1989) p. 10.

⁴³ Jay Dubashi, *Organiser*, (November 19, 1989).

Ram Pataka, Ram gulal and also through the posters, stickers, audio tapes which besieged homes and market places with the Ayodhya message. The VHP attempt to lend sanctity to the Ayodhya movement through their mass contact and mobilization program made the construction of the 'Muslim - other' easier. The Sangh Parivar projected that the alleged destruction of the temple by Babar was not just a desecration of an ordinary place of worship but Rama's birth place and thus it was a grave assault on Hindu faith itself. By continuously referring to Muslims as 'Babar Ka Santan' in their mobilization program, the Muslim community as a whole was held responsible for acting against the Hindu faith. Their very existence is considered to be a great threat to Hindu community in particular and to India as a whole. However if we look at the religion wise break -up of Indians at the census data we can understand the manipulative nature of such construction.

Religion-wise Break-up of Hindu Population

Religion	Population
Hindus	82.00
Muslims	12.12
Christians	2.34
Sikhs	1.94
Buddhists	0.76
Jains	0.40

(Source: census report-1991)This excludes Jammu And Kashmir Data.

From this data , we can see that 82% of India's population are Hindus while 12.12% are Muslims. To even think of that with such a microscopic presence Muslims will provide threat to the existence of Hindu community is ridiculous. Nevertheless, with the VHP as its precedent, the Sangh Parivar was successful in preparing the ground for a more intense and direct political mobilization under the aegis of the BJP leader, L.K. Advani , who started the Ratha yatra from Somnath to Ayodhya. In my interviews, seven out of nine active participants of Ayodhya confirmed that VHP's mobilisation and Advani's Ratha yatra played a key role in encouraging ordinary Hindu locals to participate in the movement with such vigour. One of the regular participant from Patna, Bihar said , "Due to Vishwa Hindu Parisad, I came to gather full knowledge regarding Ayodhya and participated in the Ramjanmasthan movement"⁴⁴. Another participant from Darbhanga region Bihar says, "RSS mobilised its cadre but Advani's Rathayatra also contributed".

From November 22-24, 1989 general elections were held. The election also witnessed the worst ever communal violence in the Independent India's electoral history and took a massive toll of lives in the Hindi belt.⁴⁵ The newly formed National Front came to power with V.P. Singh as the Prime Minister with the support of BJP, who really gained from Shilanyas ceremony by increasing in Lok Sabha

⁴⁴ Translation of the Interview from Hindi to English is mine

⁴⁵ In Bihar only, communal riots broke out in four places, the worst being Bhagalpur Riots.

seats from two in 1984 to eighty eight in the 1989 election.⁴⁶

V.P Singh Regime: Legal Delay, Mandal Commission Report And The Growing Complicity Of Indian Politics

The V.P. Singh regime ushered in the judicial process by establishing a Special Bench on January 8, 1990 and pleaded for a ban on construction till the title to the disputed side could be decided and the site plan approved. A special court called upon the U.P. Government to clarify the status of the site. It is to be noted here , a Hindu Priest filed a writ petition seeking relief to permit construction of the temple on the spot of shilanyas performed on November 9, 1989. Having been directed to file a counter-affidavit by the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court, the Central Government maintained that no construction could be allowed unless all the civil suits pending before the special bench of the High Court were decided.⁴⁷

In the mean time, on January 12, 1990, the Supreme Court allowed the 'Hindu' representatives to raise a preliminary issue before the full bench of the Lucknow High Court , that the suit by the Sunni Waqf on behalf of the Muslims was not maintainable. The bench, however, decided it would not interfere with the October 23, 1989 order of the Lucknow bench before taking evidence for the trial of all the five suits which were 28 to 39 years old and remained pending in

⁴⁶ *Nations Hope*, (BJP Publication, New Delhi, n.d) p.58.

⁴⁷ *Spotlight on Regional Affairs*, (July – August 1991) pp. 82, 85-6.

the District Court. The VHP appealed before the Supreme Court that the Sunni Waqf Suit filed on December 18, 1961 be dismissed on the grounds they cited. Meanwhile, the AIBMAC (All India Babri Masjid Action Committee) revived its earlier demand in its December 25, 1989 meeting that if a negotiated settlement failed, the dispute should be decided by High Court Judges of some South Indian State, none of whom should be either Hindu or Muslim.

The sharp rise in the number of seats won by BJP along with the obvious compulsion of the V.P. Singh Government to seek the support of BJP to run the government made BJP confident of their power and potential. The VHP and the RSS with whose support BJP was able to put up such a vastly improved electoral performance now embarked upon further plans of the construction of the temple along with VHP, Ramjanmabhoomi Mukti Yagna Sammelan and other Hindutva forces. Sangh Parivar declared that "it was not a case about the title of a place but of undoing a historical wrong and for that matter no court could decide it"⁴⁸ and decided to follow the guidance of the Dharmacharya Sammelan (gathering of religious heads) to be held on January 27-28, 1990 at Allahabad. February 14 was chosen to begin temple construction which V.P. Singh managed to change temporarily with great difficulty by pointing out the grave situation in Kashmir and Punjab.

⁴⁸ For details see, *Organiser*, (January 14, 1990).

As the Sangh Parivar's June 8 deadline passes without government's settlement plan, the VHP meeting in Haridwar decided to begin construction from October 30 and the program of commencement of Karseva was announced. A Joint meeting of Sant Sammelan and Kendriya Marg Darshan Mandal of the VHP was held at Haridwar on June 23 and 24, 1990. It is here that Ashok Singhal, declared "the garbhagriha (Sanctum Sanctorum) of the proposed temple will be at the very site where Ramlalla was 'virajman' and where Hindus have been offering puja archana and that their decisions are irrevocable and non-negotiable."⁴⁹

With this backdrop, V.P. Singh introduced the Reservation Bill(Mandal Bill) in the Lok Sabha on August 7, 1990 which recommended 27% of all government job for the backward class. In reaction to it there was wide spread backlash of the upper class, specially in the Hindi belt in the form of self-immolation of brahmin youths. Sangh Parivar saw the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report as the blatant attempt to divide the Hindu vote base of the BJP.⁵⁰ "For the BJP the political fall out of Mandal is potentially devastating. As a party that has tried to project the idyllic notion of an un differentiated Hindu society, the legitimization of caste as a basis of Hindu consolidation of reinforcing a set of alternative social allegiances. In practical terms, this casteist segment may mean that the BJP will once again have to confront the

⁴⁹ *Organiser*, (July 15,1990) p5

⁵⁰ See, Suresh Khare, *Organiser*, (July 15, 1989) p. 4-6.

problem of being nationally identified with the brahmin-bania core. Having recently made inroads among the so-called backward castes in the whole of North India, the BJP is threatened, if caste polarization extends to electoral behaviour it will be reduced to a rump.⁵¹ Sangh Parivar thus chalked out a more aggressive programme in pursuance of their aim. Ramjyoti Yatra starting from Ayodhya covering two hundred and fifty places well known for their religious and geographical significance and ultimately to be converging at Ayodhya on October 1990 was decided.⁵²

With the wide spread response to Shilanyas ceremony, the BJP responding to its own complex electoral calculations decided to join in the process altering the scope and complexion of mobilization.

Advani set out in September on his 10,000 kilometers Rathayatra (Chariot Procession) which was then to converge on Ayodhya after passing through eight states⁵³, for construction and to force the government to hand over the site to Sangh Parivar. Amidst a surfeit of saffron colour and gaiety and folk dance and slogans that Ayodhya temple would be built at the very spot which was believed to be the place of Ram's birth - "Sauganth Ram Ki Khaye Hain, Hum Mandir Wahin Banayenge" , Advani embarked from the gates of the Somnath temple on the sea shore in Gujrat on his 10,000 Km long

⁵¹ S Dasgupta, *Organiser*, (October 7,1990).

⁵² For detailed program See, *Organiser*, (September 2, 1990) p.7.

⁵³ David Ludden, *Making India Hindu: Religion, Community and Politics of Democracy in India*, (OUP, Delhi, 1990) p.42.

Rathayatra as a crusade for strengthening national unity and promoting nationalism in the country.⁵⁴ The procession arrived at South Delhi- First came grey green unmarked flatbed trucks filled with policemen, then a bright orange truck decorated all over with the word Ram, the mystical syllable Om and lotus designs. Next a crowd of young men on motor scooters with saffron colored badges or caps and most of them carried orange banners with an upraised, half opened lotus emblem affixed. The chariot itself was an extended DCM toyota van redecorated as a strange looking chariot with a small air conditioned cabin at its back. On the raised platform behind the driver stood five men with L.K. Advani, addressing the crowd. The decorative scheme of 'Rath' was complex and heterogeneous with fierce looking lions, large wooden cut out of an upraised Lotus in front to Advani's Potrait and two large Om insignia on the rear of the cabin. The processionists themselves, though, rather restrained in South Delhi, brandished swords, bows and tridents elsewhere along their route. They dressed up as characters drawn from Indian epics, much as Ram, Laxman, Hanuman and even Sita..⁵⁵ Thus we see how through ardent displays and manipulation cultural symbols, the Ratha Yatra was used by the BJP as an effective emotive instrument in the hope of obtaining undifferentiated Hindu support, a prerequisite for winning the election. For BJP Ramjanmabhoomi is a three-pronged tool. It is primarily directed towards the Hindus. It's

⁵⁴ The States are Gujrat, A.P. Rajastan, Haryana, Bihar and UP as well as Delhi which was not a state at that time.

⁵⁵ For vivid first hand account see, Richard. H David's. article in David Ludden *Making India Hindu*, op cit.

aim is to provide platform and an idol to the Hindu around which they can unite.

Advani consistently asserted that the Yatra was political. He says “I set out for Ratha Yatra as a frank political worker to achieve this goal through exposing the hypocritical approach of other political parties vis-à-vis secularism.” He points out “Actually I do not regard the Ramjanmabhoomi as an issue between the Hindus and the Muslims.”⁵⁶ According to him, the problem in this country are the Hindu pseudo-secularists who regard secularism only as a *euphemism for Hindu baiting*. Thus Rathayatra according to him is a crusade against pseudo-secularism and minorityism which he regard as a political issue.⁵⁷ He further tried to defend his stand by saying “people who criticize me for putting BJP symbol on the Ratha do not see the contradiction. If I put a Ram idol or a moorti or agarbattis than your charge would be correct that I am using religion. I am projecting myself as a political leader saying in a simple and straight forward manner that this is a BJP Rath, this is my symbol, this is my lotus.”⁵⁸

However whether people really understood this straight forward message is obviously a question but one thing is certain Ratha Yatra did serve as an effective election campaign for Advani by capitalizing on people’s faith and emotion, the fruits of which BJP cherishes today by becoming a major political force. One thing should be said in

⁵⁶ *The Times of India*, (New Delhi, 20 November, 1990).

⁵⁷ See, ‘Why Rathayatra’, *Manthan*, (Deen Dayal Research Institute, Delhi, May- June 1991)p.12.

⁵⁸ *The Times of India*, (New Delhi 20 November, 1990). Also see ‘Face to face with Advani’ *Current* (Bombay, 24 November, 1990).

this regard though VHP and BJP both grew out of RSS and most of its leaders shared same ideology. But unlike VHP with its hardcore imagery, the BJP was to operate primarily in the sphere of electoral politics and so it needed to pursue a more broad based and pragmatic rhetorical strategy with its soft core imagery. This dual message being sent by the VHP and the BJP held advantages for both parties. For the VHP and kindered groups, the participation of the BJP ensured coverage by major media, enabling them to project their message to a much larger audience that had been previously possible. The BJP, on the other hand, by keeping a distance from the more militant imagery as originating from the VHP was able to maintain its electoral respectability, at the same time profiting from the undoubted power and commitment that the militant imagery evoked from the people.⁵⁹ When Advani and his cohorts were arrested in Bihar to prevent communal riots, the BJP withdrew its support to government and V.P. Singh ministry fell on November, 9.

Chandra Shekhar Government: Attempt Of Negotiation Through Dialogue

Chandra Shekhar, who was in power from November 1990 to early March 1991, made a break-through by bringing both the VHP and the All India Babri Masjid Action Committee(AIBMAC) to the negotiation table. They met first on December 1, 1990 presented their sides to the Indian government on December 23, obtained copies of the 'evidence' of other sides from the Government, and met again on

⁵⁹ Ludden David op.cit. p.42.

January 10, 1991. In that meeting it was decided to set up four committees of experts nominated by both parties to examine the historical and archaeological evidence and revenue and legal records collected as evidence. The VHP released 'The Summary of Evidence' to the public, turned down the demand of the other side for more time to study and evaluate the evidence, and made it known that they were not interested in an amicable solution.⁶⁰

Narasimha Rao Government and the final enactment.

The ultimate stage of the conflict was set with Narasimha Rao Government in place and after the virtual announcement of the Hindu communalists of their demolition plan in the late October 1992. N. Ram observed "If there is one theory that this devotee of drift (Narasimha Rao) has contributed to National political life, it is the non-secular rule of not opposing 'Hindu religious sentiment' under any circumstances and of avoiding 'confrontation' with the saffron gentry and their lay allies."⁶¹

About 70,000 Kar Sevaks (Volunteers) had assembled at the Ram Katha Kunj for the public meeting and 500 sadhus and sants (religious figures) at the foundation terrace for the pooja. Between 11.45 and 11.50 am. Some 150 Karsevaks managed to break the cordon on the terrace and pelted stones at the police. About 1,000

⁶⁰ See Appendix of my dissertation.

⁶¹ N Ram, 'Hindutva's Challenge' *Seminar* 402, (February 1993) p.25.

Kar Sevaks broke into the Babri Masjid structure and some 80 of them managed to climb on to the domes of the mosque and started demolishing them. In the meantime, they had damaged the outer boundary wall. At about 12.30 am. some half an hour after the mosque had been stormed, water began to be pumped into a small, crude, tank-like, brick and mud structure a little distance away from the mosque, just below Manas Bhavan. This was to mix the cement and mortar that was later used to build the platform and wall of the temple on the rubble of the mosque. VHP ambulances stood ready in all the nearby lanes to carry away injured Kar sevaks to the civil hospital in Faizabad where the former Health minister in the BJP Government in UP, Harish Chandra Shrivastava was said to be in command.

Soon after the Kar sevaks started tearing the mosque down, journalists and camera men covering the events come under a well orchestrated attack. It was not difficult to single them out for this purpose, since all media persons present wore prominent pink identity badges issued to them by the VHP the day before. Most camera men and photographers had their equipment smashed to pieces. Journalists were beaten up, in some cases seriously, their note books were torn and tape recorders broken. One group of Kar sevaks blocked all entry points into Ayodhya to keep out Central Security Forces, while another began to loot and burn the homes of the Muslims of the city and destroy Masjids and Idgahs. The low continuous chant of Jai Shri Ram, coming over the loudspeakers

since dawn, suddenly became more aggressive in both tone and content:-

Jai Shri Ram, bolo Jai Shri Ram,

Jinnah bolo Jai Shri Ram,

Gandhi bolo Jai Shri Ram,

Mullah bolo Jai Shri Ram.

Initially, there were some hurried panicky pleas to the Karsevaks over the public address system to maintain discipline. This was followed by expressions of concerns for their safety, as the 500 year old mosque began to come apart slowly. After a while the Kar sevaks received only guidance and encouragement from the BJP leaders and the sants of the VHP's Marg Darshan Mandal assembled at the Ram Katha Kunj. Ashok Singhal grandly announced that the dawn by Hindu rebellion has arrived, while Vijay Raje Scindia declared that she could now die without any regret, for she had seen her dream come true.⁶² Cases were registered against L.K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharati of the BJP, Ashok Singhal and Vishnu Hari Dalmia of the VHP, and Vinay Katiyar of the Bajrang Dal. They were all arrested and remanded to judicial custody. In an elusive statement Advani stated- when an old structure which ceased to be a mosque over 50 years back is pulled down by a group of people exasperated by the tardiness of the judicial process and the

⁶² For further details of the demolition drama see, Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, (Viking, Delhi, 1993).

obtuseness and myopia of the executive, they are reviled by the President, the Vice President and political parties as betrayers of the nation, destroyers of the constitution and what not ! I wish to caution Government against this approach. Their pronouncements against Kar sevaks are only strengthening the movement. ⁶³

From 1989 the consequence of Rajiv Gandhi Governments' ambivalent approach with Ramjanmabhoomi – Babri Masjid dispute created problems in the political arena, specially in November 19, 1989 when in a near overnight decision, the government denied that the site on which Shilanyas was to be performed was not disputed which was often seen as an attempt to win Hindu votes after appeasing the Muslims. But if Rajiv Gandhi is criticised for his politics of appeasement, the non-Congress opposition parties scored no better. The political conclusion reached by the non-Congress opposition parties that in order to keep the Congress out, it's entry into an political electoral and post electoral understanding with the BJP, in retrospect laid the ground for BJP to harden its stance on the temple construction issue. On the issue of Ramjanmabhoomi by recognising and giving legitimacy to persons of religious communities, claiming to represent the entire communities, the politics of communalism was actually given a lease of life by successive governments, from that of V.P. Singh to Narasimha Rao. It can be argued that the acceptance of various communal leaders as the

⁶³ For Official stand of the BJP. *BJP's white paper on Ayodhya and the Ram Temple movement*, (BJP publications, New Delhi 1993).

spokesperson of communities led to the recognition and even indirect acceptance of the concept of religious communities. In political terms, this would mean obscuring of the political and economic aspirations which might be common to both communities in favour of articulating demands that were blatantly communal. For the government to enter into a dialogue with the self proclaimed representatives of the religious communities was to legitimize the use of communal politics.⁶⁴

Thus we see, “The demolition at Ayodhya on 6th December has brought into focus the real nature of the Indian state. Its system of policy development, and decision making, the character of the police and security forces and not in the least the administration of justice.”⁶⁵ The tardiness of judiciary specially came under adverse comment. Though significant role was played by the special court in detecting the actual culprit, nevertheless the judiciary failed severely in providing actual solution to the controversy and confusion regarding Ramjanmabhoomi temple. It failed to promptly deliver justice at the initial period of the controversy, which in a way helped in complicating the matter further with time.

⁶⁴ Malini Parthasarathy *Hindu*, (20 Nov, 1990).

⁶⁵ Iqbal A. Ansari, *Communal riots The State and Law in India*, (Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi-25, 1997).p. 165.

On the report of a constable, Mata Prasad on 23rd December, 1949, an FIR was lodged by Ram Dubey, the sub Inspector of police station Ayodhya. It is stated in the report that at 9.00 a.m on 23rd December, 1949, the idol of Shri Ram installed by a group of 50-60 persons who had surreptitiously entered the Babri Mosque. On the basis of this report a case was filed under section 147, 295, 448. On December 29, 1949, the mosque was locked under section 145 Cr.P.C. On April 25, in a written statement, the then Deputy Commissioner Faizabad, Shri U.N. Ugra on behalf of the government of U.P. deposed that the property in suit is known as Babri Mosque, and it has for long period been in use as a mosque for the purpose of worship by the Muslims and further that on the night of 22nd December, 1949 the idols of Shri Ram was wrongly put inside it.

A much quicker judicial resolution of this dispute was both possible and imperative. It is to note here that the early judicial orders passed in free India seemed to favour Hindu litigants whose representatives were allowed to worship centuries old mosque, while the same right was denied to Muslims. The BJP's White paper on Ayodhya (April 1993) claims that the Hindus physically occupied the mosque on 22-23 December 1949 and that it was this physical occupation that enabled them to legally win their right to worship the idols in the mosque, which the Law had failed to give them from 1886 to 1949.

Instead of expeditious disposal of the case the court was able to make token progress in 1961 by consolidating all the suits in the case, declaring the Sunni Waqf Board as the leading suit. Next important progress was made in late January 1986⁶⁶First, an unknown advocate (Umesh Chandra Pandey) filed an application on 21st January, 1986 within two day's of the Sants ultimatum, in the Munsiff Court at Faizabad, Second, on 28th January 1986, the Munsiff refused to pass any orders. Third, an appeal was in the court of the district judge, Faizabad. Forth, on 1st February, 1986 within three days of the Munsiff court order, the District Court order passed a order directing the government of Uttar Pradesh to unlock the gate, and further directed that they should not impose any restriction or hurdle in the darshan or pooja by the Hindu community. Fifth, within hours of passing of the above order, the temple was unlocked and the Doordarshan camera men were present to cover the occasion which was widely telecast all over India.⁶⁷

This sole Hindu access to the disputed shrine was used to legitimize the Sangh Parivar's claim that the Babri Masjid was not a Masjid at all. No wonder BJP repeatedly referred to the Babri Masjid as structure in the official white paper. However the BJP's White

⁶⁶ Iqbal A Ansari, *The state and Law in India*, opcit pp-167-168.

⁶⁷ Translation of the Interview from Hindi to English is mine

Paper on Ayodhya frankly admits that the judiciary simply did not move an inch from 1950 to 1986, but it responded to pressure (built by agitation from 1984) under a willing political dispensation. In fact the manner in which Sangh Parivar leaders were allowed to go scot free in July 1992 after brazenly violating the Allahabad High Court and Supreme Court orders, seems to be a prime contributing factor to indulge in fresh assault on 6th December. The Courts especially apex Courts should have intervened vigorously and substantially to prevent the taking of law in their own hands by the Sangh Parivar which could have prevented communal riot during and aftermath the demolition. It also could have helped in preventing demolition itself for political gains.

From the very beginning of the mass mobilization program, it created tension between Hindu and Muslims. Major riots occurred in Meerut (1982), Delhi (1984), Bhagalpur (1989), in the pre-demolition period. Between 1st September and 20th November 1992, one hundred and sixteen communal riots occurred all over India in which five sixty four people died and several injured.

Number of riots and casualty(Between September 1· November 20, 1992)

Sl.No.	State/UTS	No. of riots	Casualty
1	Andhra Pradesh	4	22
2	Assam	1	7
3	Bihar	8	19
4	Delhi	-	8
5	Gujrat	26	99
6	Karnataka	22	88
7	Kerala	2	3
8	Madhya Pradesh.	5	21
9	Maharashtra	3	4
10	Rajasthan	13	52
11	Tamil Nadu	1	6
12.	Uttar Pradesh	28	224
13	West Bengal	2	6

(Source: Divided We Stand, Delhi Forum, New Delhi, 1992.)

Riots continued in most ghastly form in the post demolition period in Ahmedabad, Surat and Bombay. All these riots significantly altered the day to day life and relation between two communities in different parts of India.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ See For detailed analysis on the riots see , John Mc.Guire et al. edited. *Politics of Violence: From Ayodhya to Behrampada*, (Sage Publication, Delhi1996). Also see Engineer, Asghar Ali, *Politics of Confrontation. The Babri – Masjid Ramjanmabhoomi Controversy Runs riot*, (Ajanta, Delhi, 1992).

Post Demolition Trial and Special Court Of Inquiry

On January 1, 1996; a fresh charge-sheet was filed by the CBI against nine other accused, including Vijayaraje Scindia, Ramachandra Paramahans and so on. On September 9, 1997; the Special Court ordered the framing of charges against the 49 accused. Hence it will be pertinent to state briefly the observation of the court. The September 9 order of the Special Court dealing with the Babri Masjid demolition case has serious implications for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and other members of the Sangh Parivar. Special Court Judge J.P. Srivastava observed in the order that as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Kalyan Singh violated his constitutional obligation to protect the Babri Masjid despite his assurance to the National Integration Council that the mosque would be protected. The court ordered the framing of charges against Shiv Sena Chief Bal Thackeray, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader Ashok Singhal, Advani and other BJP leaders such as Murli Manohar Joshi, Kalyan Singh, Vinay Katiyar and Uma Bharati and 42 others. The observation clearly states that the prosecution has been able to establish that there is prima facie evidence to proceed against them.

The Special Judge's conclusions are based on the facts of the exchange of letters between leaders of the Sangh Parivar and the Shiv

Sena, meetings between them, statements issued by these leaders and their speeches in public meetings, which were corroborated by witnesses, as well as on actions taken by the Kalyan Singh Government.

The first signs of the conspiracy became evident when Advani undertook a rath yatra in October 1990 with the professed objective of building a Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya. The order pointed out that after the 1990 yatra, which led to futile attempts to demolish the structure, a BJP Government led by Kalyan Singh came to power in Uttar Pradesh. One of the first acts of the members of the Kalyan Singh Ministry was to go to the disputed site in Ayodhya and take a public vow that a Ram temple would be built at that very spot. This was followed by a letter (dated July 17, 1991) from Shiv Sena leader Moreshwar Save to Kalyan Singh, asking the Chief Minister to expedite the work on the Ram temple. Kalyan Singh responded on July 1, 1991, stating that steps were being taken in that direction. The order pointed out that within a year of this correspondence, the BJP Government acquired 2.77 acres of land around the disputed structure, demolished several temples that stood there and facilitated greater accessibility to the structure.

Recounting the account given by CBI investigation records on the events of the fortnight preceding the demolition, the court order pointed out that a call to demolish the structure on December 6, 1992

was given at the Dharam Sansad (a meeting of sants and mahants) organised by the VHP at Ayodhya in the last week of November. The order cited the prosecution records on the meeting and pointed out that the Bajrang Dal had announced that its suicide squads were ready to demolish the structure.

The order refers to the statements of Advani, who led yet another Ratha Yatra to Ayodhya during this period, that the kar seva was not mere chanting of slokas. It also mentions the statement of Kalyan Singh that he would not allow the use of gunfire against kar sevaks. The order pointed out that the VHP leader Ashok Singhal told a press conference a day prior to the demolition that, whatever the obstacles; Mir Baqi's plaque would be removed from the structure.

The order recounted the events during the demolition, including calls given by Advani and Singhal to block traffic from nearby Faizabad so that the Central forces did not reach the structure and prevent kar sevaks from "completing their job". The order is particularly critical of Kalyan Singh and the two government officers for grave dereliction of duty and non-fulfillment of their constitutional obligations. According to the order, as people who had taken a pledge in the name of the Constitution to protect the rule of law, they were duty-bound to protect the structure. By deliberately not making any efforts to protect the structure, these three government functionaries committed a grave crime, said the order.

During the hearings on the charge-sheet, counsel for the defendants repeatedly said that there was no evidence for the prosecution's charge of conspiracy. The order rejected this contention and said that there can be no concrete documentary evidence for a conspiracy as it is hatched mainly by oral communication. The judge observed that any investigation had to study through the sequence of events during and after the execution of the conspiracy to come to a conclusion in this regard. The judge said that the sequence of events related by the prosecution prima facie points to a conspiracy.

Another argument put forward by counsel for the accused leaders was that they had not incited anybody to demolish the structure but that the kar sevaks were enraged over the obstacles created by the Government to the kar seva and had expressed their emotional and moral outrage. The special court did not accept this argument. According to former High Court Judge P. Subramanian Potti, this argument reveals an attempt on the part of the leadership to evade moral responsibility for the events that took place. Potti told Frontline; "The conspiracy and guilt may or may not be proved during the trial. But opposing something as normal as framing of charges in a case of this dimension and trying to pass the blame on to ordinary workers alone does not look right."⁶⁹

⁶⁹ For details see, *Frontline* (volume 14-19 September 23-October 3, 1997).

Whatever be the effort of the court in solving this case, the sad part is till date the controversy regarding the originality of Rama's birthplace continues, so also Sangh Parivar's mobilization strategy by manipulating the faith and religiosity of ordinary Hindus.

CHAPTER-IV

WOMEN THE AYODHYA MOVEMENT AND POLITICS OF THE SANGH PARIVAR

With the demolition of Babri Masjid on 6th December and the cataclysms that followed in its aftermath in the form of ghastly communal riot throughout India has confirmed that the Ayodhya Movement no longer existed as a feeble force at the periphery but moved to the centre of Indian politics, with its much cherished dream for majoritarian, authoritarian and markedly militaristic state order. Ayodhya Movement was and is still serving as an effective tool for the Sangh Parivar to establish a 'Hindu Rashtra' which in its fundamentals is incompatible with democracy, social justice and the pluralistic nature of our society.

A significant aspect of the movement is the presence of thousands of women *Karsevikas* from distant parts of India who came to witness and celebrate the demolition of the mosque. For the first time in our history we witness so many women participate, so enthusiastically on the side of a communal organisation. Politically

and methodologically this assertive participation, as many social scientist noticed, “pulled out many of our assumptions into a state of crisis for we have always seen women as victims of violence¹ rather than its perpetrators and we have always perceived their public political activity and interest as the positive liberating force.”²

The question emerges, what space and scope did Sangh Parivar provide which led women to organize themselves in this assertive politics in the Ayodhya movement. Did it look towards and serve the larger interests of Indian women in general or was it just a backdoor policy to reaffirm majority communalism with women as its active subject. Many Indian feminist remind us that the Sangh Parivar’s movement may offer a seemingly emancipatory potential for women but they enable the women’s self constitution as active political subject in dangerously unprecedented ways.³

In order to understand the role and position of women in Ayodhya movement it is necessary to look into the Sangh Parivar’s multiple discourse on Women. The Sangh Parivar’s discourse on women is often characterized by its strictly religious overtones

¹ For insightful discussions on Rape and Abduction and other violence on women during partition see, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, ‘Recovery, Repture, Resistance : Indian State and Abduction of Women during Partition’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, (April 24 1993,) p. WS 2-11. Also see, Urvashi Butalia, ‘Community, State and Gender on Women’s Agency during Partition’, *Economic and Political Weekly*,(April 24 1993) p. WS 12-24.

² See Tanika Sakar, and Urvashi Butalia edited, *Women and the Hindu Right : Collection of Essays*, (Kali For Women, New Delhi, 1995)p.3.

³ Ibid, p.7.

defining women in the image of Hindu goddesses and consorts, as mothers and wives, dutiful and sacrificing.

In fact the incarnation of motherhood is one of the central theme of Sangh Parivar's ideology.

A RSS pamphlet reads- ⁴

“It is the integral part of the Hindu way of life to treat every women except one's wife, that too only in regard to her role as a wife as equal to one's own mother. Every women including girl child is to be regarded as *incarnation of motherhood*. This value has been evolved and preserved as the most powerful antidote to the basic male tendency to look for a chance to assault women.”

If we analyze this outlook in the context of women and gender equality, we can clearly regard the attitude as merely protectionist. women here are understood to be weaker, subordinate, sexually vulnerable object thus needing the wrapping of motherhood.

The first formal , women's wing of the RSS - the Rashtriya Sevika Samiti, formed in October 1936 by Laxmi Kelkar reflects the same notion. The Samiti's gender ideology commences with the patriarchal premise of '*matruvat paradaresku*' - that all women except one's wife are to be regarded as one's mother. The Samiti's daily shakha prayer also stipulated the four stages of the life of a woman as 'daughter, sister, wife and mother.' The domicile is where

a women's character, emotions, duties and aspirations are designed and moulded. Home is where the woman becomes happy, not in her own happiness, which Samiti considers selfish, but by getting trained to seek happiness in the happiness of others.⁵

The Samity lays exclusive focus on the roles, duties, obligations and limitations of Hindu women regarding both the actual family and the 'greater family' namely the 'Hindu nation'.⁶ Unlike the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh sees a volunteer as a server of the Hindu nation, the Rashtrasevika is to be a servant to the Hindu nation. In fact, Laxmi Kelkar formed the Samiti after discussions with Hedgewar, who wished RSS to remain a strictly male organisation and wanted to establish a formal, institutional distance between the two organisations.

Sangh Parivar's ideology on women does not remain confined to the notion of an all sacrificing, home making motherhood but is supplemented by its conceptualization of the Goddess. The latter symbolically identified with the topography of India as Bharatmata (Mother land).⁷ The Vishwa Hindu Parishad tried to get Bharat Mata accepted as an all India deity, as a part of their attempt to ritualise

⁴ *Hindutva : a view and way of life*, (Rastriya Jagaran Abhiyan, Yugabha, Suruchi Prakashan, December 2000) p.5.

⁵ For details see Rashtra Sevika Samiti, (not dated), Rashtra Sevika Samity, Jabalpur, Organisation of Indian Women.

⁶ For details see, Tanika Sarkar, 'Women's Agency within Authoritarian Communalism : The Rashtra Sevika Samiti and Ramjanmabhoomi in Gyanendra Pandey edited, *Hindu and Others : The Question of Identity of India Today*, (Viking New Delhi, 1993).

⁷ Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism : Origins, ideologies and Modern Myths*, (Berg, UK, 2001) p.136.

'Hindu Nationalism'.⁸ In 1983 the VHP undertook Ekatmata Yagya (sacrifice for unity) which travelled throughout India performing sacrifices to Bharat Mata and Ganga Mata.⁹

This religious-territorial identification served several encompassing functions in the Sangh Parivar's gender ideology that illustrates both its patriarchal nature and opens up the possibility of both active and militant conception of Hindu womanhood.

In one portrayal, Bharat Mata is benign. It is not she who punishes people for wrong doings or betrayals – instead her worshipping sons mete out punishment to anyone who lacks the devotion to her. Thus "a worshipper would not need to fear Bharat Mata but would need to fear her sons who can easily become Hitlarian in their zeal to protect her honor."¹⁰ The Parivar's constant insistence that Muslims, Christians and peoples of other religions must learn to worship Bharat Mata and other threatening slogans aimed at Muslims like *'Hindustan mien rehna hai to Vande Mataram Kehna hoga'* perfectly brings out Sangh Parivar's protectionist tendency towards Bharat Mata and their communal assertiveness.¹¹

Another portrayal of the motherland is its characterization as Durgadevi. In Sangh Parivar's ideology, the goddess Durga is

⁸ See, Madhu Kiswar, *Religion At The Service Of Nationalism And Other Essays*, (OUP,Dehli,1998).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, p.259.

¹¹ Ibid, -259.

articulated as the strength of the Hindu Women in facing the problems of life. VHP's Durga Vahini or Shiv Senas's Mahila Aghadi symbolizes the power and strength of the 'Hindu nation' against its Muslim and Christian enemies.¹² Thus the Sangh Parivar's ideology is not completed by the Hindu Women's selfless sacrifice and suffering but also includes her militancy. A Hindu woman is an eternal mother, a symbol of love, sacrifice, dedication, fearlessness sanctity and devotion. The tenderhearted woman however can become bold and aggressive if time demands. For the Sangh Parivar, the Hindu woman should be trained 'physically', intellectually and mentally to fight for the 'Hindu nation' and against those tendencies which are viewed as anti-national or separatist or foreign.¹³

Uma Bharati, Sadhvi Rithambara and Vijayraje Scindia represent this militant and vociferous mood of Sangh Parivar. Ayodhya movement provided them an excellent opportunity to stage their vehement hatred for Muslims by using their rhetorical / oratory skill. Rithambara addressed one of the VHP rallies at New Delhi and said-.¹⁴

Muslims, like a pinch of Sugar, should sweeten a glass of milk, instead, like lemon, they sour it. What they do not realize is that a squeezed lemon is thrown away while the milk that has been curdled

¹² Chetan Bhatt, (2001,) opcit. p.140.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Anrita, Basu, *Feminism Inverted : The Gendered Imagery and Real Women of Hindu Nationalism* in , *Women and the Hindu Right : Collection of Essays*, (1995)po cit., p.163.

solidifies into Paneer (cheese). So Muslims have two choices; either to live like sugar or like wrung lemons .

The Sangh Parivar women leaders often make a direct attack on Muslim religion and religious scriptures in the wake of defending Hindu tradition and culture. Thus Uma Bharati says.¹⁵

The Koran exhorts them to lie and wait for idol worshippers, to skin them alive, to stuff them in animal skins and torture them until they ask for forgiveness. Our heritage enjoins repentance even if an ant is killed underfoot.

Sangh Parivar and It's Women's Front

Women's Wing	Parent Body
Rashtriya Sevika Sangh	Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh
Mahila Morcha	Bharatiya Janata Party
Durga Vahini	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
Mahila Agadi	Shiv Sena

(Source: Louis Prakash *The Emerging Hindutra Force. The Ascent of Hindu Nationalism*, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 2000, p. 65.)

¹⁵ Madhu Kishwar, 'In Defence of Our Dharma', *Manushi*, (No.60, 1990) p.4.

Through a systematic hate campaign, The Sangh Parivar was able to whip up communal tensions among their women cadres. Women here emerge as a new modern Durga, the destroyer of 'evil', as angry and rebellious women. But this modern Durga is not directed against violence within the home and community but directed externally towards the Muslims – both men and women.

We see that the Sangh Parivar completely externalised the women's problem. This externalising the problem provides for certain respite from confrontations within what is defined as Hindu Society, as such confrontation can then be viewed as irrelevant and counter productive. Not only so through this process the myth that all women are equal and could be mobilized around a common issue on a common platform irrespective of their religion and caste is completely shattered.¹⁶ But what is distressing is that, the Sangh Parivar's women mouthed slogan coined by the women's movement like, '*Hum Bharat ki Nari hai, Phool Nahin Chingari Hai* (we are not the delicate flowers but smoldering emblems) while leading demonstrations, during riot or while Babri Masjid being torn down.¹⁷

The merging of lines between communal forces and women's organisations did not stop at the level of symbols and slogans but also found an expression through some of the more concrete demands

¹⁶ See Louis Prakash, *The Emerging Hindutva Force. The Ascent of Hindu Nationalism* (Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 2000) p.115.

¹⁷ Ibid.

raised by the movement, obscenity was one such issue. The second issue was the demand for a Uniform Civil Code. The women's movement had led a sustained campaign for reforms within the segregated and religion-based marriage laws and had pressurized the state to evolve a non-sexist secular code. These demands found an echo in a similar demands by communal forces.¹⁸ What is ironical is that these demands were raised by the Sangh Parivar and its Women wing not with the aim of emancipation of women in general, but in rather reconfirming the Sangh Parivar ideology of Hindu Women as '*Matri Shakti*'.

The attitudes of BJP Leadership in the wake of Ayodhya Movement have also exemplified the way women are seen primarily as a mother figure.¹⁹ Vijay Raje Scindia the President of BJP's Mahila Morcha stated, at the Kar Seva held in 1991 that mother and wives of Karsevaks who sacrificed their lives for the temple construction were worth worshipping.²⁰ Thus women within Sangh Parivar are intended to inspire strength not so much through examples, but through sacrifice, tears and a supporting role.

However it will be wrong to assume that Sangh Parivar always deploy the religious and obscurantist rhetoric in their representation

¹⁸ Flavia Agnes, 'Redefining the Agenda of the Women's movement within a Secular Framework' in *Women and the Hindu Right: Collection Of Essays*, (1993) op.cit. p.136.

¹⁹ Ratna Kapur Brenda Cossman 'Communalising Gender / Engendering community. Women Legal Discourse and Saffron Agenda', *Economic and Political Weekly* (April 24, 1993) p. WS.39.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p WS-39.

of women. It is often based on the discourse of equality. However, equality in the Sangh Parivar's version does not mean that all the person must be treated the same, rather, equality means harmony with difference. BJP for example remarks, "Men and Women an equal but they are not the same."²¹ Thus with a single stroke BJP both involves and undermines the discourse of women's equality. The BJP's Mahilla Morcha's President, Mridula Sinha expresses the Sangh Parivar's position of women . Thus -²²

Men and women will remain the two wheels of the chariot of the family and the nation. There can be no better concept of unity and equality of men and women than the concept of Ardhanarishwar.

The subordinate status of the Hindu women in Sangh Parivar's discourse is clearly etched out in another interview of Mridula Sinha. She stated -.²³

1) A woman should not work outside the home unless her family is financially deprived. 2) I gave and received dowry. 3) I oppose women's liberation, as it is another name for loose morals. 4) We oppose equal rights for both sexes. 5) There is nothing wrong with domestic violence against women, vary often it is the woman's fault. We advice women to try and adjust, as her non adjustment creates the problem. 6) women's future lies in perpetuating the present, because no where else are women worshipped as we are in India. 7) For as women's liberation means liberation from atrocities. It does not

²¹ *Our Five Commitments* (Bharatiya Janata Party, 1984) p.18.

²² Mridula Sinha, Women's Equality – Miles to March, *Organiser*, (September 1, 1985) p7.

²³ *The Telegraph*, (December 27, 1992).

mean they should be relieved of their duties as wives and mothers.

Thus we see, instead of liberating, the Sangh Parivar's discourse on women reinforces the traditional image of women. Women's role in the family as mother and wives remains the cornerstone of the Sangh Parivar's approach to restoring women to the position of equality.

According to the Sangh Parivar, this tradition is completely Indian and is distinct from the women's liberation movement of the West. One of the prominent ideologue of RSS, K.R. Malkani argues that "The position of Women is better in India than anywhere else in the world."²⁴ He further adds that the RSS "...would consider women's libbers as the worst enemies of woman kind."²⁵

The women's wing of the Sangh Parivar instead of differing provide full support to this type of ideology. Mridula Sinha in an article *Women's Equality – Miles to March* writes-²⁶

In spite of all this glorious background the Indian woman today has to fight a sustained and long-drawn battle to achieve the goal of complete equality. This can be fulfilled not by blind imitations of the modes and techniques of struggles adopted by the so-called liberated women of the West.

²⁴K.R Malkani. *The RSS Story*, (Ipex India, New Delhi, 1980) p.175. Also see K.R Malkani, 'Women in Hindu Tradition', *Organiser*, (July 25, 1993).

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ See, Mridula Sinha, 'Women's Equality – Miles to March' op cit.

The various policies that BJP has undertaken further confirms women's role in the family-as mothers and wives. For example "health care, particularly maternal and natal care were taken up, as are smokeless chullas and sanitation facilities for poor and rural and slum women."²⁷

The issues of women's employment and education is also taken up. Another way of producing security for women is to enlarge the employment in the areas and sectors that suits them most."²⁸ However according to the Sangh Parivar what suited women most is 'primary school teachers'²⁹

Similarly women's illiteracy should also be eradicated through improved access to education. However the support given to improving such educational and employment opportunities for women in India is justified in the name of the family.

Thus -Mridula Sinha writes-³⁰

An Indian Women will command the affection of the father, the love of the husband, and the respect of her son only when she has been provided with equal rights and opportunities.

²⁷ Communalising Gender / Engendering Community; Women, Legal Discourse and Saffron Agenda, Op.cit. p. WS-39.

²⁸ Out Five Commitments, Op.cit.

²⁹ See, 'Towards Ram Rajya, Mid Town Poll to Lok Sabha, May 1991' – *Our Commitments*, (Bharatiya Janaya Party, New Delhi, 1991).

³⁰Mridula Sinha, , Women's Decade Mahila Morcha's Response in *Dashak Ki Jharoke Mein*, (Mahila Morcha,BJP 1991) p.5.

We see policies that reinforce women's role in the family as mothers and wives are supported as part of women's equality rights. In doing so, the Sangh Parivar reinforces the assumption of natural and essential differences between women and men. Women are mothers and wives – they are *matrishakti* – they are different and these differences must be honoured and protected.³¹

Within the Sangh Parivar, the discourse constituting the woman, both Hindu and Muslim are multiple. It is constituted through the multiple discourses of nationalism and gender, sexuality and community. The discourse is not only multiple but often contradictory. Within the Sangh Parivar, discourses on women are marked by internally inconsistent statement.

The public statements of Vijay Raje Scindia and Mridula Sinha supported the derogative practice of Sati. Vijayraje Scindia went on to say that the tradition of Sati is a part of our cultural heritage and that it is the fundamental right of all Hindu women to commit Sati if they want to be.³² The statement amounts to a careful intermingling of two discourses, tradition and a modernist appeal to liberal right's discourse. Women here are constructed through the religious discourse in which she, like a good wife, should engage in self immolation. This image is however reinforced with the modern

³¹ Communalising gender /Engendering Community. Op.cit. p. WS-39.

³² Ibid.

discourse of women choosing to exercise her own rights. Thus we see the discourse of tradition and modernity so also religion and liberalism are carefully manipulated to justify, support and even celebrate the oppression of women in Hindu communities.

What is all the more confusing is Sati which receives so much support of Mahila Morcha leader is squarely denounced by all the office bearers of the other women's wing of the Sangh Parivar such as the Rashtra Sevika Samiti. When asked about voluntary Sati, a young activist said, with genuine revulsion, *Wo ho nahin Sakta Aurat Jalegi Kyoon* (It is not possible. Why should a women burn).³³ She then went on to explain that she might do it out of depression and frustration, that is, as a mark of weakness, not as a mark of strength – but neighbours and relatives must shore up her will to live. ³⁴ Thus within the Sangh Parivar, Sati is both a matter of right and a matter of weakness. It shows how two inconsistent, incompatible ideology are adjusted within the same fold.

Similarly, moderate voices of Sangh Parivar support legislative changes made to Hindu Personal Law and argue for a similar reform of Muslim Law through a uniform civil code.³⁵ The BJP policy even speaks of ensuring equal access of women their husband's

³³ Tanika Sarkar, 'The Women as Communal Subject : Rastrasevika Samiti and Ramjanmabhoomi Movement', *Economic and Political Weekly*, August 31, 1991, p.2062.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Communalising Gender / Engendering Community Op.cit. P WS-41.

property.³⁶ Yet, RSS ideologue, sants and sadhus express their opposition to the reform of Hindu personal law and argue for the restoration of the laws of Manu.³⁷ Many sants and sadhus have even argued in favour of the restoration of Hindu polygamy.³⁸

Thus we see the Sangh Parivar's approach to equality within the context of women is not only elusive but also confusing.

The paradoxical ways in which the discourse of equality is aroused by Sangh Parivar is vividly illustrated in their response to the Shah Bano case and particularly to the enactment of the Muslim women's protection Act. The BJP advocated against the act, on the ground that it violated the rights of Muslim women. The Muslim Community, supporting this act, was thereby constituted in terms of its opposition to women's equality.³⁹ Thus Muslim women becomes a parameter through which the Sangh Parivar projects the subordinated status of the entire Muslim community. It will be wrong to assume from the Sangh Parivar's fight for uniform civil code that they treat and respect all women be it be Hindu or Muslim, equally, rather the Sangh Parivar provides a derogatory picture of Muslim women. They are "ignorant and superstitious, slaves of Muslim men who breed like rabbits and are incapable of knowledge

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Malini, Chatterjee 'Saffron Extremism', *Frontline*, (January 16-29, 1992) p.5.

³⁹ Communalising Gender / Engendering Community opcit, p. WS-40.

or spirituality."⁴⁰ Thus Muslim women unlike Hindu women is constructed as oppressed and subservient 'other'. But for the Sangh Parivar saving Muslim women from the oppression becomes the justification for not altering the malpractice and beliefs of the Muslim community but the basis through which Muslim community as a whole is judged and subordinated.

It is in this type of intense communal hatred even inhuman act like rape acquire legitimizations. Purushotham Agarwal states, "what is distressing is that there is a tendency on the part of the middle classes and intelligentsia to underplay or even rationalise cruel acts like raps, arson and murder."⁴¹ Many observers of riot in Surat , in Gujrat noted that , after 'mass raping' and massacres feelings of guilt, shame and embarrassment about what took place was rare among people. In retrospect, for many Hindus, the killing (so also rape), seems to have been rationalized, by suggesting that this was a 'proper' punishment for a minority, which has stepped out of line.⁴²

There we see in a collective context, rape becomes an explicitly political act and in the context of an organized aggression, it

⁴⁰ Himani, Banerjee, *Sanchetana*, (February 1991, Calcutta) pp-2-3.

⁴¹ Purushotham Agarwal., 'Savarkar, Surat and Draupadi : Legitimising Rape as a Political Weapon' in *Women and the Hindu Right*, op.cit. p.31.

⁴² See Jan Bremen, , 'Anti Muslim Program in Surat,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, (April 17. 1993) p.74.

became a spectacular ritual, a ritual of victory – the defilement of the autonomous symbol of honour of ‘the enemy community.’⁴³

Apparently Sangh Parivar’s discourse may seem to be somewhat confusing. However if we delve deep we can notice the Sangh Parivar as actually providing a new legitimate ideology to keep women under patriarchal control. A woman may be strong and powerful, inside her family and community, may be educated, may work outside of the home, may actively participate in politics and public mobilization yet she is still a woman constituted through the traditional discourse of matri shakhti as mother and wife, and of Sita, as chaste, pure and loyal. Thus “The new Hindu woman is strong-but she is strong in restoring the glories of an ancient past – a past which, as reconstructed through communal discourses.”⁴⁴ It accords a particular role for women in the family and in society; dutiful wives, and self sacrificing mothers.⁴⁵ At the same time a Hindu woman should be strong not for her own sake but for the sake of a strong Hindu Society. since it is her responsibility and her duty to raise the new generation, with all Hindu Samskaras (values) and Hindu culture.

Thus the constitution of the identity of Hindu women is one of the essential prerequisite for constituting a new definition of nation

⁴³ Purushottam Agarwal, *op.cit.* p.31.

⁴⁴ Kapar, Ratna and Cossman Brenda, *Op.cit.* p. WS-41.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

and Hindu identity. The emergence of new militant female leadership in this context seems to be the part not of true liberation of women from their oppressed state but simply a means to assert Sangh Parivar's cultural identity. As Amrita Chhachhi noticed, "women become the symbols and repositories of communal/group/national identity" and fundamentalism "constructs notions of femininity and masculinity as symbolic of community."⁴⁶

No wonder in the Sangh Parivar's outlook any attempt to change women's role or position within the family/community/nation is perceived as an attack on the very identity of the Hindu community. However this does not prevent the Sangh Parivar from making an identical assault on Muslim Women. The Sangh Parivar constructs Muslim women and in turn Muslim community as the binary opposite of Hindu women and the Hindu community.

This opposition is a hierarchical one Hindus including Hindu women are dominant and superior while all Muslims so also Muslim women are subordinate and inferior. Through this construction the entire Muslim community is deemed lowly and subordinated. The strategy echoes the discursive strategies of British colonialism,

⁴⁶ Amrita Chhachhi, 'Forced Identities : The State Communalism, Fundamentalism and Women In India' in D Kandiyoti, edited *Woman Islam and the State* , (MacMillan, New Delhi, 1989) pp.162-163.

justifying its rule through the subordinated position of Indian women.⁴⁷

The way the Sangh Parivar utilised its women's organisations, women politicians and sadhvis in mobilising public support for the Ayodhya movement and subsequent demolition of the mosque reflects how the Sangh Parivar utilised gender as important means of defining and contributing sharper divisions between Hindus and Muslims and has critically intersected with assertions of patriarchy and community identity.

⁴⁷ For details see Laura Nadir, 'Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Control of Women', *Culture Dynamics* 3, (1989), Mani Lata, 'Contentious Traditions, : The Debate on Sati in Colonial India' in K Sangar and S Vaid (eds.) *Recasting women. Essays in Colonial History, Kali, for Women*, (New Delhi, 1989).

CONCLUSION

Through the Ayodhya movement , the Sangh Parivar tried to challenge our understanding of India as a land of unity in diversity . The ideological base provided by Savarkar , Golwalkar and later leaders of the Sangh Parivar , the all- India mobilization method initiated by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad by manipulating Hindu traditions , religion , myths , practices , norms and values and the actual success in demolishing the age old Mosque put into question the real nature of Hindu-Muslim relationship in day to day life of an ordinary Indian .

My dissertation shows how ,in the name of Rama , the Ayodhya movement has built a hate campaign in an organized manner against another Indian community. My dissertation also brings into focus , how the Sangh Parivar appropriated tradition in a communal way for consent building. In the name of the Ayodhya movement , the Sangh Parivar is trying not only to homogenize Hindu religion but homogenize the entire India as one community which they call as 'Hindu Rashtra'.Trying to build a Rama temple at the exact spot

where the Babri Masjid stood can be regarded as the first step in this process of building a dictatorial state. Till date , the authenticity of the Sangh Parivar's claim Ramjanmabhoomi is located at the same spot remains unsanctioned both historically and archeologically. Yet as my dissertation has shown that communal riots continued from the initiation of the Ayodhya movement , taking a bitter turn specifically in the post demolition Babri Masjid phase.

My dissertation has shown how vote bank politics has prevented from boldly dealing with the matter while the delays in the courts further complicated the issue.

My dissertation has also shown women's role and position in the Ayodhya movement in particular and the Hindutva movement in general is different from the traditional Women's Liberation Movement .Instead of liberation, the Sangh Parivar tried to further confine women within the patriarchal fold by manipulating the traditional symbol of Matri Shakti . Also women became the body through which value and prestige of the entire community was judged .

As peaceful citizen , we should try to build up a counter agitational movement both at the intellectual and grassroot level to make people aware of the communal nature of the movement. The disputed site should be declared as a national monument to restore communal amity and peace and to maintain the true cultural heritage of India.

APPENDIX

Ayodhya Movement – A Brief Chronology (as provided by Sangh Parivar)¹

1528 AD	Mir Baqi, at the command of Emperor. Babur built a mosque at the Janamsthan site by desecrating the temple, which according to archaeologists and art historians was constructed about 11 th Century AD.
1598	Abul Fazl in his Ain-I-Akbari recorded that Ayodhya being the residence of Shri Ramachandra of the Treta age, was esteemed as one of the holiest places of antiquity.
1608-11	William Fench, the European traveller visited Ayodhya, confirms the existence of the ruins of Ramkot, the castle of Rama where Hindus believed, he had incarnated thousands of years ago. Early 18 th Century– Sahifa-I-Chahal Nasaih Bahadur Shahi, written by the daughter of Emperor Bahadur Shah, son of Aurangzeb restifies that the place of Sita Rasoi, in which, the Hindu (kaffar) have great faith, was demolished for the strength of Islam and was not exempted from the offering of the namaz and the reading of the Khutha.
1717	According to a Chaknama dated 2 nd Rajab 1129 A.H. (1 st June 1717), Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur (1699-1743) was granted 983 acres of land at Ayodhya “for a garden and pure”. It is accompanied with a map of Ayodhya (app. 5’ 10”) which shows a three domed structure at a corner of the Ramkot and is designated as Ram Janamthan, (vide description list of Kapad Dwara Collection, Jaipur Palace, Document No. 73).
1735	A serious Hindu-Muslim conflict took place as a result of Hindu effort to recapture the birth place, during the reign of Nawab Saadat Ali Khan.
1751-58	Persistent Maratha pressure on Nawab Safdarjans and Shujanddanla to transfer Ayodhya to them, which ultimately Shujanddanla agreed to do, but could not be implemented because of Maratha remises at the battle of Panipat (1761).
1766-71	Joseph Tieffenthaler, an Austrian Jesuit Priest, stayed in Ayodhya and reported that Babur destroyed the birthplace temple of Sri Ram and constructed a mosque by using its pillars. However, Hindu refused to give up the place and inspite of the Moghul efforts to prevent them, they were coming to the place for worship.

¹ Source-Manthan, (Volume xii, Nos 1-2, May- June, 1991).

	They had constructed the Ram Chabutara in the mosque's courtyard, which they used to perambulate thrice, then to prostrate on the ground. They practised their devotion at the Chanbutara and in the mosque. Tieffenthaler testifies that the Hindus continued celebrating Ram Navami with great gatherings of people from all over India. (History & Geography of India by Joseph Tieffenthaler, published in French in 1785).
1854	Edward Thoarnton in his East India Company Gazetteer recorded exactly the same situation as Tieffenthaler had found there.
1855	More than 12,000 Hindus under the leadership of Raja Man Singh and Raja Krishna Dutta surrounded the Babri mosque, where nearly 300 Muslims under Shah Ghulam Hussain had taken position. 70 Muslims were killed in this clash.
1856	After the annexation of Awadh by the British, the Muazzin of the Babri mosque, in a petition before the British authorities admitted that the courtyard had been in possession of the Hindus for hundreds of years and now they were interfering with the domed structure as well.
23 RD Feb. 1857	The British authorities put up a railing between the Babri Mosque, and the Chabutara, and prohibited the entry of the Hindus in the mosque.
1858	Muhammad Asghor, Khatib and muazzin of the Babri masjid, in a representation dated 30.11.1858, alleged that the Hindus had occupied the mosque, constructed an earthen mound therein, hoisted a flag on a high pole, installed a deity, started puja, wrote the name of Ram with coal all over the walls and so on. The muazzin also observed that in the outer space of the constructed Babari mosque, there had been Janamasthan lying desolate where the Hindus had been worshipping for hundreds of years.
1885	Hari Kishan Kaul, Sub.Judge, Faizabad in his judgement dated 24 th December 1885 rejected the Hindu petition for constructing temple at Janamasthan on the ground that "awarding permission to construct the temple at this juncture is to lay the foundation of roit and murder between Hindus and Muslims." "If permission is given to Hindus for constructing the temple, then one day or the other a criminal case will be started and thousands of people will be killed."
1886	Col. F.E.A. Chamier, District Judge, Faizabad, in his judgement in Civil Appeal No.23 of 1883, observed. "It is most unfortunate that Masjid should have been built on land specially held sacred by the Hindus, but as the temple occurred 350 years ago, it is too late now to remedy the grievance."
1834	Serious Hindu-Muslim clashes occurred in and around the Babri mosque, occasioned by a cow slaughter. Many people were killed and the structure was seriously damaged.

1936	The Babri Masjid was being used as a mosque by the local community. Later, as the Muslim presence in Ayodhya diminished, the mosque went out of use.
1938	District Waqf Commissioner in his report maintained that the Masjid was an abandoned place and no Muslim dared to go near it and other 'Namaaz'.
1949	Secret correspondence between U.P. Government and District Administration of Faizabad between July and October, 1949 proves that the Hindu population was very keen to have a nice temple at the place where Bhagwan Ram Chandra it was born. Idols of Sri Ram and others appeared miraculously on the disputed site on the night of 22-23 rd December.
Dec. 29	Receiver appointed by the State Government.
1950 Jan. 5	The Additional City Magistrate, Faizabad-cum-Ayodhya regulated the entry of the portion in dispute. The Pujaris were allowed free access.
Jan. 16	Civil Judge restrained the parties from removing the idols by a temporary injunction. Also restrained from interfering with the puja etc as 'at present' carried on.
March, 3	Civil Judge Confirmed the interim injunction.
April, 26	Appeal filed against the injunction order of 3.3.51. Hindu-Muslim clashes claimed 75 lives in Ayodhya.
1961	Sunni Central Board of Waqts field appeal praying for removal of idols etc and delivery of the mosque to them.
1984	V.H.P. gave call for removal of mosque-like structure at Ayodhya. Ram Janmabhoomi Mukti Yagna Samiti was formed.
1986	Umesh Pandey, a lawyer filed application seeking directions and as order to the respondents restraining them from imposing any sort of restriction or hurdles in the Darshan and Puja etc. The Munsif, in his order of 28.1.1986 refused to pass orders.
Feb. 1	Order passed allowing the appeal and directing the State of Uttar Pradesh, the District Magistrate, the city Magistrate and the police superintendent of Faizabad to open the locks forthwith.
Feb. 5	Syed Shahabuddin of the All India Majlis-e-Mushawarat called for observance of Feb. 14 as a day of mourning. AIBMAC was formed to oppose this court order.
May, 12	U.P. Sunni Central Board of Waqf filed appeal against the order of 1.2.86.

Dec. 22	AIBMC asked the Muslim community not to participate in the Republic Day Celebrations, 1987. The call was suddenly withdrawn.
1989 Nov. 7	Full Bench clarified that the Shilanyas was not at the disputed site.
Nov. 11	The VHP performed Shilanyas of the temple and declared their intention to start construction from February 8, 1990. With the formation of the National Front Government, the schedule was postponed for four months. After other postponement October 30 was fixed as the date for construction of the temple.
1990 Jan. 27	VHP deferred any construction for four months on request of the Prime Minister V.P. Singh.
Sept. 25	Shri. L.K. Advani began his 10,000 Km. Somnath - Ayodhya Rath Yatra.
Oct. 19	Government promulgated ordinance acquiring the disputed land in Ayodhya (Chapter 4).
Oct. 21	Government withdrew the Ordinance.
Oct. 23	Shri Advani was arrested at Samastipur in Bihar. The B.J.P. withdrew support.
Oct. 30	Curfew was imposed at Ayodhya. Kar Sevaks were lathicharged. Brutalities were committed on kar sevaks.
Nov. 2	Firine was resorted to on kar sevaks. Many lost their lives Brutalities were again inflicted on kar sevaks. Country-wide demonstrations were held against the action of the U.P. Government.
Nov. 7	National Front Government lost the vote of confidence.
Nov. 10	Minority Government headed by Chandra Shekhar and supported by the Congress took office.
Dec. 2	1990-Jan. 25, 1991 Dialogue between VHP and BMAC on historical evidence regarding the demolition of an earlier temple of the construction of the present structure on its place.
May-June 1991	General Election and BJP voted to power in Uttar Pradesh.

**VISHWA HINDU PARISHAD AND BABRI MASJID ACTION COMMITTEE
DOCUMENTS**

Submitted to the Government²

GOD'S INCARNATION ? LITERARY CREATION? HISTORICAL FIGURE?

The VHP Contention

1. The argument that Lord Rama was a mythical and not a historical character is irrelevant. Such issues require no proof, according to international standards. Essentially, it is a matter of belief and faith. No body questions the existence of Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammad.
2. Even then, the VHP has marshaled many of the literary references such as Raghuvansham (Canto 10) by Kalidas, describing Lord Rama as the incarnation or earth of Vishnu. The 13th Canto of the same book where the poet refers to the return of the Lord and Sita to Ayodhya in the Pushpak Vimana, describes him as Vishnu himself.

The AIBMAC Contention:

1. Relying on Periyar E.V. Ramaswami, a self-confessed anri-Aryan, AIBMAC quotes from his book the The Ramayana (A True Reading) and some sentences from Jawaharlal Nehru's Discovery of India (Page 82). Ramaswami says both the Ramayana as the story of Aryan expansion to the south. Ramaswami says both the Ramayana and Mohabharata are the foremost of the many fold romances manipulated by the Aryans, designed to lure the Dravidas into their snare. Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, who belonged to the Aryan community were ordinary mortals. Stories projecting them as super humans or Gods were imaginative creations.
2. According to Dr. Sukumar Sen's Lingua Et Littera Libellus (1977, Rupa & co.), The story of Lord Rama belongs to the mythical Treta Age. The Uttar Kanda of the Ramayana is a later addition. To Kalidas, Valmiki was as much a legendary figure as Lord Rama, Sita and others.
3. P.S. Sridhar Murthy, in his book Rama Ramayana and Babar (1988, Dalit Sahitya Academy , Bangalore), says Lord Rama was created by the followers of the Vedic religion to draw the common folk away from the increasing influence of Buddhism and Jainism. The Brahminical fold had till then alienated the common folk and therefore it was necessary to show Lord Rama as a non-Brahmin ideal, achieving victory over a Brahmin, Ravana. Even Valmiki did not portray Lord Rama as an incamation of God; it is a later attribute. There is no mention of Lord Rama in the list of deities compiled in the sixth century by Sanskrit scholar Amarsimha in Amarsosha.
4. C.E. Godakumbura's article "Ramayana in Sri Lanka and Lanka of the Ramayana " in Ramayana Tradition in Asia (Editor: V. Raghvan describes the Lord Rama's story as a folk tale.

² Source- RAM JANMABHOOMI AND THE MARXIST HISTORIANS, Ramachandran K.S., Historian Forum, Delhi, not dated.

CITY OF RAMA

The VHP Contention :

1. Canto 5, Sloka 5-7 Balakanda of Valmiki's Ramayana gives the geographical location of Ayodhya. The Brahmanda Purana (4/40/91) describes it as one of the six holiest cities. Vyas' Mahabharata incorporates the story of Lord Rama in the Ramopakhyana of the Van Parva. The Sanskrit dramatist, Bhasa's Pratima and Abhisheka, based on the life of the Lord, were written before the advent of the Jesus Christ. The Ayodhya Purana, Mahatmya, which forms part of the vaishnava Khand of the Skanda Purana, refers to the existence of Rama Janmabhoomi shrine at Ramakot and states that it was located to the west of Lomash Ashram and north of Vashishtha Kund.
2. According to the "well-researched conclusion of scholars", there existed at least five Vishnu temples in Ayodhya in the 12th century-Hari Smriti (or Gupta Hari) at the Gopratar (Goptar) ghat, Chandrahari on the west side of the Swargadwar ghat, Vishnuhari at the Chakratirth ghat, Dharmahari on the east side of the Swargadwar ghat, and Vishnu (Rama) temple on the Janmabhoomi. The last three of these have been replaced by mosques built by Mughal emperors.

The AIBMAC Contention :

In his chapter titled "City of Ram: A Reality or Myth (Babri Mosque or Rama Janam Temple)", Dr. R.L. Shukla writes that Valmiki's Ayodhya was situated on the southern bank of the river Sarya, which flowed westward and the town was located 1.5 yojan (23 km.) from the river. But the present Ayodhya is just by the side of the river, which flows eastward. It joins the Rapti and not the Ganges as Valmiki said. The same point is made by P.S. Sridhar Murthy in his book Ram, Ramayana and Babar. London, and translated from the original Pali into English by W.S.D Rouse describes King Dasharatha, Lord Rama's father, as the king of Benares. In fact, he had 16,000 wives, the chief among who had three children namely, Rama Pandit, Lakshana and Sita. The three later returned to Benares- not Ayodhya-whereupon Rama Pandit was crowned king and Sita made his queen consort. Rama Pandit has said to have ruled for 16,000 years.

3. Malladi Venkata Ratnam in Rama, the Greatest Pharaoh of Egypt (1934) describes Ayodhya as the transliterated form of the Greek word Agadon and says the description of the city in the Ramayana does not apply to the town in north India but Memphis in ancient Egypt, situated some 10 miles south of modern Cairo on the west bank of the Nile.

4. Mrs. Nilofer Ahmad and Dr. R.L. Shukla observed that the earliest signs of human habitation in Ayodhya are not older than 600 B.C. and they write: "If the period of Rama is 2500 B.C. or according to some historians even earlier to that, then on what basis is it said that the present Ayodhya is the birth place of Rama.

WAS THERE A TEMPLE ?

The VHP Contention:

1. The “ archaeological and art-historical examination “ of the site indicates that the antiquity of the Ayodhya site goes back to 700 B.C. In the 11th century a large structure on pillars was erected at the site where the mosque stands. It has 14 black stone pillars, decorate with floral and human carving of Hindu motives, largely mutilated. The carving show that they were made in the early 11th century when compared to similar carvings on other pillared structures of the period elsewhere in Uttar Pradesh the blackstone pillars belonged to a temple at the Janmabhoomi. No secular structure in and around Uttar Pradesh used this type of stone for pillars.
2. Most of pillars of this 11th century temple were removed at a later date, in the early 16th century, although a few of them are still in the original positions. There must have been 84 pillars originally and the area covered by them must have been seven times more than that covered by the domed structure of the mosque. Archaeological work by Prof. A.K. Narain of the Banaras Hindu University in 1969 and by Prof. B.B. Lal former director General, Archaeological Survey of India, 1975-80, under a National Project “Archaeology of the Ramayana site”, and other excavations are referred to here. Their trenches revealed a series of rectangular “bases” or short pillar like structures of burnt bricks, each about three feet tall. The directional alignment of these bases was the same as that of several pillars of blackstone found inside the mosque. Then, a well laid thick floor was found running over across the base, running even beyond the excavated area, toward the mosque.
3. The article” Archaeological Evidence of Rama Janmabhoomi” by the historian Dr. B.P. Sinha says that about a dozen pillars used in the mosque confirm that parts of the damaged Hindu structure were used to construct the Babri Masjid. The point of view inferred from the accounts of the Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang, that it might be on the ruins of a Buddhist temple, is likely to be incorrect because the structure, dating to the 10th-11th centuries was constructed over 200 years after the Chinese traveled to India.
4. In 1838, British surveyor Montgomery Martin recorded in his History, Antiquities, topography and Statistics of Eastern India (Vol.2) that “these (pillars in the mosque) are of blackstone and of an order which I have seen nowhere else..... That they have been taken from a on some of their bases; although the images have been cut off to satisfy the conscience of the bigot. It is possible that these pillars have belonged to a temple built by Vikrama.
5. Surgeon-General Edward Balfour in his Encycloaedia of India (1858) mentions that Ayodhya had three mosques on the sites of three Hindu shrines: the Janmasthan, the site where Rama was born; the Swargadwar mandir where his remains were buried; and the Treta-kathakur, famed as the scene of one of his great sacrifices.

The AIBMAC Contention :

1. P.S. Sridhar Murthy's book says the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) finds after the 1975 excavations noted that Gupta period is not significantly indicated at the site of Babri Masjid. Further , the Oudh Gazetter (1877) described the pillars used in the mosque as Budhist which was however not mentioned in 1905 Gazetteer and was replaced by an altogether new description in the 1960 Gazetteer that the pillars bear "various Hindu bas reliefs". Also the pillars are not made of kasuti stones as was discovered by Sher Singh team. Another point is that the science of temple construction was in its infancy during the Gupta period when Skandagupta or Vikramadity is said to have built the temple on the site. Also, similar pillars are available at more than seven places and all were Jain temples dating 8th to 10th centuries.
2. Alexander Cunningham, after doing archaeological work for the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) during 1962-65 observed in his findings published later: "According to the Ramayana, the city of Ayodhya was founded by Manu, the progenitor of all mankind. In the time of Dasharatha, the father of Rama, it was fortified with towers and gates and surrounded by a ditch. No traces of these works now remain, nor is it likely, indeed, as the Ayodhya of Rama is said to have been destroyed after the death of Vrihadbala in the great war about 1426 B.C. after which tradition, this Vikramaditya was famous Sakari prince of Ujjain, but as the Hindu of the present day attribute the acts of all Vikramas to this one only. Their opinion on the subject is utterly worthless."

DID BABAR VISIT AYODHYA ? DESTROY A TEMPLE ? AND BUILD A MOSQUE ON IT ?

The VHP Contention

1. Mrs. A.S. Beveridge's translation of the inscriptions on the plaques outside the Babri Masjid reads that present structure was built in 1935 A.H. (AD 1528) by Mir Baqi on the orders of Emperor Bsbar.
2. The destruction of the ancient temple by Babar and construction of the mosque on the site is corroborated by accounts of European travelers. The event is recorded by Joseph Tieffenthaler in History and Gazetteer of Province Oudh (1857), Faizabad Settlement report (1891), Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) Report by A.Fuhrer Faizabad District Gazetteer by H.R. Neville (1905), the revised Britannica (1978, 15th edition, Vol.1), and Ayodhya by Hans Bakkar.
3. The March 1886 judgment of Col. F.E.A. Chamier, District Judge Faizabad on the petition filed by Mahanta Raghubar Das requesting permission to build a temple on the Rama Chabutra outside the mosque, notes: "I found that the Masjid build by the emperor Babar stands on the boarder of the town of the Ayodhya that is to say to the west and south it is clear of habitation. It is most unfortunate that a Masjid should have been built on the land specially held sacred by the Hindus, but as that event occurred 356 years ago it is too late now to remedy the grievance, all that can (be) done is to maintain the parties in status quo-in such a case as the present on any innovation could cause more harm and derangement of order than benefit". (Quoted from Muslim India, March 1986)
4. Mirza Jan in Hadiqa-I Shahda notes that "the temple of Janmasthan was the original birth place (masqat) of Rama, adjacent to which is sita Ki Rasoi, Sita being

the name of his wife. Hence at that site a lofty (Sarbaland)mosque has been built by Babar Badshah under the guidance of Musa Askikan....That mosque is till date popularly known as Sita ki Rasoi.”

5. Muhammad Aghar’s (Khatib and Muzzan of the Mosque), petition to the British Government in 1858, alleged that the Hindus had occupied the mosque and installed a deity therein. He also observes that the Janmasthan had been lying dissolute where the Hindus had been worshipping for hundreds of years . “This confirms the fact that even though the site of Janmasthan had been worshipping in the open space for hundreds of years, etc., even during the Mughal and Nawavi periods and that they had maintained their claim on the entire Janmasthan area”.
6. The construction of the Babri Masjid on the orders of Babar are also spoken of in the following documents: Fasana-I-ibrat by Mirza Rajab ali Beg suroor, Tarikhe-I-awadh or Muraqqa-iKhusrawi bu sheikh Mohammed azamat ali Kakorawi Nami (1869), ZiaOI-Aakhtar by Hazi Muhammad Hasan (Luknoow 1878), Gumgasht-I-Halat-I-Ayodhya Awadh by Maulvi Abdul Karim (Lucknow 1885), Kaiser-ul-Tawarijkh ya Tawarikh-I-Awadh by Kamaluddin Haider-Hosni al Hussaini al Mashahadi (Lucknow 1896), and Tairkh-I-Awadh by allama Muhammad Najmul Ghani Khan Rampuri (1909).

AIBMAC Contention:

1. Emperor Babar’s personal which came to be known as Babar Nama is silent only on this period when the mosque is said to have been built. Mrs. A.S.Beveridge’s translation of original Turkish text into English records: “We stayed a few days on that ground (near Aud) in order to settled the affairs of Aud.” Babar mentions here that he stayed “near” Ayodhya but not in it.
2. Sher Singh, in his forthcoming book Digambari Gate to Babar Masjid, citicizes Mrs. Beveridge for wrongly quoting H.R. Neville, ICS, in her Babar Nama. She had quoted Neville as saying that in “1528 AD Babar came to Ayodhya (Aud) and halted here for a week. He destroyed the ancient temple (marking the birth place of Rama) and on its site built a mosque still known as Babur’s Mosque.” Sher Singh says that Mrs. Beveridge has not quoted Neville in proper context.
3. R.L. Shukla and Nilofer Ahmed have incorporated a copy of Babar’s will in which he calls upon his son and heir, Humayun, to deside from cow slaughter and temple destruction, among other things, if he was to rule over Hindustan successfully.
4. Alexander Cunningham in his ASI report, observed: “ Close by the Lakshman Ghat, where his brother Lakshman bathed, and about one quarter of mile distance, in the very heart of the city, stands the Janm Asthan , or the birth place temple of Rama. This was during the 1862-65, while the temple is said to have been demolished and mosque constructed there in 1528.
5. P.S. Sridhar Murthy, in his Rama, Ramayana and Babar notes that Guru Nanak was not only a contemporary of Babar, but also the latter’s bitterest critic. There are angry and contemptuous references to Babar in the Granth Sahib. But Guru Nanak never mentions any temple or place of worship of any other community having been demolished by Babar and a mosque constructed thereupon. Murthy also quotes from Bhai Gian Singh’s Tawarikh Guru Khalsa that Guru Nanak visited Ayodhya and so his son and the 10th Guru, Gobind Singh. But none said that Babari Masjid came up on the remains of a temple. Quoting Tawarikh-I-Guru Khalsa, Murthy goes on to say that Guru Gobind Singh visited Hanuman Garhi,

Ramachandra Asthan and places connected with sita". He further says that, "This shows that the place now known as Janmasthan (which is to the north of Babri Masjid) was known as Ramachandra Asthan at the time of Guru Gobind Singh. All this proves that there was no trace of this controversy about the Babri Masjid during his time (17th century).

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name
2. Age
3. Sex
4. Occupation
5. Address and Date
6. Ayodhya movement actually started with the shilyanas ceremony organised by VHP in 1989. It passed through several programme oriented stages before the 6th Dec. happening.
 - a) At which stage/stages did you participated in the movement
 - b) Did you participate alone or with your family, relatives/ friends?
 - c) Did you participate in the Karseva Programme 6th Dec.
7. Why did you participate in Ayodhya movement?
8.
 - a) Did you decide of own or someone/something incited you to participate in the movement?
 - b) Did you or any of your family members donated money for Ayodhya movement. If so how much?
9. Please provide detailed description of your journey from beginning to end.
10.
 - a) Did local people of Ayodhya according to your observation also participated actively in the movement or is it people from adjoining areas and other states?
 - b) Did you notice which category/categories of people mainly participated in the movement?

11. Do you think demolition of the disputed structure on 6th Dec. 1992 was just?
12. If no, do you think demolition could have been avoided, if so how?
13. Do you think there was any conspiracy for demolition of the structure or that it was instantaneous?
14. Do you think Kar Sevak's gathering was possible because of political mobilisation or Religious call or for any other reason?
15. Advani in his interview on The Times of India, New Delhi, 20th November, 1990 under the caption 'Yatra was political' stated "I am projecting myself as a political leader, saying in a simple and straightforward manner that this is BJP Rath..... this is my symbol, this is my lotus". Do you think BJP (or any other political parties) tried to gain political mileage out of religious sentiments of Hindus?
16. Atal Behari Vajpayee said in Loksabha debate 23 Feb, 1993) "We were not able to control these people, these were not our directions, what they carried out was something on their own violation"- Do you support this statement?
17. Who should one blame, if blame at all for the destruction of the structure and Why?
18. Do you think people who participated in the Kar Seva on 6th December (If you have participated then you too) were aware of the fact that Supreme Court had ordered only symbolic Kar Seva like bhajan, Kirthan etc.?
19. Do you think court played satisfactory role in delaying in the problem?
20. Do you know which committee was set up to investigate the matter?
21. Do you know which organisations were banned after this commissions report?
22. Are you aware of Shah bano case? What do you know about it?
23. What role did women play in the movement supportive or active participant? Please give detailed description of your observation regarding women's role in the movement?
24. Did women member of your family participate in the movement and your relation to that person?

25. (a) Are you aware of Mandal Commission Report? What do you know about it?
- (b) Do you think Mandal Commission Report have any contributory role towards development of the movement?
26. Is the movement, an upper caste movement or did dalits also participate?
27. Do you think this Ayodhya problem could have been solved? If so how?
28. There was wide spread riot throughout the country after 6th December, 1992. There was Bharat bandh on 9th December, 1992. Media to intellectuals widely condemned such move. In the light of this do you think Ayodhya movement aggravated the development of Hindu-Muslim tension and communal riot and that if there was no Ayodhya movement the relation between Hindu-Muslim would have better or that Ayodhya movement only exposed the actual relation between Hindu and Muslims in India?
29. a) Do you believe Muslims (specifically Babur) are foreigners who came and demolished our temple?
- b) Do you support Sangh parivari view that Kashi and Mathura should be handed over to Hindus?
- c) Since Hindus are majority, India should be a Hindu Rashtra?
30. Do you think, there should be an Uniform civil code, uniform family planning for all Indians or that minorities should be given some special status and that their religious sentiments should not be challenged?
31. a) Do you think India is a Secular state?
- b) If yes, do you think Ayodhya movement ruptured that secular framework?
- c) If No, why do you think so?
32. How do you define Ayodhya movement in one word.
33. Any other relevant information/ views you want to add.

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