

**NATIONALISM AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE 'OTHER': A  
STUDY OF HINDI PRESS IN NORTH INDIA**

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the dissertation titled “Nationalism and the Construction of the ‘Other’: A Study of Hindi Press in North India” submitted by Arun Kumar Kushwaha for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** is my original work. This dissertation has not been previously submitted in part or full for any other degree or diploma of this university or another university.

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*Dedicated to my teacher*

*Professor Kameshwar Choudhary*

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## **List of Abbreviations**

OBC	Other Backward Caste
ST	Schedule Tribes
SC	Schedule Caste
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
TOI	The Times of India
VHP	Visva Hindu Parishad
V. P. Singh	Visvanath Pratap Singh

# Chapter-1

## Introduction

### 1.1. Introduction

Nationalism in India is one of the most debatable subjects of discussion which is not only discussed within academia, but ordinary people are also major participants in this debate. One of the varieties in which nationalism is articulated is majoritarian nationalism. This dissertation is an attempt to understand the concept of nationalism in the context of the construction of national identity in India. Religion is one of the significant criteria that is used to construct the community identity in India (Oommen, 1997, 1999: 8). It is not only the reflection of differences but it also creates cultural boundaries among people of different faiths. The Indian political history is the best example of nationalism based on religion and cultural attributes of the majority community. One of the important ways of construction of identity in India is centred on the construction of majoritarian 'self' and the minority 'others'. As a Hindu majority country, India has evident the expansive Hindu identity based on the inclusion of Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs as the part of the majority religion. On the other hand, some religions, like Islam and Christianity are treated as outsiders. The nationhood claim of these minority communities are suspected by the Hindu majoritarian discourse which brands them as anti-national and problem communities.

The debate of nationalism circulated widely within a particular nation-state through the means of communication. This particular aspect highlights the construction of nationalism as a modern phenomenon. This dissertation has dealt with the North Indian public sphere in general and Hindi press in particular. This dissertation has used the Ram Janmabhoomi movement which is one of the first Hindu nationalist movements of majoritarian nationalism, as my reference point to study nationalism and identity construction in India. The North Indian public sphere, specifically Hindi press, didn't only cover the news stories, but also constructed stories and circulated them. This dissertation has taken the period of 1989 to 1993 which was a crucial period in North India. This period is popularly known for the Ram Janmabhoomi movement as well as the Urdu language debate along with the lower caste assertion

for reservation. In that way, Ram Janmabhoomi is a pretext, which provides a chance to Hindu nationalists to deliberate the larger discourse of nationalism in which Press was a medium. But it would undermine its role if I will confine it to the means or medium of communication only. Press holds the power to create discourse and Hindi Press has also done it in Hindi public sphere.

### **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The work of Benedict Anderson (2006) on nationalism suggests that nationalism is the product of print-capitalism. On the other hand scholars like Robin Jeffrey (2003), who have worked on print-capitalism in India argue that print has not given birth to the idea of nationalism, but has carried out in different times. The historical works on the role of print-media, specifically public sphere in North India also reason that the theme of nation, nationalism, culture, Hindu identity and Muslim 'other' were the important subjects of debate in the Hindi public sphere (Orsini 2011, Dalmia 1997, Joshi 2001, Rai 2001). The present work will take the theme of nationalism and print-media and will try to understand the role of Hindi newspapers in the construction of 'self' and 'other', as critical to the discourse of Hindu nationalism..

### **1.3. Understanding Nationalism**

The work on nationalism suggests that it is not possible to have a single definition of nationalism. There are many definitions of nationalism (Calhoun, 1997, Hall, 1999). Different scholars have approached the concept differently. Ernest Gellner has defined Nationalism regarding its principle. Gellner has defined '*Nationalism is the political principle which is based on the congruence of national and political unit*' (Gellner, 1986: 1). Gellner's conception of Nationalism rests on the urge of homogenisation of heterogeneity. It is sentiments of the majority which becomes the sentiment of entire political community and gets the sanction as national sentiment. It is expected to each and every individual as well as nations to assimilate in the same nationalist sentiment. As Gellner (discussed in Anderson, 2006: 6) has argued that '*nationalism is not about making the nation self-consciousness, it invents nations where they do not exist*'. Ross Poole (1999: 9) has explained that in its more familiar form nationalism is based on the principle that nation is the ground of political sovereignty, and it is its fortune and right of every nation to get its



political sovereignty. Political sovereignty is only possible within an ethnic or national boundary under which the claim for a modern nation-state is made. Gellner (1986) has attributed that nationalism as an essential feature of modern nation. Transformation from agrarian society to industrial society has made this inevitable. Benedict Anderson's definition of nationalism is linked with his definition of nation. Anderson defines nation:

It is an imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign (Anderson, 2006: 6).

Anderson (2006: 1-7) has discussed in his work that nationality, nation-ness or nationalism are cultural artefacts of a particular kind which were created at the end of the eighteenth century. After its creation, it became a standard which was capable of being transplanted and to be merged in different social, political and ideological terrains. This description of Anderson, tries to provide an answer as to why and how nationalism became an important subject at a particular time of history. Anderson has discussed that the imagination of nation as an 'imagined political community' became necessary with the changes and transformation in the society. Anthony D. Smith (2005) has explained Anderson's view that the weakening of the old system of monarchies and cosmic religion created a gap in different terrains of life which made it imperative to construct an imagination of communities. Print-capitalism provided a spacious ground to this imagination. It enabled the community to imagine the presence of similar community in the particular boundary of the nation-state and they share the common language, common history, and common origin of ancestry at a certain time. It wiped out the differences, inequality and developed a sense of comradeship among the members of the imagined community. Anderson's answer to the question why and how the constructed cultural artefacts became so deeply attached to the people indicates towards the roots of cultural nationalism which can be traced in the Indian context as well.

In the path breaking work of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (2000), Hobsbawm (2000) has explained the roots of modern nationalism in 'inventing traditions'. Hobsbawm has argued that tradition, which appears as an age-long existence is the invention of some recent period. He defines 'inventing tradition' as:

Invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed and overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past (Hobsbawm, 2000: 1).

The inventing tradition includes both traditions, which is invented as well as whose claim of historicity is not possible to trace in the prescribed period. But, one of the similarities of both of the tradition is their claim of their continuity with history. Hobsbawm also argues that the inventing tradition can also be based on fictitious ground. The most interesting part of '*inventing tradition*' is its contrast with the modernity.

Hobsbawm (2000) has argued further that 'inventing tradition' is the evolution of modernity. It also marks the changes in the social norms, customs, traditions and living patterns. It is an effort to merge the old tradition according to modernity. The last 200 years are more important from the point of view of these changes. It had made these changes and its formalisation and ritualization inevitable. Hobsbawm (2000) has also described those conditions which has played an essential role in the invention of tradition in modern times. He discusses that the feminisation of Catholic churches has been done and now they have been made clerics as well. Along with these changes the structure of army has also been changed. He refers to the changes in the law as well. Laws have either has been changed completely or the context has been changed. It also reflects the changes in the structure of the society and the process of inventing tradition is found in the most of the modern nations, but it is specifically their own traditions, which is reversed or invented. Hobsbawm (2000) wonders that ancient materials are reinvented or even constructed for constructing the tradition. The changes in the structure of the state itself has also led to emergence of many symbols and its circulation through the medium of school, language, and other communicational means which were already present in the modern era. The most recent construction is the National flag, National Anthem and Nation Emblem. He writes:

The National Flag, the National Anthem and the National Emblem are the three symbols which an independent country proclaims its identity and sovereignty and as such they command instantaneous respect and loyalty. In themselves they reflect the entire background, thought and culture of a nation (Hobsbawm, 2000: 11).

According to Anthony D. Smith,

Nationalism is an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential “nation” (Smith, 2005: 9).

#### **1.4. Paradigms of Nationalism**

There are two paradigms of Nationalism, which defines nationalism according to its historical periodization and the narrative of social change. First is the *Primordial or Perennial Nationalism* which elucidates nationalism as it has existed it throughout the recorded history. This approach of nationalism takes nationalism as ancient and evolutionary, as part of an ongoing history. Different epoch ancient and medieval period have been taken into account to argue the appearance of the nation, cultural community and state formation in each and every period in all the continents. It prefers age-old communities in the emergence of national sentiments and nationalist ideology. According to this paradigm, even if, nationalist ideology is new, still the nations have always existed in history. This paradigm has also got support from the idea of social evolution. The social evolution approach emphasizes upon gradualism, stages of progress and social and cultural cumulation. For the believers of organic analogy, it was easy to support the social evolution approach of the nation. The growth of national historiography and the discipline of archaeological has also helped the argument of perennial nationalism. The case of perennial nationalism has also been encouraged by the idea that nations are natural communities. Smith (2005 4-13) has differentiated perennialism and primordialism by this conception. Smith argues that the conceptualisation of nation as natural communities should not be confused by the later stage primordialism. It is the point of similarity between perennialist and primordialist. Smith maintains that all that is important for the perennialist is to the belief that nation or at least some nations are existing form time immemorial.

In contrast, *the modernist approach* of nation and nationalism suggests it as recent development. In short, nationalism is accepted in this approach as a product of modernity. Anthony D. Smith (2005) argues that it is not only nationalism but also nations, national state, national identities and the entire inter-national community are considered chronologically recent as well as a qualitatively novel. The idea of novel is based on the assumption that nationalism is not the part of any older version, but it is completely an innovation. The changes in society and politics at

the particular juncture of time, especially the revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> century are supposed to be responsible for the emergence of nationalism. The particularly favourable condition in the west helped in its emergence at the given period of history, first in the West and later in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. Anthony D. Smith (2005) has discussed the different characteristics of modernity paradigm.

(a). Socioeconomic- According to this feature, Nationalism and nation are the product of industrial capitalism, regional inequality, and class conflict. According to Tom Nairn and Michael Hechter, the national sentiments and ideals were provoked by the deprivation within the modern nation-state. It took place between the core and peripheral elites, by the mobilisation of the masses of the periphery (Hechter, 1975, Nairn, 1977) (discussed in Smith, 2005).

(b). Sociocultural- According to Ernest Gellner, Nation and Nationalism are the product of the phase of transition from the agrarian to industrial society. Nations are the expression of educated, highly standard culture which is maintained by the compulsory, mass education system (Gellner, 1981, 1986) (discussed in Smith, 2005).

(c). Political- In the political domain, nation and nationalism are forged by the modern professionalized state in both directly or in opposition of specific (imperial/colonial) state. Anthony Giddens (1985), Michael Mann (1995) and John Breuilly (1993) (discussed in Smith, 2005) have explained that not only the modern state but its relation with the society play a substantial role for a reintegrative nationalism. The relationship between state and society is inevitable which works parallel for the state sovereignty.

(d). Ideological- The ideological dimension of modernist paradigm of nationalism focuses on the origin of nationalism from the European modernity, its quasi-religious character where Christianity dominated and the power of colonial empire which created nations where it didn't exist earlier. It also emphasizes that the non-European intelligentsia adopted the same European doctrine to their native ethnic and religious traditions.

(e). Constructionist- It is a different form of modernism which focuses on the social construction of nation and nationalism. This approach of nationalism accepts the

modernist construction of nation but also highlights that it had been constructed for the interests of ruling elites. Eric Hobsbawm (2000) has primarily emphasized on the role of invented tradition. He argues that it is the product of social engineering and had been created to fulfil the interest of the elites by channelizing the energies of newly empowered masses. Anderson (2006) has defined a nation as an imagined political community which has been constructed to fill the vacuum left by *the decline of cosmic religions and monarchies* (Smith, 2005: 48). The conception of 'time' and 'print-capitalism' made this imagination possible (Smith, 2005).

The two paradigms of nationalism suggest two different things, but at the same time, it has certain similarities which links these two paradigms. Primordialist and modernist both assert their claim by historicity. History is the point of juncture of both the claims. Anthony D. Smith (2005) has argued in his work that the 'inventing tradition' (Hobsbawm, 2000) is the reinvention of tradition. Modern nationalism claims for the ancient 'golden age' and tries to search the base of their claim of existence in the past which approves the presence of nation, but at the same time it also declares that it had been declined at some particular stage, and now it is reappearing. Hobsbawm (2000) has also agreed on the contrast of the tradition with modernity. The invention of tradition actually tries to connect the modern and tradition in the changing circumstances. It also supports the Renan's argument of emergence, decline and the reappearance of the nation.

### **1.5. Nationalism and the construction of 'other'**

Who is other in the conceptualisation of nationalism? The formation of 'other' is an important part of this study. The idea of other has been explicitly used in the entire work. Christophe Jaffrelot has argued:

Nationalism is an ideology which may simply promote one's own identity against others<sup>1</sup>.

The idea of other is relative to the idea of self. The construction of 'other' and 'self' take place in the realm of culture. Different scholarly work on nationalism suggest the idea of cultural nationalism directly or indirectly. Anderson (2006) has discussed nationalism in context to cultural artefacts. These cultural artefacts include many things like history, literature, music, art, education, language, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceci/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceci/files/qdr10.pdf>

which plays an important role in the conception of self and other. The sharing of imagination with their communion suggest that people understand and recognize their belongingness to the community and the living-style of community that actively informs them about their symbols, beliefs, history, an ancestry of common origin and people relate it with each other. Ross Poole (1999) has discussed that Anderson has conceptualised that if we have to understand the existence of nation, we have to observe the sacrifice, which people have made for it. Poole has questioned that only an imagination of relation with certain objects of cultural artefacts doesn't produce nationalism, but it is the people's conception of 'ourselves' also that exist in relation to that artefacts which give them a sense of identity. In that way, nation is not a form of 'consciousnesses' only, but it is also a form of 'self-consciousness'. Poole (1999: 10-18) has argued that if nation is a form of imagined community, it is also a form of an identity. As an identity, it exists as an object of consciousness which is a kind of public embodiment of nation's conception in the cultural domain. Culture is also a process which imparts the knowledge and capability to understand about various cultural artefacts and people relations to the objects. The success of this cultural process confirms our individual existence as well as we become conscious of the collective existence. Anderson's conceptualisation of imagined community creates a difference between those who share the similar cultural artefacts and alienates those 'others' who do not share the same history, literature and other cultural artefacts.

The best expression of these cultural artefacts is possible in the debate, discussion, and contestation of thought in public sphere. One of the major basis of nationalism is the construction of equality and differences in communities. The collective identity of community is formed on the basis of equality and differences. Laclau (1996a, 36-46) (discussed in Hansen, 1999: 25) has explained that it is important to have an enemy to formulate any conception of 'we'. Nation always stands on some of its core basis like-history, symbols and mythical leaders which gives a strong base to the community identity. Thomas Bloom Hansen (1999) has argued that the Hindu nationalist movement in India was not so dominant in the political or religious field, but, it is the domain of public culture where it got its true expression. It is the public space or public arena where the individual represents, recognizes and participate in the formation of social and cultural identity by actively engaging

in debate and discussion (Hansen, 1999: 4-13). Hansen has also focused on the formalisation of *mythico-historical inventories* and symbols as a common narrative in the public culture. He uses the word '*culturalization*' of political field in India (Hansen, 1999: 13).

Manuel Castells discusses the construction of identity and gives the theoretical ground on which the identity construction becomes possible. "Identity is the process of construction of meaning on the basis of cultural attribute, or a related set of cultural attribute, that is given priority over other source of meaning (Castells, 2010: 6)." This identity becomes identities only when and if social actor internalizes them and constructs their meaning around this internalization (Castells, 2010:6). Castells (2010) has discussed three types of identities. One is, 'legitimate identity', which is proposed by the dominant institution. Second is, 'resistance identity' and third is 'projected identity'. Resistance identity is an important part of the understanding of nationalism what Laclau Laclau (1996a, 36-46) (discussed in Hansen, 1999: 25) has also discussed. Resistance identity is based on the logic of domination. The dominant identity resists the 'other' identities on the basis of their claim of control over the state and other institutions. The third major kind of identity is the project identity. Project Identities are built on the available cultural material and then they redefine their positions in society (Castells, 2010: 8).

Eric Hobsbawm (2000) has also discussed how the ideology of nationalism is based on the inclusion of ancient materials. The focus on historicity indicate over two major things.

First, To establish the belongingness of community by historical sources.

Second, Those who are not the part of common identity, alienate those communities as 'other'.

In the modern time as well, the ancient past is revived as well as invented and constructed. Hobsbawm (2000) has maintained that new words have been introduced to construct national identity. It is 'patriotism' and 'loyalty' towards nation-state. Christophe Jaffrelot<sup>2</sup> (2003:4) has told patriotism originated from the word 'Patria' which refers to the country of father, which is historically understood

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/gdr10.pdf>

as the king. But, the term is still significant in territorial nationalism of modern times and now citizens sacrifice for a more imagined and abstract construction. Patriotism and loyalty has been established as a normal course of life as it is expected to everyone to be patriotic and loyal to the nation. Thomas Bloom Hansen (1999) has argued that although nationalism is possible without a language, history, and people but there is no example which can further substantiate this argument. The written history establishes the role of territory, history as important criteria to define nation and nationalism. Craig Calhoun has also told that history writing has got the new charm in modern times and the history is written in the format which would be helpful to construct the collective identity in contrast with 'others'.

Gellner (1986, 767-769) in his thesis on nationalism has assumed homogenisation of identities as a necessary part of unity. The 'others' have to be essentially assimilated in the dominant ideology. The process of assimilation starts from the education and linguistic system which would assimilate low cultures in high culture.

Clifford Geertz (Geertz, 1973) explains that modern nationalism has adopted two symbolic strategies to exist in the changing scenario. This equally applies to the Indian nationalism, which is dominantly based on the Hindu religion.

First, to construct an efficient system which would be able to challenge the 'cultural threat' of 'dominant other'.

Second, the reinterpretation of tradition, Geertz explains that cultural nationalists reinterpret the tradition as per the current needs. In that way, they do not talk about traditionalisation, but retraditionalisation (Geertz, 1973: 230).

The ideology of Hindu nationalism is based on the stigmatization and the emulation of 'Threatening others' (Jaffrelot, 1993). T.K. Oommen has argued that Hindu nationalists have created a criteria of *Indic* and *Non-Indic Religion* to define the 'other'. He argues that those religions which have evolved in the Indian territory, are claimed as Indic. These include, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Those religion which were born outside the Indian territory, are considered non-Indic religions. Islam, Christianity, and Zoroastrians are considered as non-Indic communities. Oommen (2004) has discussed that there are three different ways to define the Hindu identity. It is territory, religion, and Caste or language (Oommen,



2004: 69). Hindu nationalists claim that 83% population is Hindu on the basis of census. To maintain their claim, Hindu nationalists have also searched an ancient golden age (Smith, 2004) in the way to reinvent tradition (Hobsbawm, 2000). Hindu nationalists claim that ancient Indian state was so prosperous, but it started declining after the medieval era, with the invasion of Muslim invaders.

In my understanding, Indian nationalism is based on the primordial as well as modernist paradigm of nationalism. On one hand, it establishes the historical existence of Hindu community in a particular territory. On the other hand, it modifies those traditions which are not appropriate in the changing context. They have invented traditions, but at the same time they are modernist as well.<sup>3</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot has reasoned that Hindu nationalists have learnt from Christianity (dominant other) to improve their religion on the lines of Christianity. For that purpose, they appealed to Hindu masses to leave their dogmas to reform Hindu religion further (Jaffrelot, 1993: 12-13). T.K. Oommen also argues that “Hindu identity is neither entirely new nor completely old, it is the product of both contemporary construction and the given of past (Oommen: 1999: 27).” The construction of Hindu self in modern times exemplifies a recognisable trajectory. It reflects the changes in Hindu religion in the way to survive with the encounters with Semitic religions. The polytheistic nature was try to be transformed into monotheism to follow the Semitic religions. The adoption of Bharat Mata (Mother India) was included to give Hindu religion a national character<sup>4</sup>.

The ancient Indian civilization is presented as nothing but the Hindu civilization, which had advanced in *Akhand Bharat*. The basic urge of Hindutva is to control the political power for which argues on the religious criteria of the nation-state. The linguistic dimension of otherisation is based on the assumption that Urdu is the corrupt form of Hindi and Persian. Language is one of the major identity markers which creates a bonding. Hindu nationalists claim Sanskrit as the original Indian

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<sup>3</sup> Ashis Nandy (2005) in his work on Nationalism has focused on the traditional as well as modernist features of Hindu nationalist. He refers the example of Golwalkar and argues further that Golwalkar was a science graduate and a science teacher, but at the same time he was also the proponent of tradition Hindu social order based on brahminical ideology. Christophe Jaffrelot has also cited the Hindu nationalists urge for the modern sciences. Most of the Hindu nationalists were science students, but in the social domain they were in favour of hard core Hindutva.

<sup>4</sup> See Charu Gupta's 'The Icon of Mother in Late Colonial North India: 'Bharat Mata', 'Matri Bhasha' and 'Gau Mata'(2001), Sumathi Ramaswamy's 'The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India' (2010) and Ashis Nandy's, 'Exiled at Home' (2005)

language and demand its due place. They demand to make Hindi, a national language, as it has originated from Sanskrit. They demand that Urdu should be written in a Devanagari script and it should leave the Persian script (Foreign script).

The cultural nationalists argument has deep influence of V.D. Savarkar and Golwalwar, who have conditioned some of the criteria of citizenship rights for the Muslim in India. V.D. Savarkar (2009) coined the conception of Hindutva which is based on differentiation of cultural identity of different communities, based on their origin. In his conception of Pitrabhumi and Punyabhumi, he described that it is important to have a fatherland (Pitrabhumi) as well as holy land (Punyabhumi) in India to make the claim for citizenship rights. The conception of fatherland and homeland trace the ancestral roots of communities. It has placed some communities to subordinate position or suggests them to assimilate in majority Hindu religion. Golwalkar (Cited in Oommen, 1999:6) has extended the idea of Savarkar in his book 'We and our Nationhood Defined'. Golwalkar said:

The non-Hindu people of Hindustan must learn to either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of glorification of Hindu race and culture...may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, not even citizens' rights. In the country, Hindus alone are national, and Muslim and others, if not actually anti-national, are at least outside the body of the nation (Golwalkar, 1939: 55-56) (Cited in Oommen, 1999:6).

T. K. Oommen (2004: 71) in his another work has discussed some of the reasons which Hindu nationalist argue to construct the idea of Muslim as others. These reasons are,

First, Muslims are in numerically better situation and constitute a single most important vote bank, *especially in the North Indian belt*. So, Muslim are the major threat to the Hindu nationalist desire to control on the state power.

Second, The presence of two Muslim majority country in neighbourhood country makes the relation between Hindu majority and Muslim minority uneasy.

Third, Hindu Nationalists hold Muslim responsible for the division of the sacred ancient Indian land.

Fourth, Indian Muslim have not left their claim of nationality even after they have been territorially disseminated. Hindu nationalists make effort to wrongly project

Urdu as the exclusive language of Muslims to make their claim of distinct Muslim nationality more strong.

### **1.6. Ram Janmabhoomi movement and Nationalism in India**

This section will introduce the larger debate of nationalism in India, which took place in the 1990s. It mainly influenced the North Indian public. There are various dimensions of nationalism which was highlighted by the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Ram Janmabhoomi movement is not only the movement for construction of Ram temple on the disputed site where Babri mosque is located, but it is also a claim of the community's natural belongingness and its existence in Indian territory from time immemorial. All around the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, a political and cultural identity was constructed. As Peter Van Der Veer (1987, 1994) has argued that the historical existence of any community is based on some evident which the community needs to prove. In the case of Babri mosque, the majoritarian nationalism took it as a symbol of the domination of Muslim community who invaded and ended the rule of Hindus (majority). The Hindu-Muslim dispute around Babri mosque is based on the claim of Hindus that the same place where the mosque is situated was the Ram Janmabhoomi temple which was destroyed in 1528 A.D. by Mughal emperor Babar. Ayodhya is also claimed as Buddhist and Jains sacred place, but the dominant discourse is Hindu and Muslim conflict. Gellner (1986) has rightly argued that modern era has noted the immense importance of national territory, and it is unendurable for the majority community to accept that its historical domination has been challenged from the minority community. Hindu nationalist claim of the Muslim migration (so that outsider) makes the situation more complex. This is an interesting point to elaborate that the territorial boundaries of nation-state had been fixed very later and in some of the countries, it is an ongoing tussle. In India itself, the nation-state came into existence only after the independence and partition. Partition tried to make India and Pakistan, a country based on the two distinct religious identities, but even of that India remain a secular nation whereas Pakistan had been transformed into an Islamic nation. The secular nature of India is 'reality', but there are other realities also which underlines that there has been a regular demand for cultural nationalism. Cultural nationalism means, a nation based on the values and norms which are favourable to the cultural elements of the majority community.

Orientalism and Colonialism had played a major role in shaping the identity question of Hindu and Muslim in India. Oriental discourse applied its own understanding of religion in India and constructed the expansive idea of Hindu religion which merged all the Indian origin religions in larger Hindu framework whereas the other religions which came from outside like Islam and Christianity, had been situated in another category. Based on the Oriental reading of Brahminical text<sup>5</sup>, it constructed the idea of Hindu religion. Oriental discourse constructed the idea of nativity and natural belongingness of Hindus in Indian territory and glorified the Indian spirituality (King, 2008). They divided the Indian history into three parts, (ancient, medieval and modern) based on the rule of different religions in the different juncture of society. The ancient rule was defined as Hindu rule which was culminated by the end of Hindu civilization by Muslim invaders. Later, Muslim rulers rule India and corrupted Hindu culture. Medieval India was presented as the worst rule in Indian history where India had been degraded gradually. Ludden (1996) has agreed on the point that the construction of Hindu and Muslim identities was a way to maintain the colonial hegemony. Ludden (1996) writes:

They (British rulers) created the cultural connotation of these( identity construction) pattern of usage to indicate the ideological legacy of orientalism which created the religious stereotype of Muslims and Hindus and others that even today rationalize the western power in the world (Ludden, 1996: 9).

Gyanendra Pandey (2012) and Sandria Freitag (1989) has argued that colonial rulers started treating the regular conflict between Hindus and Muslims as religious conflict and gave it the character of communalism. Gyanendra Pandey has further contended that Indian leaders and the public sphere communicated the same idea of communalism and appealed to leave the divisionary approach of both the communities. It established Hindu-Muslim conflict in as one of the fundamental hurdle in India, and the development of both the communities are different in their approach and lifestyle. Later, Nationalism had been reasoned as one of the alternatives of the Hindu-Muslim communalism.

The foundation of Hindu nationalism is the construction of ‘other’. The construction of other is based on the conception that Islam rests on the Arab

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<sup>5</sup> Richard King has elaborated that the colonial rulers selected the Brahminical text and interpreted it. It expanded the demographic dimension of Hindu religion. Richard King notes that it was the Brahmins who have been benefitted the most by the oriental construction of Hinduism.

civilization which is different from the Hindu civilization. The categorisation of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous relies on the division of evolution of religion in a particular territory. Along with Islam and Christianity, Parsis are also considered Non-Indigenous. But there is the difference between the stigmatisation of Parsis, Christians and Muslim. Parsis are the most mentioned example of Hindu tolerance. It is argued that Parsis came in India and Hindus have provided them shelter. The example of Parsis has another dimension also. The population of Parsis is declining regularly which is not so in the case of Muslim. On the other hand, Parsis came in India, but neither ruled in India nor demanded any cultural rights for preserving their culture. In the context of Christians, Hindu nationalist express their grief over the expansion policy of Christians. Christians have the history of the rule in India, but even of that, they are attributed that they reminded Indians, their past glory and left India after 1947. In the current scenario, Christians are blamed that they have converted tribes and indigenous populations from Hindu religion to Christianity. After the departure of British, there is a tiny population of Christians left in India.

Islam, on another hand, came at different times in India. But, later, it led the foundation of stable rule in India. Mughals rule over India for extended time and impacted Indian culture in the long run. In spite of the respect for Indian culture, Mughals had always been treated as 'outsider' and 'others.' T. K. Oomen (1999) has described the example of Akbar who is known for his benevolence, generosity and his effort for Hindu-Muslim accord, but is stigmatised due to his foreign origin only. Many linguistic changes also took place during this period. Persian was made the state language. Urdu was given prominence in public life, and a mixed form of Hindi and Urdu, which is called, Hindustani developed.

Language has a deep impact on identity formation in India. Colonial interference in the language policy widely influenced the linguistic discourse. It was the colonial rule which started treating Hindi and Urdu as two distinct languages of different communities. The importance of Hindi, as a language of communication, got a new breath, and it was communicated among literary persons to give importance to Hindi rather than Urdu. Writers Bhartendu Harischand and Mahavir Prashad Dwivedi, who had an influence on the Hindi public sphere, urged for the expression of true nationalism in Hindi language. Hindi language became one of the significant criteria of Indianness. The Hindi public sphere merged the language and image of

Mother India within (Orsini, 2011). It was conditioned that the existence of a nation is only possible with a national language and national script (Rai, 2001:106). These changes are also evident in the form of demonization of Urdu language. The power relation between Hindi and Urdu became more open in the colonial era. After independence, the tussle of language became more dynamic as Pakistan established Urdu as the state language of Pakistan. Paul Brass (1974) has noted that the number of Hindustani speakers were started declining after the independence movement and partition. The Hindi and Urdu speakers, separately noted a rise in comparison to Hindustani speakers (Brass, 1974).

### **1.7. Hindi Press and Nationalism in Hindi Public Sphere**

This dissertation has concentrated on public sphere to understand how the discourse of nationalism and community identity was communicated and later made the part of the common sense. In the public sphere, there are several means to communicate the views, but this dissertation has specifically dealt with the Hindi press. Hindi press has a major importance to understand the politics, culture, and society in north India. Its importance envisages with the attention to the fact that it has noted a big rise from the 1990s till onwards. Hindi press has noted the growth in the era when the western world has noted a fall in the subscription of press (Jeffrey, 2003). Hindi press has replaced the English newspapers in having the highest number of readers and secured the top two positions (Jeffrey, 2003). The growth of Hindi press is also important because it has noted this rise in the era when television has been reached in the homes. Jeffrey (2003) and Sevathi Ninan (2009) argue that television facilitated the growth of vernacular press. In, spite of the news on television, the wait for an everyday newspaper is a reflection of the eagerness of people for detailed analysis. Hindi newspapers through their stringers also reached in remote locations.

Print media, in general, has influenced the whole discourse of nationalism and identity formation. Herald Innis has noted:

Application of power to communicate industries hastened the consolidation of vernaculars, the rise of nationalism, revolution and outbreaks of savagery in the twentieth century (Harold Innis, 1951:29) (Cited in Jeffrey, 2003:4).

It describes the larger implication of print in the discourse of nationalism. It has worked as a medium of communication between people to realise the similarities

between them. No other development in human history has affected the human race as the changes in the mode of communication. On the same lines, McLuhan has argued:

Print technology...isolates the individual yet also creates massive groupings by means of vernacular nationalism (McLuhan: 258) (Cited in Jeffrey, 2003:5).

In a similar way, Hindi Press has a major role in the construction of national identity in North India. North India became the centre of politics after the colonial government decided to change the capital from Calcutta to Delhi in the 1920s. It increased the importance of Hindi belt. Frenseca Orsini (2011) has also noted the period of 1920's as the age of nationalism in Hindi public sphere. From literature to press as well as the construction of debate played an important role in the debate of nationalism. The creation of Pakistan provided a vital opportunity to Hindi press associate it with the enemy nation and constructed an Indianness. Tanweer Fazal (2015) has noted that a major section of Hindi Press was involved in questioning the loyalty and belongingness of minority community (Fazal, 2015: 79-80). The war between India and Pakistan just after independence, and later in 1965 provided another chance to question the loyalty and favour of the Muslim community. It demanded Indian Muslims to produce evidence of Indianness.

In Hindi public sphere, these discourse always had an important place because here journalism developed from the literary sphere. Dalmia (1997) has described that during the last decades of the nineteenth century, it was believed that the growth of Hindi as a national language could only be possible with the growth of its literature. The growth of Hindi literature was depicted as the growth of nation itself. The idea of national in Hindi literature comprises many challenges. In its first and foremost work, it started to find out the old Sanskrit texts which were the evidence of nation's old past. The disappearance of past was important to be revived and for that purpose, it was considered important to search Sanskrit texts. The second work that Hindi literature did in its initial stage was to refer to the authentic place for the expression of thoughts. Here, the literature produced by Muslims, had were considered inauthentic. The third important work that the new Hindi literature had to do was to focus on the idiom of new education which was considered to be based on national tradition. During this period of pre-independence, the category of 'Hindu reader' was evolved. According to Dalmia, Hindi literature emerged in

Benares and then later expanded to Allahabad and other North Indian regions. It created a completely distinct cultural and political identity of Hindus. The Hindi literature created Hindu consciousness among its readers from which the Muslims were excluded (Dalmia, 1997:225). Though, the idea of Hindu, as explained by Dalmia (1997) covers the inhabitants of Hindustan in a homogenous framework by assuming the civilizational unity. But, the leading journals of North Indian city Benares, discussed prominently the cultural, religious and political issues around Hinduness (Hindu religion). The Hindi press of Benares played an important role in the politicization of Hindu identity. But, Hindi press and journals took a long time to follow the new literary approach and its constituted idea of nation. In her discussion of Bhartendu Harishchandra role in the creation of Hindu identity, Dalmia (1997) asserts that the journals and news press of Bhartendu Harisichandra period, had a major role in the formation of public opinion around the Hindu identity (Dalmia, 1997:222-234). Orsini (2011) has extended further in the idea of Dalmia (1997) and suggested the continuation of literary influence on the Hindi newspapers during the early age of nationalism. The discourse which was created by Hindi literary sphere was grounded around Hindu religion. During 1990's when Hindi press achieved a vast growth with its capitalist character, the tendency of homogenisation increased rapidly. Still, the literary influence on Hindi newspaper continued. Arvind Kumar Das (2012) has also noticed the influence of literature on the Hindi language press, but he also asserts its decline with the commercialisation of Hindi newspaper.

One of the reasons for the growth of newspaper in the 1990s is the growth of literacy rate in India. It made newspaper reading, a status symbol. It made easy for Hindi press to communicate its message to its readers. Nineties is also remembered for the large scale reservation movements in north India. These discourses tried to connect people with their own issues. The dominant role of upper caste in media houses left the lower castes unrepresented<sup>6</sup>. Neither these lower castes has been given representation, nor their issues has been raised in the public sphere. If their concerns have ever been raised, it was the approach of upper castes rather than their own. The upper caste dominated press linked the assertion of the lower caste in politics with growing casteism. It tried to create a discourse as the lower caste

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/missing-from-the-indian-newsroom/article3294285.ece>



assertion has ended the unity and brotherhood in Indian society. Badri Narayan (2005) discusses the role of the alternative public sphere which provided a platform to Dalits to raise their voice. Although its role is limited, but it is very popular among the members of Dalit community and plays a central role in raising the consciousness of the community. Both, the emergence of Hindi Press at large scale as well as the emergence of the alternative public sphere has established the role of the press in establishing identity discourse in North India.

Charu Gupta & Mukul Sharma (1996) have discussed the class dimension of Hindi press. During the 80s, Hindi press emerged as the voice of emerging middle class readers. The slogan of nationalism had dimmed after independence which was a popular slogan during the independent struggle. To ensure its reach among the readers, Hindi press oriented itself towards the marketization of press. It was the time when the middle class was emerging due to the changes in the economy. Particularly in North India, green revolution impacted the life of agrarian castes. But, at the same time, Charu Gupta & Mukul Sharma also accept that it was the agrarian castes, especially middle castes, not the lower caste who became the consumer of emerging Hindi press (Gupta & Sharma, 1996).

Along with Ram Janmabhoomi movement, two other noteworthy movements were launched within the Hindi belt. It was the movement to oppose the status of second language, given to the Urdu language, as well as the reservation movement. Here this dissertation has tried to show how all these three discourses constructed the idea of nation and nationalism with a majoritarian tinge around it.

Ram Janmabhoomi tried its best to unite the Hindus in all over North India. During 1989, the issue of language emerged in the wave of nationalism. Politically, Urdu had already been declared as the language of one community and the movement for Hindi after independence demonised the Urdu language. It was argued that Urdu had indulged in a divisionary tendency and now, the same effort is being done by the state government, and it would lead to the division of the nation. In that way, nation was an important part of this discourse which was communicated among people by Hindi press.

The discourse of reservation emerged with the assertion of lower castes for their representation in the public sector. It challenged the position of twice-born castes.

Hindi press raised the question of Ram Janmabhoomi and reservation together and tried to evoke the Hindu identity of lower castes. Hindi press had already constructed a situation where Hindu religion became the national religion and Hindu became synonymous to the nation.

It is important to place all these three examples together because it was an important part of the Hindu unity campaign along with Ram Janmabhoomi movement. It indicated Muslim community as the only enemy of Hindus. Badri Narayan (2006) has discussed the symbolic mobilisation of lower castes by Hindu nationalists to use their muscle power against the Muslim community. The lower caste identity was attached with Hindu warriors and were told how they fought to defend the nation before Muslim invaders.

### **1.8. Methodology**

The present work is based on the historical method. It has analysed Hindi press in the backdrop of Ram Janmabhoomi movement. I have looked into the period of 1989 to 1993 to explore the discourses of nationalism which was constructed around the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. I will use the two major Hindi dailies, one at national level and another at the provincial level. I will analyse Navbharat Times of Delhi edition, a national Hindi daily, along with Dainik Jagran of Kanpur edition. Navbharat Times had the highest number of readers in Delhi at that time, and it has its English edition newspaper 'The Times of India' also. The Dainik Jagran is a local newspaper but has the highest number of readers in all the categories of vernacular and English language newspaper (Jeffrey, 2003).

The major part of the study will focus on the public sphere, especially Hindi press and its role in the construction of the 'other'. In the construction of the 'other', this dissertation will specifically look into the news reporting, headlines, editorials, special editorials and the advertisements regarding nationalism, the construction of nation, the construction of community identity, the claim of nationhood, the notion of historicity, the depiction of community, reporting of Ram Janmabhoomi during the same period and the approach of the newspaper during the Babri demolition. The year 1993 is known for the Bombay blast and large scale riots that happened before it. This work will also look into the reporting and editorials of two newspaper during that period. It will enable us to understand the mass scale mobilisation of

Hindu masses during Ram Janmabhoomi movement and its culmination in the demolition of Babri mosque. At the same time, it would also facilitate to understand the response of Muslim community and the depiction of Islam and Muslim community during and after the large scale riots and violence in Bombay. However, I will only confine myself to the reporting of the news, headlines and the editorial section during the Bombay blast and the riots that preceded it. This work will not focus on the Bombay blast and riots in detail. It is an entirely new subject, so that, I will confine myself to the North Indian region and will engage with analysing the creation of the discourse and the construction of the 'other' in the public sphere. It is an open-ended analysis of the two Hindi dailies. The selection of an open-ended analysis is important because, in a structured analysis, there is a possibility to leave the important events, news and editorials unrecognized.

Apart from these sources, I have also used other primary sources like the documents available on VHP's official cite in PDF format and Government of India reports. In secondary sources, I have used articles, history books, periodicals, documentaries, and booklets.

### **1.9. Approach to the Field**

In the initial period of the research, I contacted the head office of the Dainik Jagran at Kanpur. Earlier they denied providing access to their newspaper record room, but later, I again approached to the head office of Dainik Jagran. They provided me with the newspapers of five years in the form of a file which the office saves for future reference. I visited the Kanpur office of the Dainik Jagran for one month (From February 07, 2016 to March 06, 2016). Here, I noted all the important facts, headlines, editorial and other relevant news on my notepad. For Navbharat Times, I approached the Central Secretariat Library where I found the newspapers of 1989 to 1993 in a microfilm. Central Secretariat Library provided me with the facility to take the photocopy of the selected papers. I visited there for almost one month (from March 10, 2016 to April 06, 2016). Here, I prepared the copies of all the essential materials including headlines, editorials, special editorials and other news items. Later, I analysed the similarities and differences in the contents of both the newspapers.

### **1.10. Research Objective**

The major Objectives of this research are-

- (a). To illustrate the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and the discourse of nationalism in North India.
- (b). To understand the process of otherisation of Muslim identity in the Hindi public sphere in general and Hindi press in particular.
- (c). To explore the role of national and provincial Hindi press in the construction of Muslim identity in North India.

### **1.11. Research Questions**

- (a). What are the various discourses of cultural nationalism in India and how has it shaped the idea of Hindu 'self' and Muslim 'other'?
- (b). How does the notion of nationhood depend on the construction of the 'other'? Who constitutes the 'other' in the different dominant narratives of the 'other'?
- (c). How has the Hindi press strengthened the dominant ideas of nationhood and facilitated the process of otherisation?
- (d). How has Muslim identity come to be forged and represented in Hindi public sphere?
- (e). How has an event such as Ram Janmabhoomi movement, impacted the stigmatisation of Muslims and shaped majoritarian nationalism in north India?

### **1.12. Chapterisation**

Apart from the introductory chapter, there are three major chapters. The first chapter would focus on the Ram Janmabhoomi movement as a case study. It will explore the various dimension of Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Giving the historical description, it would focus how the institutions like press has worked to establish cultural nationalism and constructed the idea of the 'other'. The second chapter will look into the construction of Muslim identity in the Hindi public sphere. This chapter would emphasize the historical construction of community identity from the colonial era to the present one. It will try to argue that Hindi public sphere, particularly Hindi press has continued the colonial construction of community identity as 'others' in the post-colonial era also. It will also highlight the

homogenising urge of Hindi press in the era of capitalism. The third chapter would be based on the sociological analysis of two Hindi dailies. One is 'Dainik Jagran' of Kanpur edition; that is the local edition also, and another one is the national edition of 'Navbharat Times'. This chapter will argue that although both Dainik Jagran and Navbharat Times are different in their approach, but there are similarities as well. Dainik Jagran has directly participated in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and mobilised the Hindu masses through the communalisation of the public sphere. In contrast, Navbharat Times did not approach directly to communalise the public sphere and rather urged for maintaining peace and secularism. But at the same time, it couldn't hide its Hindu majoritarian bias. Indirectly, it entered into the discourse through special articles, editorials and news coverage by the special correspondents. Both the newspapers have a role in the construction of the myths as well. The last and concluding chapter will summarize the important points with analysis.

### **1.11. Significance of the Study**

Nationalism has been debated within academia and in general a lot. The debate has included the various dimension of nation, nation-state, nationalism, nationality and national-identity. But, this work has tried to problematize the relationship between nationalism and the public sphere. Habermas (1991) has emphasized on public sphere in his work. On the other hand, various scholars, like Benedict Anderson (2006), Gellner (1981, 1986), Anthony D. Smith (2005, 2005), Eric Hobsbawm (2000) and others have discussed the ideology of nationalism. The current study has emphasized largely on the work of Benedict Anderson, who has specifically referred to the role of print capitalism. Print is major part of the public sphere. It is the linkage point between Habermas and Benedict Anderson. It is the market situation that helped print to expand the ideology of nationalism in the public sphere. To understand this association of public sphere and nationalism, this work has focused on the Hindi press. This study is also important because, in the two decades, Hindi press has noted an enormous growth (Jeffrey, 2003). It again emphasizes the role of capitalism and expansion of the market in the growth of Hindi press. Hindi press is the carrier of the ideology of nationalism from the nationalist movement of independence. Most of the works on Hindi public sphere (Orsini 2011, Joshi 2001, Narain 1998, Dalmia 1997, Fazal 2015) are historical in

nature, or they focus on the Historical debates. One of the recent work on Hindi sphere has been done by Robin Jeffrey (2003), and, Charu Gupta and Mukul Sharma (1990, 1996). The work of Robin Jeffrey has slightly focused on the question of nationalism in the Hindi press whereas Charu Gupta & Mukul Sharma (1990, 1993, 1993, 1996, 1996) have done extensive work on the communalisation of vernacular news media but confined themselves to the national Hindi dailies only. The current work has made an effort to compare the national and local newspaper so as to locate the similarities as well as differences in their construction of community identity. The localisation factor of Hindi newspaper has made it an important field of study in the academic discourse.

## Chapter-2

### Ram Janmabhoomi Movement: A Case Study

#### 2.1. Historical Background of Ram Janmabhoomi

Ayodhya is considered as an important Hindu pilgrimage which attracts thousands of pilgrims from all over the world. It is believed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama. Ayodhya is also called the city of temples. Daniel Gould has depicted the religious expression of Hindu life from the Hindu pilgrimage Ayodhya. He articulates:

Ayodhya has... managed to escape the chaotic excitement and hucksterism that comes with the worst excesses of the pilgrim trade. To the jaded researcher of traditional Hindu life, it can seem an unusually peaceful place, with visitors and residents calmly following their customary pursuits in the shops and temples throughout the town. Only once during my several sojourns there in 1980 and 1981 was an attempt made to draw me into a charged religious situation- and this by no traditional pilgrim guide (Cited in Nandy, 2005: 1).

The first European visitor William Finch noted the worship by Hindus in the same area of the mosque which is disputable in present (Nandy, 2005, Van Der Veer, 1987). There are end number of examples that describe the support extended by many benevolent people of both the communities in the development of Ayodhya. There are many temples which had been established by the allotted grant of the Nawabs of Lucknow, who were Shia Muslims. Hanumangarhi is one of the famous temples which has the same history of Hindu-Muslim accord. The same story is true in the cases where Mughal emperors actively participated for their welfare. However there may be many facts and approaches which suggest their biases towards Islam, but it was obvious to them because their empire had the base on those of Islamic codes and beliefs (Van Der Veer, 1994).

The decline of Mughal Empire opened a new phase for the Shia nawabs of Lucknow, who became the independent emperors in North India. Awadh was once the important centre of their rule (earlier the capital of nawabs) of the Shia nawabs which later had been transferred to Faizabad and then to Lucknow, the current capital city of Uttar Pradesh. The Nawabs of Awadh did not only obey the religious

beliefs of the Muslim but as well as respected the values of Hindus also because their rule were dependent on the cooperation of both Hindus and Muslims (Veer, 1987). The mutual understanding of both the communities led to the development of Ayodhya. Peter Van Der Veer in his work suggested that the Nawab rule belonged to Hindus in the same proportion as of Muslims (Van Der Veer, 1994). This description of Peter Van Der Veer is important to understand the changing configuration of Ayodhya in the current period.

## **2.2. The Issue of Contestation in Ayodhya**

Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid complex emerged as a disputed site which made inevitable the enquiry based on archaeological and historical evidences. It was an important issue as it divided the archaeologist and historians into two parts<sup>7</sup>. Along with RSS and VHP, some of the archaeologists had claimed that the disputed site was the birthplace of Ram. They argued that the current mosque was constructed after the destruction of the temple. The supporters of this argument use the result of excavation, did by B. B. Lal. The Centre for the Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University joined in this debate. B.B. Lal admitted that the archaeological evidence is mute about the historicity of Ramayana, still he summed up by saying that Ramayana is not fictional but is true (Lal, 1992). Peter Van Der Veer (1994) has noted the paradox of Ramayana and Mahabharata project. Painted Grey pottery was found after the excavation from the sites of Mahabharata whereas the Ramayana sites were established as younger than Mahabharata. This is problematic as it is accepted in the traditions of Hindu religion that Ram comes first and Krishna of Mahabharata later (Van Der Veer, 1994: 144).

B.B. Lal had also accepted his fault in an interview to the *Manthan* magazine (Mandal, 2003) that he did not document some of the evidences at the time of excavation. It is against the scientific norm of archaeology which compelled historians to question the authenticity of B.B. Lal's work.

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<sup>7</sup> The Ram Janmabhoomi issue divided historians and archaeologists in two groups. The group of VHP was represented by S.P Gupta, B.R. Grover, Devendra Swarup Uppadhyay and Harsh Narayan. The another group of historians which were presented from the side of Babri mosque Sangarsh Samiti comprise RamSharan Sharma, Ajhar Ali, SurajBhan and D.H. Jha.



The historians of Jawaharlal Nehru University told that Ram is a myth, not history which is based on belief and faith. The use of science to prove his authenticity would disappoint the archaeologist. These historians had been called pseudo-secular by Hindu nationalist organisations. D. Mandal has also made the similar argument that the pillars and sculptures, used in the decoration of mosque are not the exact remains of temple (Mandal, 2003).

Ayodhya is the centre of debate in many sense. The major question in this debate is the question of its significance as Ram's birthplace. S. Gopal argued that historical truth and beliefs are two different things. He understood Ayodhya as an important Buddhist and Jain centre (Gopal, 1991:11). By Huen Tsang documentation, this reflects it as Jain and Buddhist place. (Gopal, 1991). The fame of Ram started expanding after the thirteenth century after Hindi translation of Ramayana. According to K.N. Panikkar, the Buddhists claim that there was the presence of large scale Buddhists in Ayodhya from about fifth century B.C. The Buddhist centre declined in first millennium AD. Jain tradition refers Ayodhya as the birthplace of its first and fourth Jain Tirthankaras. Panikkar has described that Jain tradition also claims that Ayodhya was visited by the two founder Tirthankaras- Parshvanath and Mahavira. Mahavira had not only visited but also converted several households, merchants and noble men of Saketa into Jainism. It is one of the most important *tirthas* in the Hindu tradition.

R. S. Sharma, M. Athar Ali, D.N. Jha and Suraj Bhan also denied the VHP'S argument citing lack of evidence. They argue that VHP only provided the evidence of Sakand Puran, which was of a later period (Sharma et al. 2003: 33). Shaivites and Vaishnavites also gave it prominence as their sacred place. The development of Ayodhya as the sacred place of Ramanadi (worshiper of Ram) was a later development. The tussle between Hindus and Muslims began on the issue as what could be the exact location of the birthplace of Ram.

According to the Local tradition, the temple of Ayodhya was built by the Gupta king Vikramaditya. Vikramaditya constructed the temple on Ram Janmabhoomi as well as other temples in Ayodhya. This theory is based on some of the religious beliefs which has also been discussed by Peter Van Der Veer. According to the religious beliefs and local tradition, it is believed that Rama was born in Ayodhya

in the *Treta* period<sup>8</sup>. The city of Ayodhya declined after the *Tretayug*, and again it was re-established by Vikramaditya. The city of Ayodhya had been identified as ancient Saketa which was an important North Indian town in Gupta period. Bakkar has argued that the fictional site of Ayodhya in the epic Ramayana had been identified as Saketa in Gupta period in the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Gupta rulers decided to change the capital from Patliputra to Saketa, which was later named as Ayodhya. Gupta rulers were the devotees of Lord Vishnu, a Hindu god and they also hold titles over the name of Vishnu. Gupta rulers glorified Ayodhya by relating to the birth of Ram (Van Der Veer, 1987). According to Peter Van Der Veer (1987), local tradition informs that the temple was destructed at the time of Sadhu Shyamanand. Two Islamic *pirs* came to learn the devotional method of Sadhu Shyamanand, and they were very influenced by the mahima of Ram's place. Enlightened by the power of the place, they determined to change the place as a centre of the Islamic faith. When the Mughal emperor Babar came in India, their dream came to be true. They offered Babar to establish as the emperor of the India if he destroyed the temple and built a mosque. Both of the descriptions of Peter Van der Veer and VHP supports the argument that the temple had been destructed. It has also been proved by the Muslim grave of *Pir Fazal Abbas Musa Ashikhan* where the two pillars of ancient Hindu temple can also be seen. Even after the destruction, the Hindu community continued to worship at the temple until the middle of the nineteenth century (Sitaram 1930: 36) (Cited in Veer, 1987: 186).

Visva Hindu Parishad (VHP) has also interpreted the importance of Vikramaditya for Ayodhya. VHP narrative describes the decline of Ayodhya, many times and different kings established it again and again. Before the rule of Vikramaditya, it had also decayed. Vikramaditya established this city again when he sat on the throne in 57 B.C. According to the VHP, it was Vikramaditya who constructed the temples on the birthplace of Ram and 360 other temples as per the description of the sacred text (*granths*).

VHP has discussed the story of Salar Masood, who was the Muslim invader and attacked Saketa or Ayodhya. Salar Masood was defeated after the demolition of Ayodhya near Bahraichon June 14, 1033, by the Hindu warrior king Suhaldev. The

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<sup>8</sup>. There are four periods in Hindu cosmology which is *Satyug*, *Tretayug*, *Dwaparyug*, and *Kaliyug*. *Tretayug* was the second-period of Hindu cosmology when Ram took birth.

myth of Suhaldev and Salar Masood is interesting due to its importance in the local conflict over the sacred place of the mazaar of Salar Masood, who is known as Gazi Mian in local tradition. Badri Narayan (2006) provided examples of conflict in Bahraich due to the adaptation of local heroes for the mobilisation of communities for political power. There are some other myths which describe Salar Masood as the peer and Hindus are the major devotees of his *mazaar*. Local traditions highlights Suhaldev as a warrior king who fought bravely against Islamic invasion. In the later period, RSS and BJP mobilised the lower castes by constructing the communal history to relate Suhaldev with lower caste identity (Narayan, 2006). The VHP version of history of Salar Masood is different than the Gazetteer of India. It didn't provide any reference of Salar Masood's entry in Ayodhya whereas VHP pictures the destruction at Ayodhya as the part of the same confrontation which started at Ayodhya.

VHP provided supposedly detailed documentation of nearly 76 battles between Hindus and Muslims over the Janmabhoomi. Interestingly, the series of battles start from the attack of Babar, including the period of other Mughal rulers Humayun, Akbar, Aurangzeb and Nawabs of Awadh (Qudh) Nawab Sadat Ali, Naseeruddin Haider, Wajid Ali Shah with the last<sup>9</sup> battle being fought in the colonial rule. VHP has used the reference of Alan Beveridge (she translated Babarnama into English) for extending the argument of destruction<sup>10</sup>. The evidence of Austrian Jesuit missionary is also an important source which argues the destruction of the temple and the construction of the mosque. He also maintains that it is believed that the construction of the mosque was done by Babar.

*'A Historical Sketch of Tehsil Fyzabad, Zilla Fyzabad', 'Gazetteer of the Province of Qudh', Vol.1- A to G<sup>11</sup> and 'Fyzabad: A Gazetteer Volume XIII<sup>12</sup>'* are another sources attached by VHP which also supports the existence of temple at the disputed site. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series also favour the use of same material of the Ram temple in the construction of the mosque and the small platform

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<sup>9</sup> <http://vhp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/5-Vikramaditya.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> <http://vhp.org/faq/faqs/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://vhp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/4-Historical-evidence.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <http://vhp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/4-Historical-evidence.pdf>

outside the mosque. These references suggest that Colonial historiography has a larger impact on the construction of Hindu- Muslim identity.

The differences in the interpretation of archaeological evidences and historical facts indicates to the role of history and archaeology in the development of nationalist consciousness. The debate and division among historians establishes that the history and archaeology have also some social and political biases. Philip A. Kohl (1998) has emphasised that nationalism needs an invented or constructed past. It doesn't even hesitate to manipulate the archaeological and historical sources in the name of national interest. (Kohl, 1998: 223). It directs towards the social and political location where these subjects work. He also emphasises that nationalist history and archaeology are frequently involved in the construction and elaboration of national identities (Kohl, 1998: 226).

### **2.3. The Entry of Colonial rule in Mandir- Masjid strife**

The colonial rule has played a major role in the Ram Janmabhoomi- Babri mosque dispute. The orientalist discourse of knowledge construction was one of the major foundations of this entire dispute. Colonial historiography constructed the knowledge based on its biases and interest. H. M. Elliot's description of Babar's demolition was later accepted as a fact without any interrogation, after that day the debate started over here (Davis, 1996: 38). In the later period, colonial rule interfered in this dispute in a legal form. The first attempt of colonial interference in the Ram Janmabhoomi and Babri mosque debate came with the court case. According to the VHP site, Mahant Raghubar Das filed the petition 61/280 in 1885 in the court of Faizabad for the pucca construction on the Ram Chabutra that had been quashed off by the court of sub-judge Pandit Harikishan. The next case had been filed in the court of District Judge Colonel J. E. A. Chamier on December 24, 1885. Judge J.E.A. Chamier visited the disputed site and given his judgement. He writes:

It is most unfortunate that the masjid should have been built on land, specifically held sacred by the Hindus. But as the event occurred 356 years ago, it is too late now to remedy the grievance. All that can be done is to maintain the status quo. In such a case as the present one any innovation could cause more harm and derangement of order than benefit<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://vhp.org/faq/faqs/faq-ramjanmabhoomi/> Question 14

Mosque remained the site of contestation between the Hindu and Muslim still after the decision. Before independence, the last conflict between both the communities happened in 1934 when the issue of beef had become the cause of communal tension. The mosque was acquired after the bloody battle, but British administrators interrupted and decided to put a railing around the mosque. The outer courtyard was allotted to the Hindus for worship while Muslims were given the right to worship inside the mosque (Van der Veer: 1987, 1992, 1994) (VHP cite also refers to it). The dispute was stagnant until independence when the Hindu Mahasabha installed the idol inside the mosque.

#### **2.4. Hindu Nationalism and the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri mosque dispute**

Hindu Mahasabha emerged in 1907 in different parts of the country<sup>14</sup>. Its founder, V.D. Savarkar (2009), propounded the idea of Hindutva based on the geographical and racial entity as well as common culture. Savarkar is famously known for his idea of *Pitrabhumi* and *Punyabhumi*. The idea of *Pitrabhumi* and *Punyabhumi* makes an effort to trace India's original inhabitants and the foreign invaders. It also proposes the idea of citizenship based on the same notion of *Pitrabhumi* and *Punyabhumi*. The glorification of *Aryavart* is the significance part of it (Bapu, 2013). The xenophobic element of racial superiority had been evoked later as 'Hindu Rastra.'

Hindu Mahasabha was directly involved in the Ayodhya case. Hindu Mahasabha member Abhiram Das not only planted the idol of Ram inside the central dome of the mosque but also made attempts to mobilise Hindus around the Ram Janmabhoomi issue. The political mobilisation had been supported by the Poona session of Hindu Mahasabha also (Jha & Jha, 2012: 20). The plot of annexing the mosque was made prior to Gandhi's assassination through the active involvement of Mahant Digvijai Nath, Mahant of Gorakhnath *peeth* in Gorakhpur, K. K. Nair, who was a District Collector of Ayodhya and Maharaja Rateshwari Prashad Singh of Gonda. This development at Ayodhya got its inspiration from the construction of a temple at Somnath also. The move was supported by the administration also when K. K. Nair contested the orders of removing idol from the disputed site raising fears of law and order problem (Van Der Veer, 1992, 1994).

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<sup>14</sup> <http://abhm.org.in/about.aspx>

Later, RSS extended the dispute of Ram Janmabhoomi and Babri mosque. Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal, and Durga Vahini are the sub-organizations of RSS which helped to expand the ideology of Hindu nationalism. However, BJP is a political party which had been established on different lines than Sangh, but they came close on the issue of Ram Janmabhoomi movement. VHP, Bajrang Dal, and Durga Vahini were directly involved and mobilised the Hindu masses for the participation in Ram Janmabhoomi movement.

Ashis Nandy (2005) argues that VHP is a different kind of cultural organization which draws lineage from the reformist movement of Arya Samaj and Sanathan Dharma in North India. Nandy articulates that most of the VHP members belong to North India and they believe to transform Hindu religion into a monotheistic religion (Nandy, 2005: 88). VHP drew an Indian map with the image of Bharat Mata who holds a saffron flag in his hand. This image can be found in the VHP headquarters along with Ram, Laxman and Sita. The image of Bharat Mata already existed in North India, but VHP popularised it in an everyday sphere with its projection during Ram Janmabhoomi movement. The efforts have been made to assimilate people across religion and caste in the Bharat Mata image. VHP established Ram Janmabhoomi Mukti Samiti in all over India and collected *Shilas* from home to home for making grand Ram temple. Its programme was successful due to the greater participation of urban middle class as well as people from all over India. The results of 1991, parliamentary elections as well as legislative elections of Uttar Pradesh were a gift of its efforts.

Bajrang Dal was originated in July 1984 as a youth wing of VHP. According to VHP, it was established at the very crucial time when the government denied to provide security for the RathYatra. Later, it decided to give a call to youths for the protection to *RathYatra* as an armed squad (Nandy, 2005). Vinay Katiyar was its first president. Bajrang Dal was working as a fighter unit of VHP, which had similarities with Shiv Sena in Maharashtra as both were working for the violent Hindu nationalism. It interrupted the daily life in North India by forcefully closing of schools and calling for *Pradesh Band*.

## **2.5. Ram Janmabhoomi Mobilisation and the Politics of Slogans**

The slogan articulated during the Ram Janmabhoomi movement is an important way to understand the reaction of the crowd and the entire movement itself. Some of these slogans were:

Ram Lala Hum Aayenge, Mandir Vahi Banayaenge (Nandy, 2005:52).

(Dear Ram, we will come and build your temple at the same spot.)

Some of these slogans were the part of the day to day interaction in north India like *Jai Shia Ram* (Nandy, 2005: 44). But in support of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, it became the supporter of violent Hindutva.

*Baccha- Baccha Ram Ka, Janmabhoomi ke Kaam ka* (Every child is Ram's child, He'll Work for the temple!) (Nandy, 2005: 44), like slogan united people on religious lines. The slogans are not only very informative, but it also depicts the art of mobilisation for the construction of the temple. During the Rath Yatra, the trucks were full of the peoples. They were singing the above mentioned lines<sup>15</sup>.

Saugandh Ram ki khate hai,

Hum mandir wahi banayenge.

Jo swapan dekhte Babar ka,

Arman mitakar manenge.

Jo khel rahi hai aangan me,

Is bar kuchalkar manenge.

(We swear by Ram

We will build his temple at the very same spot.

Those who dream of Babar

We will wipe out? their aspirations!

This poison ivy spreading in our garden

We'll crust underfoot.)

The *Rathyatra* during its journey tried to provoke the violent masculinity of the Hindus by sloganeering. They appealed that the cowardly, feminine and tolerant Hindus must be violent, masculine and strong now (Gupta & Sharma, 1990: 4). They made slogans like:

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4v0om4fqgw>

Jis Hindu ka Khun na Khaule,  
Khun Nhi wo Pani Hai.  
(Any Hindu whose blood doesn't boil  
Has water in his viens!)

The violent crowd had been reached on that stage where it symbolised only a single enemy. It said that Lord Ram is already with us, and no one could prevent us from demolishing the mosque of sinner Muslims (Nandy, 2005: 55). They had been completely violent after the indirect support of the police. They were chanting:

Katuye Jab- Jab Kate Jayenge, Ram-Ram Chillayenge (Nandy, 2005: 56).

(When the Katua (a derogatory term, here used for the Muslims) will be cut into pieces, he will take the name of Ram)

Mobilisation of people was not limited to these slogans, but also spread from the hate speech cassettes of Sadhvi Ritambhara. A song was very popular among them. It was,

Aao Sab mil chale,  
Ram a mandir bhaiya banane ko.  
Khun kharaba hota h  
To ek bar ho Jane do  
Samaj Na paye Bato se,  
Ab lato se samjhane do  
(Let us all get together brother,  
To build the temple of Ram,  
If there is bloodshed,  
Then for once let it happen...  
Since our words have not made them see reason,  
Let us now make them understand by kicking them...)

Along with that, some other slogans were demanding the other pilgrimage sites of Hindus. It was like:

Ayodhya to bas jhanki Hai  
Mathura Kashi baki H...  
(Ayodhya is just the sample



Kashi Mathura are next!)

Another slogan was:

Ake Bolo,

Jor se Bolo

Janmabhoomi ka tala Kholo.

(Come and loudly ask for the lock on the Janmabhoomi to be opened.)

Bharat Mata (Mother India) and Lord Ram had been paralleled. It symbolised as those who are against the Ram temple were against the Indian nation. The nation had been symbolised in the female body. The slogan was,

Bharat Mata Ki Jai,

Jai Shri Ram

Newspapers had also played an important role in spreading these slogans. The upper caste media was itself involved in making the image of backward caste chief minister of Uttar Pradesh as Maulana and Jinnah. These two words had symbolic meanings. One was related to the Muslim religious chief whereas other is about the advocate of Pakistan, Mumhammad Ali Jinnah, which is treated as an enemy who divided India. It reflects the base of Indian nationalism which needs a resisting identity. Here, it is Pakistan and the Muslim living in India. These slogans were the clear example of that:

Katuon ke bas do Sthan, Pakistan ya Kabristan (Nandy, 2005:29).

(There are only two places for the Katua to be in; Pakistan or the graveyard)

These slogans were substantiated with the statement like *Hindustan me Rahna Hai to Hindu Bankar Rahna Hoga* (If you want to live in India, you will have to live like Hindus.) and *Babar ki Santano ko Hindustan me Nhi Rahne Denge* (We will not let Babar's progeny live in India.)(Nandy, 2005: 168). These slogans are the gist of Hindu nationalist ideology against the outsider religion in which Mughals are their worst enemy who had resided in India. They had been blamed for the end of Hindu Rajya. One slogan was like:

Babar ki santano se khun ka badla lena hai.

(The sons of Babar must pay with their blood.)

The another slogan which demonised Babar, essentially entire Mughal rule as Babar was the founder of Mughal Empire,

Tel lagao dabar ka,

Naam mita do Babar ka.

(Use the oil of Dabar,

erase the name of Babar!)

Babri mosque in Ayodhya was depicted as a symbol of slavery that had been imposed on Hindus by Muslim rule in India. They provoked:

Ek Dhakka aur do,

Babar Ki Aulado ko.

(Give one more shove to the sons of Babar!)

## **2.6. Participants of Ram Janmabhoomi Movement**

People from diverse background had participated in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. It included many common people who were there in Ayodhya along with the Karsevaks. The crowd was full of BJP, VHP and Bajrang Dal activists. Ideologically, this was the movement of Hindutva, which was successful due to the participation of entire Hindu community. Sangh gave space to the leaders from different castes to unite them in the movement of Ram Janmabhoomi. This movement had been accelerated because of the support of unemployed, less educated, youths and the crowds along with traders, pujaris, and sadhu sants. It extracted support from the global Indian diaspora in forms of monetary supports for the cause of Ram Temple. VHP had also attracted people from worldwide to contribute for the sake of Ram temple. So, directly and indirectly, it reached the global level.

## **2.7. Ram Janmabhoomi and the Politics of Symbols**

VHP has used Ram with its clear motives of fulfilling its political agenda. The matter of Ayodhya was already in dispute, but this dispute reached at its heights after the Shah Bano case. After the judgement of Shah Bano, the demand for Mandir got increased and Congress party itself wanted to get its benefits and was successful in 1984 because of the death of the Indira Gandhi. In this whole movement, Ram had been used as a symbol of India and Hinduism. It is also a reality in the case of

North India (Varshney, 1993) as well as entire India where Ram is part of the political imagination of India (Pollock, 1993). Ram had become famous because of the major importance of Ramayana in India. There are various forms of Ramayana and it was also a cause of tussle for the Hindu nationalist. Ramayana was in the Sanskrit language, and it was tough to read as Sanskrit was not the language of masses. Ramayana reached to common people in its Awadhi translation by Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas. Ramcharitmanas can usually be observed in the forms of *Katha* and *Kirtan* in North India. The devotion of people can also be observed in the Ramlila plays in North India. It is celebrated in the recollections of victory of Rama over Ravana which is interpreted as the victory of truth over evil.

The image of Ram as *Purushotam* had been essentialized on the line of masculinity. Ram was the sole representative of masculinity who launched battle Ramavana to save the *Satitva* (*chastity*) of his wife (Van Der Veer, 1994). This idea of *Satitva* (*chastity*) is also understood as a form of Jouhar, which is very popular in Rajasthan. It is directly linked with the demonization of Muslims. According to Rajasthani folklore (whose history is disputed), during the attacks of Muslim rulers on Rajput princes, the Rajput women were expected to commit *jauhar*, an act of self-immolation to save their *Satitva* (chastity). It shows that Ram was always present in symbolic forms in the lives of North Indians. It only needed mobilisation through the deployment of these symbols. Collecting bricks and grants were the agenda to make people a sense as they were participating indirectly in the movement. VHP also argued that Ram Janmabhoomi is not the movement to collect bricks and mortar, but of political rejuvenation of Hindu community who has slept. It converted the symbolism of the battle between Rama and Ravana as one between Hindus and Muslims. The VHP actively exhibited the identity of Muslims as outsiders while veiling their Indian identity. The temples of North India are full of Ram's idol in a humble, tolerant, kind and compassionate, but here he had been projected as Ram had been locked in the jail of Muslims and was calling for the help (Van Der Veer, 1987). Here Ram had also been depicted as using his *Dhanush*, which symbolises him as Krodith Ram (Datta, 1993: 50).

The mobilisation strategy of VHP was a true picture of modern and traditional viewpoint. Advani used a Toyota car which was completely decorated as a Rath. Somnath and Ayodhya had been chosen as starting and ending point of the yatra.

One (Somnath) had already been successful, and it was presented as a model for the Ayodhya.

## **2.8. Ayodhya and the History of Hindus: The construction of Hindu Self**

Hindu nationalist discourse has taken Ayodhya, as a part of its historical imagery. This section will depict that how the Hindu construction of past is an effort to reassert the Hindu masculine 'self' which was supposedly enslaved by the Muslim rulers.

The rebuilding of the temple in Ayodhya is not the construction of temple only. Its religious significance is one dimension, but it also has its importance in the national history. The Hindu nationalist organizations have demanded control over certain sites located in important centres of pilgrimage such as- Ayodhya, Mathura, Kashi, etc. These sites, according to Hindu nationalist narrative, were annexed and converted into Muslim religious sites during the medieval period. The past glory of the Aryan nation was declined due to the Muslim invasion..

The construction of identity as believer and non-believer or other creates the boundary between citizens around religious lines. In case of Hindu nationalism,

It identifies the nation with the community of believer, sacred space with the national territory and the sacred history with national history (Van Der Veer, 1994: 144).

Ayodhya and Somnath are the two major example of the efforts of Hindu nationalists to improve the past<sup>16</sup>. These sacred sites “*are not only contested as markers of space but also as a marker of time. They are the physical evidence of the perennial existence of the religious community and, by nationalist extension, of the nation* (Van Der Veer, 1992:87).” It took support from the archaeological sciences which are used to make it more authentic. Peter Van Der Veer explanation becomes more important as VHP went on to argue:

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<sup>16</sup> There are two possible ways to improve the past. One is to rewrite the past which Eric Hobsbawm highlights as inventing tradition. The invention of tradition is a modern phenomenon. Hindu nationalists assert that these sites are sacred sites of Hindu religion which had been demolished by Muslim invaders. Muslim invaders erased the historical sites which were the evidence of existence of community. They highlight the glory of these sacred sites which was destroyed by the Muslim invaders. In its claim of improving the past, Hindu nationalists glorify the Hindu past, on the other hand, they also demand to Muslim community for returning, some of the sacred sites to Hindu community.

Muslim should understand what kind of message they are sending by insisting on continuing the occupation of our sacred places, an occupation started by fanatics and mass-murders like Babar and Aurangzeb. We don't like to think our Muslim compatriots as heirs and followers of such invaders and tyrants. It is up to them to make a gesture that will signify a formal break with this painful past.<sup>17</sup>

VHP's desire to torn the Muslim chapters from the Indian history is a utopia in the sense that it doesn't realise the culture of Hindu-Muslim accord in India where Hindus and Muslims shares culture as well as historical memory. Although history cannot be deleted, but memories can be constructed and circulated. The nationalist historical writings asserted the Hindu past while keeping alive the memory of the destruction of the Somnath. The Lord Shiva temple in Somnath is symbolically linked with Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Somnath is relevant because it was one of the successful movement of Hindu nationalists to construct the temple which was demolished by Mahmud Ghazni. The success of Somnath worked as an inspiration for the Hindu nationalists which had been easily reflected in the *Rathyatra* of Advani, which had been started from Somnath. VHP also cites the success story of the Somnath temple. It argues that Ram Janmabhoomi movement is the movement of the resurgence of the 'Collective Conscience of the Hindu ethos'<sup>18</sup>.

K.M. Munshi writes:

An ancient race subconsciously felt that it was Somnath which connected it with the past and the present; it was the eternal symbols of its faith in itself and its future. An often as the shrine was destroyed, the urge to restore it sprang up more vividly in the heart....That is why for a thousand years Mahmud's destruction of the shrine has been burnet into the Collective Sub-conscious of the race as an unforgettable national disaster ( cited in Van Der Veer,1992: 91).

“Collective Sub-Consciousness<sup>19</sup>” of Hindus that seems happier in the Munshi narrative is similar to the VHP's description of Ram Janmabhoomi movement.

Munshi remarked:

The temple of Somnath was not an ancient monument; it lived in the sentiment of the whole nation, and its reconstruction was a national pledge (Van Der Veer, 1992: 91).

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<sup>17</sup><http://vhp.org/faq/faqs/faq-ramjanmabhoomi/>

<sup>18</sup><http://vhp.org/faq/faqs/faq-ramjanmabhoomi/>

<sup>19</sup> Peter Van Der Veer (1992: 92) has also discussed how the temple construction in Somnath is significant in the formation of collective consciousness of Hindus. K. M. Munshi also discusses its relevance during the temple construction at Somnath. While drawing the reference from Somnath, to build the similar temple in Ayodhya, VHP also claim its importance for making the Hindus conscious about their past and historical existence.

In another statement, VHP cites Munshi's statement which was illustrates as:

The Hindu sentiment regarding this temple is both strong and widespread. In the present conditions, it is unlikely that that sentiment will be satisfied by mere restoration of the temple or by prolonging its life. The restoration of the idol would be a point of honour and sentiment with the Hindu public <sup>20</sup>(Veer, 1992: 91).

The continuation of Somnath story in textbook established the Hindu feeling of victimisation in medieval era, However the demolition of temple in Ayodhya, is still not the part of textbooks (Pandey,1996) The controlled history writing and the other modes of making the memories strong, like, news media, television is channelized in the same way. The language and medium of writing have played a long impacting role in such construction of historical consciousness. He notes:

The recent history of Ayodhya-which may also be described as the Hindu history of India-is not about the construction of Ram Janmbhumi temple. It is about its destruction, to that extent,it is a history, not of the temple, but of the mosque built upon its ruins-not of the greatness of 'the Hindu', but of the evilness of 'the Muslim' (Pandey,1996: 152).

It gives a clear sense that the Somnath, Ayodhya and the construction of past are part of the similar project. It is important to look the VHP's idea of correcting the past, specifically medieval past of India. In the case of medieval past, VHP argues to initiate the struggle, but this struggle would be different to freedom struggle against colonial empire. VHP argues that the norm of medieval barbarism must be corrected for the future generations to tell them that they are not coward and women like who had been "*raped, conquered and enslaved by the Muslim first and the British later*"( Van Der Veer, 1994: 97).

VHP claims that its agenda of correcting the past would be different from the Indian struggle of Independence from colonial rule. It would be based on erasing the memories, symbols and monuments of such rule. This according to VHP, would help to re-establish the glorious Hindu past. It cites the example of Spain where Christianity was re-established by ending the rule of Moors. Christophe Jaffrelot (1993) has argued that the base of Hindu Nationalism in India is Brahminical ideology which came in dialectics with European modernity. This ideology is based on the sloganeering of 'nation's self-esteem' (Jaffrelot, 1993: 12) to reinterpret the tradition in favour of the dominant Brahminical ideology. North India is of

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<sup>20</sup> <http://vhp.org/faq/faqs/faq-ramjanmabhoomi/>

historical relevance where the organizations like, Arya Samaj had been developed with the ambition of preserving the brahminical ideology. Dayanand advocated adoption of the best values of the west and incorporating it in their day to day life, along with maintaining the Varna hierarchy of traditional Indian society. Religious reconversion was the method adopted by the Arya Samaj on the lines of Christian missionary. The thoughts of Vivekananda are in the same line. He admired the self-esteem and willpower of Europeans to rule the world (Paranjape, 2015). The VHP s cited one of e Vivekananda's statements:

Your forefather underwent everything boldly, even death itself, but preserved their religion. Temples after the temple was broken down by the foreign conqueror, but no sooner had the wave passed than the spire of the temple rose up again. Some of these temples of Southern India, and those like South of Gujarat, will teach you volumes of wisdom, will give you a keener insight into the history of the race than any amounts of books. Mark how these temples bear the mark of a hundred attacks and a hundred regenerations, continually destroyed and continually spiring up out of the ruins, rejuvenated and strong as ever! That is the national mind that is the national life-current. Follow it and it leads to glory, give it up and you die; death will be the only result, annihilate the only effect, the moment you step beyond the life current<sup>21</sup>.

The process of nationalisation of Hindu religion and the Hinduisation of the nation are parallel processes in Indian history. (Pandey, 1996). *Garv se Kaho Hum Hindu hai* (say it with pride that we are Hindus) and the rhetoric of *Akhand Bharat* (Gupta & Sharma, 1990) was an effort of Hindutva to homogenise the Hindu identity by absorbing caste and class cleavages within religious identity (Bhattacharya, 1991). This imagined Hindu homogeneity was challenged by the report of the Mandal commission which highlighted the deep-rooted caste-based inequality in Indian society. The demands to end the upper caste monopoly in public sector jobs was on the rise (Omvedt, 1990). Hindutva made its full effort to fill those gaps among different assertive castes in the name of common identity. Charu Gupta and Mukul Sharma notes:

The issue of 'Ramjanmabhoomi' again gave an opportunity to camouflage these contradictions. The figure of Ram produced a master belief in a common symbolic hero who conjured up the image of the heroic and embattled community (Gupta & Sharma, 1990: 3).

## **2.9. Ram Janmabhoomi Movement and Print Media**

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<sup>21</sup><http://vhp.org/faq/faqs/faq-ramjanmabhoomi/>

The selection of the content, its description are very important ways to understand the news and its production. The decision of front page news and the inside news is decided by the entire production house which is generally decided as per the reaction of the readers. It is the headlines, front page, Cartoon section, and the highlighted news which are prominently read by the readers (Gupta & Sharma, 1993). Dainik Jagran gave most of the news of communal conflict and Ram Janmabhoomi movement during 1989 to 1993 in colour brackets of pink and green colours which could preferably attract the readers. During the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, some of the newspapers involved in homogenising the news content. Charu Gupta and Mukul Sharma (1993, 1993) note that during the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, the BJP and RSS were the major highlights of the news. The Indian Express published 15 news items on BJP and RSS only on 13 Dec 1992 along with some very provocative pictures. Engineer(1991, 1995), Rajagopal (2009), Ninan (2009), Ramaseshan (1990), Jeffrey (2003), Gupta & Sharma (1996, 1996) Sikand (1994) and Nandy (2005) have noted the communalisation of press especially Hindi press during the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Press Trust of India also slammed four of the newspapers for misreporting and provoking the communal sentiments. The messages and events of communal harmony had been completely swept out or taken in a very casual manner whereas the news of communal conflicts had been preferred.

The biases and unrepresentativeness of public sphere can be noticed by the fact that the newspapers like The Indian Express, Jansatta, Navbharat Times, *Dainik Jagran (Kanpur edition)* (*emphasis mine*) reported the claim of a group of archaeologist for the existence of temple at Ram Janmabhoomi site, it was favourably reported on the first page with photographs whereas the challenge to the same claim by a group of another historian, had been placed inside pages (Gupta & Sharma. 1993). The newspapers tried to show that the Ram Janmabhoomi issue is the construction of secular intellectuals who had stood against the rights of the Hindus. The cartoon section of the Navbharat Times made a cartoon which mocked the secular voices and argued:

Mandir Murdabad, Masjid Zindabad (Gupta & Sharma, 1993: 25).



The news was not only reported but the pseudo news had also been constructed to construct the identity. It was consciously created, planted and circulated. In the similar construction Navabharat Times reported:

Karsevako ke vesh mein Pakistani guptachar sewa ke agent bhi Ayodhya pahuche hain (Gupta & Sharma, 1993: 27).

(Disguised as karsevaks, agents of Pakistani secret service have also reached Ayodhya.)

The naming of ISI or Pakistan in the newspapers was usually an effort to mark out the nationalists and the anti-nationals. The name of Pakistan is frequently deployed as a metaphor to question the loyalty of Muslims in India. While constructing the stereotyped identity, the newspaper was aware of this fact that most of their readers come from the majority Hindu community, and Muslims are not their appealing audience. Charu Gupta noted that the construction of pseudo-event, re-established the stereotype prevalent in our society like *Pakistani agent, foreign hand, armed gangs of minorities* (Gupta & Sharma, 1993: 29). The identity of the Hindus had been attached to the Sangh's idea of Hindutva and the ban on RSS had been depicted as it is the representative of all Hindus. In the similar news item, the ban on two Muslim organisations had also been reported with the addition of suspicion of growth of armed gangs from foreign help (Gupta & Sharma, 1993: 27-28).

The news reportings were very much influenced by the religious belief of the majority, and the issue of destruction had been pictured in a religious way as if it was the work of some deeply religious people who were full of passion (Nandy 2005, Gupta & Sharma 1993). The coverage of Rath yatra by *Jansatta* is the best the example, which reported:

Advani ki Rath ka yaha ki Janta ne yaha palak Pawade Bichakar Jabardast swagat kia... Diwali ka alam tha (Gupta & Sharma, 1990).<sup>22</sup>

(The people gave a tremendous welcome to Advani's rath. The atmosphere was of Diwali.)

There were some similarities in the news coverage of some of the newspaper on 31 October 1990 when the first attack on Babri mosque took place. The headlines of the major newspaper produced the news which could help the Hindu nationalists.

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<sup>22</sup>Jansatta, 12 October 1990, p. 10.

Hindustan, of that day<sup>23</sup> reported that 11 karsevaks died whereas the newspapers didn't discern the differences between karsevaks and VHP-RSS and BJP activists. As a part of their strategy, VHP, RSS and BJP decided the same day for the karseva, when parikrama usually takes place. Ragubir Sahay, who is a noted journalist and poet, has analysed the language of news in Hindi press. He argues that the language of the demolition of Ram temple in Ayodhya is very destructive. The poetic style of the news was not only inhumane but also established the biases of a journalist (discussed in Gupta & Sharma, 1990). In some of the areas, like Aligarh and Kanpur, the distribution of national newspaper had been restricted. Here local press worked as the mouthpiece of violent Hindutva. It is a matter of concern that most of the studies concentrated on national newspapers which shows the limitations of available research (Jeffrey, 2003). It also sets the requisite to study the local press, a task that the present work undertakes.

Rajagopal (2009) notes that the Hindi press used its cultural location to mobilise the Hindu masses. This mobilisation was supported by other institutions as well. It was for the first time, when all the Hindus were reading the same kind of pamphlets, news and slogans. The contrary views had either been restricted from the reach or marginalised consciously. The telecast of Ramayana also added a new charm to the entire movement by showing the strong impact of visuals on public memory (Gupta & Sharma, 1990). It would be unjust to say that it was the Ram Janmabhoomi movement only when the Hindi press was involved in the communalisation, it must be evaluated in the holistic term, where the changes in the structure of the press was also taking place. The 'corporatisation of the press' as well as development of stringers as news provider also affected the content of the news (Ninan 2009, Gupta & Sharma, 1990, 1996). The passionate Hindutva was the actual part of the social and cultural milieu of some of the noted journalists who understood Hindu religion as truly national, secular and tolerant religion (Gupta & Sharma, 1990: 6-7). Dainik Jagran in his coverage of press conference of Atal Bihari Bajpai compared the situation of Ayodhya and Somnath and appealed that what is possible in Somnath, is also possible in Ayodhya<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Hindustan, 31 October 1990, P. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Based on my field work.

## **2.10. Conclusion**

In this chapter, the effort was made to provide an overview of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and the construction of the 'self' and the 'other' during this movement. Ram Janmabhoomi movement was a Hindu nationalist mobilisation aimed at acquiring state power. This chapter has provided some of the important historical narratives, differences within historians as well as their contestation with local traditions. The homogenisation process as a necessity of modern nationalism (Gellner, 1981) is also the end goal of Hindu nationalism which was sought to be achieved with the aid of different institutions. Subsequent chapters elaborate how the public sphere in general and Hindi press, in particular, took the issue of Ram Janmabhoomi movement and constructed an imagined Hindu self, based on the construction of Muslim as the '*other*.'

## **Chapter -3**

### **Muslim Identity in the Hindi Public Sphere**

This Chapter shall discuss the construction of Muslim identity in Hindi public sphere, will first trace the emergence of Hindi public sphere in North India and its nature. It will also emphasize on the concept of Public sphere, proposed by Habermas. This chapter will also seek to address the changes in Hindi press with the entry of market capitalism. The later discussion will be confined to the early 1990s which is a significant period regarding the case that I have taken for the study. I have selected. This chapter would try to demonstrate how North Indian public sphere, developed in colonial period, and continued in the postcolonial period and how it helped to establish the Muslim identity. Hindi Press carried out the construction of community identity during the colonial era and followed the similar path in postcolonial India. Ram Janmabhoomi movement was the part of the same process.

#### **3.1. The Conception of Public Sphere**

The concept of Public Sphere has been coined by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas. The public sphere is considered as a place which would be open to all to participate and make a public opinion on the issue of public importance. In the feudal state, it was the king who was considered public and his decisions were bound to public. The court of King was the place of discussion for those affairs which these people thought of importance. The court of the king was not only hierarchized but was in the control of the King. The development of the early capitalist economy (Habermas, 1991: 10) and the private realm of these bourgeois family paved the way for the development of the public of private people who first codified the codes and conduct for the discussion (Orsini, 2011). This private sphere was highly individual and confined to the some of those capitalists who had earlier controlled the economy. The growth of the economy demarcated public and private realms for the first time. The private sphere was considered as different to the public realm in the sense that it was not under state authority. Habermas has noted that usually public sphere is considered as opposed to the state authorities, but it depends

on the condition and the issue of discussion. The changes in this private realm happened in the later period of the growth of literacy and socio-economic and political changes. The development of capitalist economy provided greater space for democratic voices (Orsini, 2011) to express public concern in a limited sense. The previous situation had started to change with the non-bourgeois access to the public sphere. Interestingly, social questions began to be included in the debates through the emergence of mass movement and public demonstrations. The further development of public sphere in the welfare state economy gave it a truly public character where state and society came closer. But the nature of print media became more manipulative as the big dailies were commercialized. Once again, its character included the same private interests, but now it had been reached at a mass level with greater influence. Public sphere holds the power to influence the political action. One of the major features of the public sphere is its reach and access to the public. It is the freedom of discussion, debate, refutation, and rejection of thoughts which gives a proper shape to the public sphere and decides its success. Ideally, the public sphere is imagined as space which is free from hierarchy and influence.

Reason is considered the basis of discussion in the public sphere. The public sphere was not confined to the few topics of interest as per its earlier characteristics, but it expanded its domain to cover the issues of state authority also. It demanded the public scrutiny of the state affairs. For the sake of public, it forced the state to publicize the information for the detailed analysis among the public. Habermas (1991) has stressed the importance of public recognition for the activities in the purview of the public sphere. In the absence of such recognition, it would not be public in its true sense and would be limited to some of the dominant persons. Habermas outlines the Public Sphere as:

By the 'public sphere' we mean, first of all, a realm of our social life which something is approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body. They then behave neither business nor professional people transcending private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy. Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion-that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and freedom to express and publish their opinions-about matters of general interest. In a large public body, this kind of communication requires specific means of

transmitting information and influencing those who receive it (Cited in Orsini, 2011:11).

The detailed description of public sphere also points out towards some of its fundamental flaws. The Habermasian public sphere seems imaginative in the sense that it had denied the existing power structure. The emergence of the private realm of public itself is the marker of divisive and exclusive nature of the public sphere. Neither does Habermas examine the framing of topics and its manipulation while setting it for the agenda of discussion, nor does it take into account the exclusion of marginalised sections. In that way, public sphere works under the aegis of the dominant public. The public sphere is the space apart from the state but still state control on these spaces cannot be undermined. The regulation to control these platforms of public discussion influences its freedom of expression.

Along with such issues, there is also the issue of language, which is a significant hurdle in the expression of thoughts and arguments. Habermas has also indicated towards the refederalization (Habermas, 1991: 194-195) of the public sphere by capitalist intervention. The control of capitalism has set out an agenda as well as it has the power to channelize the argument by not giving proper voice to the significance subjects. Still, public sphere as a concept is far more important than its earlier period, even of its idealisation. It persuades for making a more inclusive and objective debate on subjective concerns.

Nancy Fraser (1990) has argued that Habermas's conception of the public sphere is confined to the bourgeois liberal public sphere. There are other public spheres as well which have been emerged from the conflict of views within the bourgeois public sphere. Fraser's point of view intends towards the question of women's participation in the public sphere where she has questioned the class and gender-biased nature of public sphere. Fraser argues that public sphere has always been constituted by the conflict of other publics.

Civil society is one another important part of the public sphere of the private realm. Civil society, as opposed to the state, raised the issues of public concern. Eisenstadt (2006) notes the role of civil society in the public sphere as it ensures the participation of private people in the political process of the state. Habermas (1991) also gives importance to the civil society which guarantees universal participation. The development of modern state made civil society more inevitable. Apart from

the Habermas conception of universal access, public sphere remained confined to serve the interest of bourgeois class who were determined to regulate the civil society.

### **3.2. Construction of Community Identity and Public Sphere**

Benedict Anderson (2006: 9-47) in his path-breaking work *'Imagined Community'* has established the relation between the growth of print-capitalism and the construction of imagined identity. For Anderson, Nation is a political construction, and it is imagined because most of its members are unknown to each other. In spite of that, they share the common idea of nation and national consciousness. The construction of nation happens on the lines of communities which creates brotherhood and the zeal for the dying for the same cause. The limitation of boundary or we can say the territory of nation-state also works here as an important part. It is impossible to imagine a nation-state beyond the limits of a particular boundary. These limitations are also imposed by the specified characteristics of the sovereign nations which help to develop the relationship on the grounds of equality. The development of press at mass scale from the Gutenberg technology to the modern technology of mass production of the book created a homogenous identity by some similarities. Anderson gives more importance to the newspaper, as it has certain kind of fix traits which confirm its daily consumption in a fixed period. The nature of this fixity gives it a form of ceremony or we can say daily ritual. Communitarian identity becomes stronger when the reader observes his/her neighbours, shopkeepers, as well as other individuals, are consuming the same kind of news. Print capitalism played the utmost role in giving a sense of language as a powerful tool to develop the community feeling. The vernacular thrust of capitalism persuaded the illiterates also on the religious and political lines to read. It gave birth to the homogenous national identity and national consciousness. The vernacularization of mass media in India during the 1990s supports the Anderson thesis. Robin Jeffrey (2003) in his study of print capitalism in India argues that press has played a vital role in the everyday construction of nation and nationalism. At the same time, Robin Jeffrey (2003) has questioned Anderson thesis on print-capitalism. He questions whether print was responsible for the growth and development of nationalism? He further argues that if it is so, why could nationalism not emerge with the invention of Gutenberg Galaxy in 16<sup>th</sup> century and

why could nationalism emerge only in 18<sup>th</sup> century. He answers that print-capitalism did not serve the emergence of nationalism. Print has only carried out the idea of nationalism which emerged due to many reasons in modern times (Jeffrey, 2003).

Habermas (1991) has also given the same importance to the press as part of the public sphere. The imaginary universal participation of the citizens of the nation validates Anderson's argument. If Anderson's print capitalism serves as the major factor behind the emergence of nationalism, then it is the Habermas' conception of public sphere that conceptualises the public participation for the same cause. Anderson and Habermas, both are similar in the context of participation of common masses in the public sphere. It is the literate and rich masses which has presented their worldview to be accepted as the view of entire community and nation (Neyazi, 2014). The illiterate masses, of early Europe and some decades back, in other parts of the world, had a peripheral place in the constructed imagined community and the public sphere.

Partha Chatterjee (2002) in his '*Whose Imagined Community*' dealt with the question of third world nationalism. Partha Chatterjee argues that Anderson has not addressed the development of nationalism in the third world countries. It was the official nationalism, of the colonial regime which imagined the community identity on the behalf of the colonized masses. By doing so, it used the same European category and imagination in an entirely different setup. It not only denied the local context but tried to erase the memories of the colonized countries. The more detailed emphasis would be given to his thought with possible criticism in the next section while discussing the emergence of Public sphere as well as press in particular.

### **3.3. Development of Public sphere in India**

The public sphere in India came to emerge in its true form only in British period. It was the British period during which the representative form of politics based on different community identities gained significance. It led to the contestation as well as the emergence of two distinct publics which had been supported by the colonial rule. Beyond the colonial intrusion, Indian public sphere had been developed with freedom struggle. The early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the period of decline



of the court culture. This court culture was nowhere different from the early public sphere of Europe. It was highly feudal in its character (Hasan, 2005). It was the market, mosque, temples and some other places where the public had been allowed to perform and present its art and culture. In that way, Indian public sphere existed in a flawed way.

Amir Ali (2001) has discussed the emergence of the public and private sphere in India. The public sphere in India was controlled and dominated by the colonial rule as they had direct control over the state in India. Not only did they introduce different laws and codes regarding land, marriage and others, but also encroached in the private realm of the two communities. This distinction was made by participation in the public ceremonies which established Hindu and Muslim as two distinct communities.

Thomas Bloom Hansen (1999) has discussed the political development in India from the colonial times till the era of globalisation in India which he marks as the rise of 'saffron wave' in Indian democracy. Hansen gives the ultimate priority to the debate and discussion which plays a major role in the formation of the public sphere. Switching over to the Indian public sphere, Hansen depicts the layers of the development of colonial governmentality. The colonial governmentality gives a wonderful picture of direct and indirect control of colonial rulers on the public sphere. The colonial rule had been expanded from the early urban centres of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. Hansen argues that colonial rule had been organized around '*double discourse*' (Hansen, 1999: 32). On the one hand, there was the early middle class who had a stake in the government services, and they were working as a true servant of British rulers. The early middle class also includes all those zamindars, literate elites and the leaders of religious communities. On the other hand, there was a large population of peasants, artists and ordinary people who were considered as irrational and traditional in the eyes of the emerging middle class and colonial rulers. This middle class was the support system of the colonial rule. Hansen envisaged further:

It was also these groups that were accorded certain rights of political representation and right to organize a diverse range of cultural and civil associations and vernacular public spheres that developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Hansen, 1999: 32).

It directs towards the development of same bourgeois middle-class public sphere which emerged in a very private manner in Europe to serve their interests. In India, the same happened within the framework of new administrative and religious categories. The introduction of community right and their representation based on their numerical situation benefited the majority community, but it established a majority and minority division.

British Empire codified the rules and codes of the communities by the interpretation of the religious texts of both Hindus and Muslims. It also helped them to develop a distinct law for both the communities. The interpretation of religious texts, as per the needs of orientalism, helped to construct the community identity. The orientalist discourse created a category of native and side-lined the '*others*' by their migration and their natural belongingness to the Indian land. Richard King (2008) has clarified that the selection of text for the oriental interpretation was made by the Brahmins, and their rules and laws had been accepted as the law of the entire community. King maintains that it was the Brahmins who had been benefitted most by this interpretation (King, 2008). The less number of population of Brahmins got an expanded demographic base.

This codification of Hindu as unified category helped British government to codify the other communities as different as well as 'other' in India. This otherisation has been given an institutional character by writing histories on the same lines. The construction of other had been later channelized in the public sphere which became a popular slogan for the Hindu right wing to adopt the Indian lifestyle vis-a-vis Hindu lifestyle to claim their Indian identity. The new administrative system affected the relation of Hindus and Muslim directly in North India. Both the communities were already in a tussle for power. The interference of the British Empire ended the pre-existing Mughal rule from India. The conflict over power had been reached in the public spaces. The concept of public sphere comes with the new additional charm of caste, class and religion. Religion had already been disappeared from the European public sphere after the coming of enlightenment.

Colonial rule had left the private spheres free for the communities but, indirectly, they entered into that space also. They intervened in the community life by changing some of the laws for the communities. Freitag (1989) and Pandey (2012) argue that

the colonial rulers had observed the Holi and Muharram like festivals of specific communities. It is true that there was violence in these festivals, but both of the communities participate in each other's festivals. Freitag (1989) has extended her argument by the example of Benares press about the Muslim festival Muharram. The *Bharat Jivan* newspaper of Hindi language observed:

Mohurram passed off without disturbance.... When it is Hindu who mostly celebrate this festival, what fear can there be? (Freitag, 1989: 27, supra note, 25).

Freitag (1989) also notes that political and economic reasons were also responsible for the changes in the relation of communities. Rajputs had started asserting their status in the public spaces after the decline of their power in Benares. The violence on the religious lines was the common expression for the assertion. The differences of religion had been utilized to gain the favour of the community. Muslim became the sole target of Rajputs in their violent expression of anger to get status in the community. Freitag (1989) also indicates over the use of religious idioms for the mobilization of communities. But, the social and cultural fabric of communities came in tension due to the state intervention in these community spaces (Freitag, 1989: 51-52).

Thomas Bloom Hansen (1999) also argues:

The North Indian example demonstrates lucidly how the imposition of a colonial governmentality provided a new matrix of intelligibility through which native subjects could come to know themselves as communities, and how this new matrix displaced older hierarchies and produced a social imaginary structured by the consolidated principle equal- communities in competition (Hansen, 1999: 36).

Colonialism created a sense of representation among communities to draw the boundary of 'fuzzy communities' (Kaviraj, 2010:187-194). It constructed a consciousness among communities as the representation of community is only possible by the community itself. Paul Brass (1974) has argued that British followed the idea of '*Pluralism on the basis of equality*' (Brass, 1974: 42) while providing them representation. The different interests of the community paved the way for making a unified All India Hindu and All India Muslim Association which could fight for the interest of the community (Pandey, 2012). These development of colonial government made the size of population inevitable and it had become a marker of identification of the communities, deeply rooted in their common sense

(Hansen, 1999). It gave birth to the majority and minority politics in colonial India where the Hindus had been benefitted because of their large population.

The emergence of a unified and collective identity of the community eroded the differences within community itself. The participation of the backward castes in the riots is the example of this which had been elaborated by Pandey (2012) and Jaffrelot (2003). It was the idea of Sanskritization which persuaded these communities to claim the higher status in the caste structure.

Pandey (2012) explains that construction of communalism took place as a part of the colonial project. The first time, it was the emergence of state in modern sense which detached religion and politics from each other. Pandey (2012) argues that as like the factionalism and tribalism in other colonies, it was the communalism that had been constructed in India. The subjected people had not been subjected only regarding empire, but also in the form of their representation which was decided by the colonial rule. The imagination of colonial empire identified some cities like Benares and Aligarh for Hindus and Muslim respectively. Pandey's (2012) idea is very deliberative as well as important to understand the use of colonial category in postcolonial India in different forms of the public sphere. Dipankar Gupta (Cited in Hansen, 1999) , in his review of the Pandey's (2012) '*Construction of Communalism in North India*', has refuted Pandey's idea that communalism is a colonial construct. According to Gupta, the differences between communities were clear in pre-colonial period in North India, and this claim of harmonious relation can't be entertained because there was a contestation for power among both the communities. He maintains that boundaries between community existed at supralocal levels, but it was the colonial regime when these communities started their claim in the public arena (Hansen, 1999:240, supra note 13). British rule had made the assertion of communities easy and gave it a fixed form by introducing the modern representative politics. The construction of terminology by codifying and giving it a form of Gazetteer is only a single way of constructing the identity of Hindu and Muslim. There may be other ways which guaranteed the grasp of the colonial category by the colonizers. Pandey (2012) had explained that during the struggle for independence, the leaders of the communities appealed to end the problem of communalism, as it was assumed the biggest threat to the freedom movement. The use of the same categorisation and appeal to them in the public

sphere through the press and other forms, established this categorisation in the colonisers mind (Pandey, 2012). Pandey has not taken into account the causes of appropriating the same categorisation. He failed to explain any attempt of the leaders to oppose of the colonial categorisation. In my understanding, it was the interest of the communities and their leaders itself who wanted to remain on the same argument as it was the way to assure the representation of emerging middle class of both the communities. We also see the colonial categorisation gave a new energy and demographic strength to these communities. Gupta's argument has also been supported by Hansen (1999) and Van Der Veer (1994). Van Der Veer (1994) accepts that the relationship of communities had been changed by the intervention of Colonial rulers, but it is not the fact that the Hindu- Muslim strife was a colonial construction (Van Der Veer, 1994).

The changes in relationship have also been demonstrated in the public sphere. Freitag (1989), while comparing the European and Indian public sphere argues that both of the public spheres had been developed on the different roots. There are certain similarities, but its basic theme were drawn from the community itself when it transmitted in Indian life. Freitag observed:

Despite superficial similarities that suggested that the European models of 'the nation' and its public sphere could be borrowed directly, new substantive differences prevented an easy translation to British India (Freitag, 1989:192).

Ali (2000) argues that due to these differences, public sphere in India had not been developed around the European model of individual and state, but on the established model of the community. This tendency was very prevalent in North India. It was the religious identity which dominated in the Indian model of the public sphere, based on the community identity. It paved the way for the emergence of communalism as an alternative to nationalism (Freitag, 1989: 196). Freitag said:

Anti-imperial agitators unwittingly created an environment whose reference points were drawn not from the European model but definitions of "community" established in North India in the late nineteenth century. As we have seen, for a variety of rhetorical and symbolic reasons most of these North Indian definitions revolved around religious identity. As a consequence, politicized religious identity- that is, communalism-emerged as an equivalent, and viable alternative to nationalism (Freitag, 1989:196).

Freitag (1989) has also noticed that communities had been mobilized around the symbols of religion in the public sphere which also exemplifies the aggressive

situation of Hindus. In contrast to Hindus, Muslims were in a defensive position. She wrote:

Hindu embraced an optimistic, expansive rhetoric that made little distinction between the Hindu and nationalist symbols... In contrast, the Muslims developed a much more defensive posture,...they had neither the numbers nor the influence for optimistic symbolism (Freitag, 1989:218).

The observation of Freitag (1989) has a very deep rooted implication in the colonial as well as post-colonial Indian public sphere where Hindu became the replica of the nation. In a similar vein, Chatterjee (2002) has argued that it is understood that Indian model of the nation is based on the European model. It assumes that the idea of the nation had flourished in the political sphere. In contrast, Chatterjee (2002) argues that in India, the situation was not the same. Nationalism in India created its domain of sacredness where the political battle of anti-imperialism had been launched. Chatterjee (2002) has divided these two domains into spiritual and material domains which he also refers to inner and outer domains respectively. The materiality which consists of economy and science and technology had been dominated by the West, and it had been replicated in the public domain. In contrast to the outer domain, the inner domain of the spirituality was given prominence in India which was fundamental in shaping the cultural identity. Chatterjee (2002) argues that the spiritual domain of the culture had always been a sovereign and unaffected, pure domain which had never been allowed for the colonizers to intervene. Chatterjee (2002) divides the two phases of social reform in India. First was the phase of those reforms which had been influenced by the colonial power with the urge of reform in the traditional state structure and customs. In the later phase, the changes in the state structure had been continued, but there was a strong resistance to any effort of change in the domain of '*national culture*'. It was the later phase (second stage) which was the period of nationalism. The idea of an inner spiritual domain of nationalism had been expanded in the domain of language, education, and family (Chatterjee, 2002). Tanweer Fazal (2015) has noted that Chatterjee's argument of forging a national identity based on spirituality purportedly the '*ancient Indian cultural tradition*' which became the basis of the reconstruction of Hindu identity in inner domain (Fazal, 2015: 75). Fazal argues that Chatterjee ignored the layer of the development of private, traditional and spiritual in Indian context (Fazal, 2015:76).

The categorisation of the inner and outer domain of culture contradicts all the developments in the Indian society from ancient till the modern period. These changes had also been reflected in the social, political, cultural and spiritual realm. The development of Sufism is the best example of that which is commended by Hindus as well as Muslims. Chatterjee (2002) has generalised the growth of nationalism in Bengal with the other part of the nation. The development of nationalism in North India was quite different than its development in Bengal. His reference to language in the context of Bengal is important to elucidate the argument while applying it in North India. The two communities of Hindu and Muslim had been different in their linguistic identities, and it has been demonstrated apparently in North India. The question of national freedom helped these communities to sort out the differences (Ali, 2000), but still, the inner and the private sphere of the community had been a divided on the issue of language. Apart from the Bengali elite consciousness of making language a part of a cultural project to construct the cultural identity and sense of belonging, North India had the two major languages, one was Hindi, and the other was Urdu. The differentiation had been reached at such a level where the religious identities had been attached to a linguistic identity.

Gail Omvedt (discussed in Fazal, 2014:76) has raised her concern on the nature of the construction of nation in India. She argued that the nation in India had not been constructed on the lines of anti-imperial agitations only, but caste hierarchies and family relations had also played a major role in this construction (Fazal, 2014: 76). Hansen (1999) also argued:

This construction of nation as residing in an “inner” cultural domain, I argue, had to do first and foremost with the structure of domination—the structure of their “othering” —and with the structure of knowledge through which the dominated people came to know themselves as cultures—whether through orientalist celebrations of spirituality and differences, or as invention of Slavic spiritual mysticism, or of a Celtic golden age in Ireland—rather than through any intrinsic colonial difference ( Hansen, 1999: 43).

The conception of ‘inner domain’, linked with ‘ancient Indian culture’ is the significant part of the concept of nationalism. Smith (2000) and Hobsbawm (2000) have understood the modern nationalism in the similar pattern. Smith (2005) has highlighted the construction of ‘Golden Age,’ as one of the major parts of the

discourse of nationalism. It attempts to glorify the past to advance their claim of natural authority. Hobsbawm (2000) has also comprehended that the invention of tradition is a modern phenomenon which attempts to link the present with historical past to retrieve the claim of majority community.

### **3.4. Hindi Public Sphere: It's Peculiarities**

Orsini (2011, 11-16) has discussed the features of Hindi public sphere. She calls it the normative attitude of Hindi public sphere which is based on the assumption of one and only position. The differences of opinion are considered as the deviation from the norm. So, it focuses on the unity of approaches and opinions. She points out the example of the language of and the idea of shuddh (pure) Hindi, which is considered as the symbol of cultural unity. Orsini argues, "*Press and the education system were the means of disseminating the normative idea*" (Orsini, 2011: 12).

The differences of caste, class and gender were put outside from the marker of unity, and the imaginary idea of a community of equal, educated and public-minded Indian citizens had been communicated in the public sphere. The Hindi public sphere made its criteria of national or *jatiye* which was considered to be the only discussion fit in the public sphere. It doesn't mean that the differences from the public had been disappeared, but, it was not recognized under the public definition of 'Indian' (Orsini, 2011: 12). Orsini (2011) has differentiated the development of public sphere in colonial India and Habermas (1991) description of the public sphere in Europe. The development of European public sphere is directly linked with the development of private sphere which was considered the space of gender-based division or the sphere of woman, and the space of individuality where an individual could express their taste, feelings and thoughts. Public and Private, in this sense were complementary notions. On the other side, the colonial Hindi public sphere seems completely different. In its private realm, the notion of morality, family and community had been depicted as the sole necessity. The novels of this period suggest that there was no place for the private feelings of individual and the private aspirations of the family. It also suggests the merger of private and public at a greater level. At least the dominance of public on private life can be recognised easily. Orsini (2011) has suggested that there were three layers within Hindi public sphere. It is the public, private and the third one, she calls, it 'customary.' The public



is the space of interaction, reflection, and self-representation. Private refers to the voice of individual which emerges as the voice of opposition or normative practices. Customary indicates to the social world apart from the 'public', based on the set of beliefs, rituals, and practices. The major importance of the vernacular language had been given by the education system and journals. Orsini (2011) has differentiated the Hindi middle class of the Hindi public sphere from the Habermas depiction of middle class in Europe. She has argued that the early Hindi middle class had no similarity with the European middle class at the same time. The Hindi middle classes were the English elite and the subaltern masses.

In another description, Orsini (2011) has discussed the importance of the idea of Nation in the Hindi public sphere. The idea of nation has been discussed in the two frameworks. One, history has been given the sole importance to describe the modern inhabitants of the Indian nation, national community and their bond with the sacred stories. Second, the depiction of darkness or decline of Indian *jati* (community) which particularly seems a Hindu *jati* (community). It is imagined that from one corner to another corner of the society, the national consciousness is spreading, and people are becoming devotional to their history. The importance of history and its relation to developing a community feeling reflects the idea of a homogenous cultural identity and one ancestor of the entire community which is believed to be helpful for developing a patriotic consciousness. The history of India has been developed from the encounter of various discourses like orientalism, colonialism and of course the Indian knowledge of history. This history has been popularised by the journals, school books, and literature which put it as a part of public debate. Orsini (2011) argues that history has a major role in the project of cultural nationalism. The early historians and literary persons engaged with the Orientalist historical construction and changed it according to their concerns. Hindi historiography prominently discussed the oriental history writings, their quotations and had been circulated in the public sphere through Hindi journalism. Orsini (2011) has elaborated that the history had been utilized to the "*successful rhetoric of political mobilization*" (Orsini, 2011: 176). History helped to manifest the modern 'Indian identity' as similar to the modern 'Hindu identity' (Orsini, 2011: 176). The modern Indian state tried to introduce secular history with the idea to demonstrate the composite culture, but it always has clashed with nationalist history

writing which had their categorisation of ‘Aryan’, ‘Hindu’ and ‘Muslim’ (Orsini, 2011: 177). Although Hindi public sphere has been changed in the later period, these modifications have powerfully established the discourse of nation and nationalism (Jeffrey, 2003).

### **3.5. Cow Protection Movement and the Hindi press**

Pandey (2012: 161) has argued that the representative politics as the community right had been transformed into a major force of unifying Hindu identity to assert their rights further. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, this effort reached at its peak in the cow protection movement and the Hindi-Urdu conflict. Cow protection movement was significant during the early phase of Indian nationalism. The All India Hindu and All India Muslim organizations had been expanding their domain to subsume the larger populations of their respective communities. In this way, the cow had been presented as a symbol of Hindu religion and community. Pandey (2012) argues that the agitation to save the cow had been used to create a sense of oneness as well as to differentiate and divide the ‘Hindu’ and ‘non-Hindu’ communities (Pandey, 2012).

The militant Hindu organizations and the colonial regime as well made the issue of cow-slaughter public, which was once a private ritual once. McLane (discussed in Pandey, 2012) depicts this event in the form of sub-nationalism where the Hindu customs had been given primacy, and the rights of the Muslim community had not been replaced on the periphery (Pandey, 2012:162). He terms it as an exclusion of Muslim community from the ‘*primary community or nation*’ (Cited in Pandey, 2012: 162). The cow protection movement reached from urban to rural areas, and the language of communication was full of religious deliberations. Pratap Narayan Mishra in his Kanpur monthly ‘*Brahman*’ wrote that the cow protection was the supreme dharma of the Hindu and linked it with the economic importance for the nation. He claimed that the prosperity of ‘*Hindu nation*’ and *the country of ‘Hindus*’ was not possible without the protection of cow (Pandey, 2012: 178). Mishra further drew an analogy between the Brahmins and cows, as both hold the highest position in the Hindu religion. Mishra (discussed in Pandey, 2012) wrote:

The supreme importance of gaumata, the ‘Mother Cow’ was attested to by the invocation, ‘Gaubrahman’, in which Hindus made their obeisance to the cow even

before they bowed their heads to the repositories of the faith, ‘ those who are venerated universally’, the Brahmans (Cited in Pandey, 2012: 178-179).

In a similar development in July 1888, *Brahman* published a short poem reverential about emphasis upon Krishna love for cow. This attracted Ahirs to participate in large scale (Narain, 1998). Kirti Narain (1998) has also accepted the role of the press in deterioration of the relations between Hindu and Muslim. The depiction of a glorious past along with the contestation between Hindus and Muslim had been presented with full vigour in Hindi press. The *Prayag Samachar* of Allahabad reported that the head of the cow was thrown by the Muslims in the house of a Hindu. Another newspaper *Hindi Pradeep* warned about serious violent conflicts. In its defence, the Urdu newspaper *Tutiya-i-Hind* of Meerut defended the Muslim right of freedom and religious practice. This newspaper on October 16, 1885, argued that no cow had been sacrificed on Id, and if it was done, it was done in complete cover. The newspaper blamed Hindus for their biases towards the Muslim as they (Hindus) were not protesting against for the same deed of the British (Narain, 1998). Kirti Narain wrote that some newspapers had argued against the zeal for cow-protection as it was foreign rule in India. This argument of foreign rule was later picked up by some of the Hindi newspapers. They argued that earlier it was the rule of foreigners when the Hindus tolerated the assault on their religious symbols, but now they would no longer do so. Pandey (2012) depicts it as the strategy of Hindu mobilization in the earlier period, but the same appeal can be seen repeated in independent India. Narain (1998) has wonderfully analysed the role of print media as a collaborator of the British rule in their partisan approach which is applicable on the current Hindi press. It seems that the current Hindi press adopted the same divide and rule strategy of the orient categorization without any challenge which needs to be studied in detail. Narain wrote:

The partisan attitude of the language press was nowhere as visible as it was in the sphere of religion. The views of the newspapers framed and also reflected the opinions of the general public. Hence, the breeding ground for the communal awareness was prepared by an unsuspecting people (represented by a still evolving language press) and a shrewd government which did not want to loosen its colonial stronghold (Narain, 1998: 158).

### **3.6. Partition and the Muslim Image building**

Pandey (1999) has discussed the construction of Muslim identity, the question of loyalty and citizenship in the context of emerging nation-state in India after the partition of India and Pakistan. The demand for Pakistan had already divided Muslims into two categories- 'Nationalist Muslim' and 'Muslim'. In contrast to the Muslims, the Hindus were called 'Hindu nationalist. Pandey (1999) has questioned this reversal of naming, which doesn't seem a coincidence. Pandey has explained:

It does not refer simply to nationalists who happen to be Hindu. It is, rather, an indication of their brand of nationalism, an indication of the brand of nationalism, a brand in which the "Hindu" moment has considerable weight. It is nationalism in which Hindu culture, Hindu traditions and the Hindu community are given pride of place (Pandey, 1999: 609).

The divisionary politics of Hindu and Muslim had culminated ultimately with the demand of a new nation 'Pakistan'. The demand for Pakistan was justified on the logic of representation of Muslims in Indian public sphere. The Muslim elite feared control of the Hindus over the Indian public sphere. This control could be exercised in multiple ways, but one of the significant way to make symbolic changes in the day to day life of the community. It transformed the religious and community's symbols into national ones as Freitag (1989: 218) also observed. Over the period it has established as common sense. Jinnah (discussed in Fazal, 2015: 76) had expressed this fear. Jinnah said:

Hindi is to be the national language of all India, and the Bande Mataram is to be the national song, and is to be forced upon all...On the very threshold of what little power and responsibility is given, the majority community has clearly shown their hand that Hindustan is for the Hindus (Cited in Fazal, 2015: 76).

During this period, both presses, Hindi and Urdu, were involved in the image making of the community. The aggressive Hindi press demanded the denial of citizenship rights of the Muslim. During this time not only the Hindi press, but the Constituent Assembly also was debating on the question of citizenship, loyalty, and nationality. These debates were highly sensational in North India as the Muslim elite of North India had created this demand for Pakistan to save their interests (Hardy, 1972). They mobilised the Muslim community on the same lines of fear of losing power and representation. After partition, there were demand that Muslim should prove their loyalty towards the Indian state. The symbols and behaviour of majority community were the set standard to test the loyalty. Fazal writes:

Muslim, the largest and the most vociferous, were guilty of dismembering the national territory-their loyalty 'suspect' till date. In this regard, mere affirmation of allegiance was not sufficient to wash the stigma off; they were required to vociferously demonstrate it whenever called upon to do so. The litmus test of their loyalty was their unequivocal disapproval of Pakistan, not only in words but also in their deeds (Fazal, 2015: 81).

Pakistan became the touchstone against which patriotism and loyalty of Indian nation was to be tested. Castells (2010) has reflected on the construction of identity by presenting a hostile identity which would develop the feeling of 'we' against 'other'. He has argued that identity comes with being only when it is socially and culturally internalized around cultural attributes (Castells, 2010). It is truly applicable in the Indian case. The demand for Pakistan tarnished the category of Nationalist Muslim. Pakistan became an important part of Muslim identity construction in India as though it was the demand of the entire Muslim population. The Muslim population became *half Muslim* (Pandey, 1999: 615) and *half Pakistani* (*emphasis mine*).

The idea of citizenship has developed alongside the rise of the modern nation-state. The nation has always been understood as predetermined, natural and giving reality which defines its essence. The coming of state with nation made territory an important component of nation-state. The majority community has been assumed to be the natural part of the territory as their values and norms are the bases of the nation-state. Muslim population had been subjected to loyalty tests for citizenship while Hindus had been taken as the natural inhabitants of the Indian nation-state<sup>25</sup>. The partition of India helped to fix these national identities rigidly. Said (discussed in Richard King, 2008) has also described how orientalist discourse fixed migration and the question of natural inhabitants as the basic identity marker, leading to stigmatisation of Muslims all around the world. Later, the same reason became the basis of tagging of Muslim as anti-national and divisive. The Pakistan chapter of Indian nationalism has been revived from time to time by the press and the other elements of the public spheres. During the period of war, the press had always tried to create a sense of otherness as it was the question of establishing their liability

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<sup>25</sup> T.K. Oommen (1997) has refuted the Hindu nationalist claim of the natural inhabitants of India. Oommen has argued that before the advent of Aryans, there must be some indigenous population, whose culture and identity had been marginalised by the invaders. It is the tribes or the indigenous people of the India who are the natural inhabitants of the Indian nation-state.

towards India. Hindi press has given more attention towards this question. Be it the question of Kashmir or of Bangladesh war or the India-Pakistan war in 1948. On July 1948, *The Tribune* published in its editorial:

Of late hardly a day passes when news is not received of the arrest...of Muslim engaged in espionage for Pakistan... In this connection, we want to address our Muslim countrymen. We hope they are alive to the dangers that confront India. Notwithstanding in the patience that the government of Indian has been displaying...the country may be obliged to ensure security by an appeal to something more potent than reason. If such an emergency arises, it will be not only a testing time for the country but also a dangerous time for those elements in India whose loyalty has long been suspect (Cited in Fazal, 2015: 81).

In the same way, a leading Hindi newspaper *Aaj* assimilated the differences between Hindutva and Indian nationality (Fazal, 2015: 82). The homogenizing tendency of the mass media generalized the difference between Indian nation and political Hindutva. It had the larger impact on framing Muslim identity and worked as a model of reality. The impact of news on masses is not same, but it differs with caste, class, and regional differences. The present evidence of Ayodhya demonstrates the same fact in North Indian region where the masses unpacked the news item seriously. It resulted in mass scale violence. So, not only the presentation of fact but the way it is perceived by the masses is also different. In the same way, manufactured suspicion created a communal common sense. The Sachar Committee report (2006) has also noticed the same problem where Muslim expressed their agony about the press which has made their image as ISI (A Pakistani spy agency) agent (GOI, 2006).

Gupta & Sharma (1990, 1993, 1993, 1996, 1996) have discussed the depiction of Pakistan in detail in Hindi press. The news stories during the Ram Janmabhoomi movement had not only linked Pakistan with Muslim identity. The Hindi and English both the newspapers blamed Muslims for working under the guidance of ISI agents. The demands of Muslims for representation had been reduced to their separatist tendency which had once resulted in the partition. Some of the newspapers had reported during the period of the partition that Pakistan has stood on its promise of establishing “an ‘*ekjatiya rastra*’ and lamented that India would never be able to achieve the same kind of unity (or homogeneity” (Pandey, 1999, 613).

Along with Hindi press, the same kind of nationalist urge on the name of Pakistan had been built by the Hindi cinema and literature. Daiya (2008) has opened the new arena of research where a Hindi cinema, Hindi Literature, and Hindi press stand parallel in the way of debating nationality, national identity, and citizenship rights. Daiya (2008) has emphasized on Hindi cinema which has highlighted partition, Pakistan war and Bangladesh war efficiently. It can influence the audience and compel them to enter in nostalgia (Daiya, 2008). She argues that some of the Hindi literary persons were also script writers for films (Daiya, 2008). Along with that, the earlier press had not only been influenced by the literary persons, but they had the larger control on views and editorship which remained till the entry of capitalism.

### **3.7. Language, Press and Nationalism**

Van Der Veer (1994) has explained that the development of a national language is considered an important part of modernity. Gellner (1984) has also given the same importance to the national language and seen it as part of the state-owned project to homogenize the national culture. Anderson (2006) also emphasizes on print-capitalism and accepts the importance of language. He discusses the appearance of the novel which facilitated the advancement of the national language. The Indian case also approves the linguistic basis of identity construction. The effort of linguistic identity construction had been started during the colonial regime. Oommen (1997) has discussed three major sources of nationality construction in India. These sources are religion, language and tribe.

The alliance of religion and language is the basis of linguistic politics in India. There are two dimensions of the religion and language debate. These are-

1. The Hindi language came to be associated with Hindu identity
2. The Urdu language came to be associated with Muslim identity

Linguistic nationalism in India has worked on the idea of making Hindi as a national language, thus it has faced the ire of people from different states. Although Hindi belt has a very dominating role in Indian politics, still the movement has not been successful. Jeffrey (2003) has argued that in spite of linguistic differences the national news, cricket, Indian stock market and Indian politics with editorial

regularly remind people of the existence of Indian nationality. Vernacular newspapers differ in their local news content but, as Jeffrey argues:

The overall thrust of their news-gathering and dissemination was to propagate subliminal ideas about the existence and legitimacy of an Indian state and Indian nation (Jeffrey, 2003:9).

The debate of linguistic nationalism had been started during the colonial period. Metcalf (2003, 30-31) has discussed the three stages of development of Urdu language in the colonial period.

1. In the first stage, Urdu became the language of court and poetry in Lucknow and Delhi like cities.
2. In its second stage, the British government took an important decision to supersede Urdu by English, as an official language. Colonial rulers also gave importance to the vernacular languages at the local level.

It was an important period when Urdu was very popular among the common masses especially in United Province, Oudh, and Punjab. Many new genres like, journalism and novel writing had been developed around the Urdu language. Without any biases, it remained the language of elites of all religions.

3. In third and important stage, the Urdu language had been superseded by the Hindi language. The decision of British government of United Province is very important as it was responsible for the competitiveness between both the languages.

Brass (1974) has argued that British government in India worked with the strategy of *'pluralism by equality'* and recognized the diversity and provided it space for institutional expression. But at the same time, Hindi and Urdu had become the enemy by conferring equal status to both of them in United Province.

Sanskrit and Arabic both are considered sacred languages and attached to two different civilization namely: Hindu and Arab Civilization. Sanskrit is directly linked with Sanskriti (Culture) and is said *Dev-Bhasha (The language of God)*. It is assumed that it has civilized people. Anthropologist M. N. Srinivas has also given Sanskrit a prominent place in his conception of Sanskritization. Sanskritization is also a way of Hinduisation in which it is expected to lower castes and tribes to follow the Sanskritic texts in a way to civilize themselves. Van Der Veer (1994)



have underlined the religious importance of Sanskrit. He considers Ramcharitmanas to be the best example of adaptation of Sanskrit in vernacular languages.

The English policy to both Hindi and Urdu created a situation of conflict between Hindi and Urdu which was adopted and started to describe as the language of different communities by the elites of the communities. Literature has a very vital role in expanding the problem. Hindi literature, starting from the earlier age of Indian nationalism, started emphasizing that the expression of highest nationalistic feeling is only possible in national language, the Hindi language. The development of nation was considered possible only in one's own language, and the service of literature had been attached to the service of the nation. Urdu was represented in the entire discourse as *quarrelsome co-wife* (Orsini, 2011: 6; King, 1977) or a *prostitute*<sup>26</sup>

Hindi journals and newspapers played a great role in communication of the literary voice of nationalism in public spaces. Dalmia (1997) has explained that editors of that time were aware of the powerful role of their journals played in discussing and establishing public opinion. Orsini (1999) has extended this point and included newspapers of that period as an important medium of communication in Hindi public sphere<sup>27</sup>. After partition, an effort to establish Hindi and Urdu as representative of two distinct communities increased. There was a demand that Urdu should be written in Devanagari script than Persian only then it could become

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<sup>26</sup> Alok Rai (2000) has discussed the lines of Sohan Prashad's '*Hindi Urdu ki larai*' which has painted Urdu as Prostitute. The lines are as follows-

This is not fit conduct for a decent married woman, you harlot, you!

She who is forever bedecking herself is but a prostitute...

Consider well, such is not the conduct of a loyal wife...( Rai, 2000: 94)

These lines have compared Hindi and Urdu in the feminine attribute and questioned the loyalty of Urdu language as it is not the language of Hindu community. Here, Urdu has been labelled as a prostitute who can be good, but can't replace a loyal wife.

<sup>27</sup> Orsini (1999) has discussed that the contemporary newspapers and journals (1920-1940) were aware of this fact that what they have to publish. They preferred the voice of Madan Mohan Malviya and Bhartendu Harishchandra. Bhartendu Harishchandra is known for his idea of '*Hindi, Hindu, and Hindustan.*'

the part of Indian nation-state. The writing of Urdu in Devanagari script was considered an important evidence for its Indianisation and non-divisionary. Rai (2000) has argued that official Hindi has worked as the construction of cultural memory, especially in the Hindi belt. He provides the example of the Hindi nationalism from literary arena which proves how references of Partition were used in establishing Hindi as the Indian language.

Pakistani Urdu chodo, Hindustani Urdu seekho;

Apni bhasha, riti-niti ko apnao, Hindu se dikho (Rai, 2000: 119)

(Abjure Pakistani Urdu, learn Hindustani Hindi-

Adopt your own language, your own customs and traditions-Appear like a Hindu!)

The situation of Urdu language gradually worsened in independent India and Muslim leaders who were advocating for the equal right of Urdu, increasingly became defensive. Even the Muslim demand for cultural rights was labelled as divisionary by Hindu nationalists. But in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where Muslims were in numerically better situation, the demand for declaring Urdu as a second language attracted the politicians. The importance of numerical strength in democracy assisted Urdu in securing the status of the second language in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which was opposed by many Hindi newspapers. Hindi newspapers argued that this step (conferring the second status to Urdu) would only increase the sepreatist tendency in modern India.

Jeffrey (2003) notes that the tendency of homogenising the language can be seen at world level. It has also been adopted by the Hindi press. It doesn't reflect the preferences of language, but also political preferences. Hindi press has borrowed the content from its society, religion and politics. They work in their cultural setting as well as the cultural positioning of journalist also matters in coverage and news writing. Jeffrey (2003) has given the example of language dispute in Dainik Jagran, a major Hindi daily. Dainik Jagran denied placing a dot on certain consonant of Devanagari script which sounds as Urdu (Perso- Arabic-derived words). This illustrates that Hindi press has not only moved towards homogenising language but also proclaims its political support which indirectly, it has communicated to their readers (Jeffrey, 2003). Jeffrey (2003) has rightly argued that press in general and Hindi press in particular, has not developed the idea of nationalism, but has carried

out as a means of communication in masses. Hindi press has also communicated the cultural politics of Hindi belt with their majoritarian biases.

### **3.8. Post-colonial public sphere and the Muslim identity in India**

The post-partition Hindi public sphere in India was in many sense an expansion of the colonial public sphere. The dominant control of middle class in the Indian public sphere, specifically in the realm of the political sphere, as well as the civil society, had been continued. It was the upper middle class which became the model public and was presented as reference group to the masses. In the early phase of the Indian public sphere, it was the English press which had the highest number of readership, and it had their public of representation. On the other hand, the Hindi newspapers were in the hand of those who were not educated in English. Joshi (2001) in his analysis of colonial middle classes in Lucknow has observed that those middle class which had been excluded from English education, they demanded a Sanskritic Hindi while it was not the mass language. This also held true for the post-colonial Hindi public sphere. It was possibly the attraction of some of the elites of Hindi belt (Joshi, 2001).

An important development in the post-colonial public sphere is the thrust for the secularisation of Indian politics. At the political level, secularism had been adopted as the state policy, but it was always contended by the scholars like T.N. Madan, Ashis Nandy and media giant like Girilal Jain who led the 'The Times of India,' an English daily along with national Hindi newspaper 'Navbharat Times' which belongs to the same group. Hansen (1999) has depicted the contradiction of Indian state's policy of principle distance from religion. Hansen (1999) has reasoned that the cause of introducing secular reasoning was not fulfilled. He further says:

On the contrary, the public spheres in secular India remained full of religious signs and practices, packaged and represented as a culture, making up a nationalized cultural realm represented as unpolitical, pure and sublime. Now a Friday prayer, a mosque, or a Hindu procession and temple were no longer manifestations of community and sectarian strength, but a picturesque and awesome manifestations of Indian culture and the Indian nation (Hansen, 1999: 53).

He further writes,

It was not as if religious manifestations were not allowed in the public sphere. On the contrary, they were encouraged and revered as repositories of the cultural

legitimacy that the state, routinely depicted as purely technocratic, could not generate” (Hansen, 1999: 54).

Hansen’s argument is applicable in the three different domains which is interrelated as well. Hansen has used the Indian cultural nationalist argument to criticise the entry of religion into politics. He added Culture-Nation-Politics to bring out the problem of secularism in the public sphere. The construction of nation in the cultural domain would have been contaminated after the open entry of politics in the cultural domain of communities. The use of religion in politics had not only created the communal consciousness but poisoned the heart and mind of people (Hansen, 1999).

The open proclamation of religious identity under the principle differences with all the religion can be a biased idea where the state itself can’t be able to draw the line of control. In the democratic public sphere, where the numerical size of the community always matters, Hindus had been benefitted, and the Muslim community had been shifted to the vote bank politics (Jha & Jha, 2012). The symbols of majority enjoyed not only in the private spheres but also in the public spheres. These symbols had been given the freedom of worship and faith without noticing the fact that symbols hold a larger appeal in them, and it has a great power of communication with the masses. The flooding of news items along with advertisement and political appeals on the name of *Ram-Rajya* is not different than this but, benefitted the Hindu nationalists to serve their purpose. Hansen has rightly argued that it is the public sphere where the Hindu nationalists forces got its right expression (Hansen, 1999). Hindu nationalists have utilized the same conception of secularism (where religion and politics are considered inter-related to each other) to defend their rights and hegemonized the public sphere by majority values. Fazal (2015) has also noted the continuity of state-led hegemonic model of nationalism which tried to decide the minority rights in the public sphere (Fazal, 2014).

Ali (2000) has analysed the development of public sphere in the post-colonial public sphere and forwarded his concern over the deep-rooted majoritarian values in the public sphere which is being legitimised and sanctioned as the national value. Ali (2000) has entered in the multicultural plea of Indian nationalism where the different cultures are provided freedom to live according to their choice. The effort of assimilation had been rejected while the framing of constitution and plurality had

been accepted as the basic value of Indian constitution. Referring the Shah Bano case, Ali (2000) argues that the Supreme Court judgement on Shah Bano case is the same homogenizing urge of Hindu nationalist where the differences of life-world are not guaranteed. He said that the Muslim response to the Shah Bano case was an effort to save the voice of Muslim private sphere while the Hindu nationalist urge was an effort of symbolising the cultural values and dominance of Hindu nationalist values in the Indian public sphere.

The period of the 1980s is important in Indian democracy when the battle around secularism and 'pseudo-secularism' has come in limelight. Hindi press along with some scholars started arguing that the idea of secularism in India is based on the minority appeasement. Madan (1987) argued that the secularism is a way to impose the minority views on the majority community and in the nation like India, secularism is not applicable. Apart from the dual character of Christianity in European countries where religion had been detached from the state, in India religion is the way of life and in that way, it can't be separated from the politics. The critique of secularism has not emphasized on the politicisation of religion and the popular participation like Ayodhya where the large-scale violence had occurred by the direct and indirect participation of the state. Print media, as a powerful tool of public imagination, has taken the idea of pseudo-secularism and helped Hindu nationalists to build their movement in the country where the words of literates and educated people are given worth. It was the responsibility of the press to ensure the reach out of the idea of reason and secularism in the public arena where the religious differences were the cause of communal tensions. But the upper caste dominated (Nandy, 2005) print media in North India created the same religious fervour during the Hindu nationalist movement of Ram Janm-bhumi. Arvind Rajagopal in his work on the Indian public sphere has noted the making of 'split public' in the North Indian Hindi belt (Rajagopal, 2009).

### **3.9. Hindu Nationalist Movement and the Hindi Press**

Hindi Press provided support to the Hindu nationalist idea of the homogenous nation while erasing the differences between communities on the line of accepting Hindu values as a core of Indian nation. The struggle of Hindu and Muslim has been highlighted with new vigour while the Hindi press was adopting the same

oriental tactics of the dividing the masses by insider and outsider. In recent periods, especially after the Emergency, there is a flood of communally charged press. The Hindu nationalist parties have realised the essence of communication means in spreading their ideology. Gupta and Sharma (1996) have argued that the press in India in general and *the Hindi press, in particular*, has the similar caste and class background of the brahminical hegemonic category which helped them to come together (Gupta & Sharma, 1996).

In the similar kind of attempt, the *secular prejudices*<sup>28</sup> of the Hindi press and the Hindu nationalists got merged. The period of 1980 is known for growing Hinduisation of North Indian Hindi press. The editor of Navbharat Times, an important national Hindi daily, Rajendra Mathur has also noted the same. He writes:

We can't escape the fact that the people behind the fervour of nationalism are 80 per cent Hindu. Thus, no nationalist can be created or tackled without taking into account this vast majority (Cited in Gupta & Sharma, 1996: 4).

Mathur's account is no different from the earlier discussed press perception where Hindu and nationalist was equated. A similar approach had been adopted by the *Jansatta*<sup>29</sup> during the coverage of Sati, where the reputed newspaper reported that it would be a misunderstanding of Indian culture if one opposes Sati (Gupta & Sharma, 1996: 4). The participation of subaltern in the communal violence had been used as a justification for the Hindutva movement. The mass murder of Dalit, tribes, and other religious people had been justified in the name of participation from the below in 'The Times of India' when Girilal Jain was its editor. The fictional construction of the Muslim community had been made during the Bhagalpur riot when Muslim had been tagged as aggressive as Hindus as tolerant. The fictitious Pakistani hand in the riots had been depicted in the newspaper (Gupta & Sharma, 1996).

During the Rath yatra of Advani in Ram Janmabhoomi Movement, the press was engaged in a lethal act of dispersion of myths and unsourced contents. The Hindi

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<sup>28</sup> Secular prejudices is meant that secularism in Hindi press has been depicted as the basic principle of Hindu religion. Hindi newspaper argues that Hindus are secular by nature and other religions must have to learn secularism from Hindu religion.

<sup>29</sup> Jansatta, 18 September 1987 (Jansatta editorial). The incident of pyre-burning happened in Deorala district of Rajasthan. The newspaper (Jansatta) reported, "Only one among lakh of widows is determined enough to become *Sati* and it is only natural that she will become a centre of reverence" (Gupta & Sharma, 1996: 4)

Press described the identity of India as Hindu and tried to picture Muslim as a problem community, a hindrance for the growth and the development of the nation. The Muslim was stereotyped as bigoted, violent, unpatriotic and hyper-sexual like an animal.

The Press, Hindi and English both were involved in highlighting the plight of the Hindu population in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Gupta & Sharma (1996) argued that the news of the destruction of temples in Bangladesh and Pakistan had been given prominence on the first page, while the opposition of the same act has reduced to the inside page in *Navbharat Times (emphasis mine)* and The Times of India. Gupta & Sharma (1996) have maintained that the destruction of any religious place is offence, and it can't be justified, but the destruction of the religious place of any religion in a mass led political mobilisation by the political party is a different act.

The news content of the media during the days of Ram Janmabhoomi mobilisation was divisionary. It created a fear of the Muslims among the Hindu community. It was written that the Hindus in Muslim dominated areas of the Ayodhya were living in fear while the eviction of Muslims from the Ayodhya was not raised prominently.

The language of the Hindi press was in line with VHP and BJP's terminology. The destroyed temple remains a temple while the destroyed mosque turned had been turned into a 'disputed place' in the media. In the case of riots, the reporting of the event is guided not so much by facts but by the collective conscience. The presumptions of the editor of the news presented the fact in a consumable manner. Gupta and Sharma write:

Reporting, especially in the case of riots, is not simply a matter of collecting fact. Facts don't exist in isolation, but are located within a wide-ranging set of assumption and which facts are relevant to a story depend on which set up assumptions are held. If both journalists and majority of readers associate Muslim with 'threat' then reporters and editors, pressured by deadlines and constrained by limited space available, may simply treat the news about riots which confers to this. In other words, what they are doing is to present unfamiliar in as familiar and easily digestible a fashion as possible (Gupta & Sharma, 1996: 8).

After December 6, 1992, demolition of the mosque, Girilal Jain of TOI exhorted Muslims to learn a lesson for the future as the Ayodhya episode was the first ever mobilisation of Hindus on political lines. Jain threatened the Muslim population that the debate of secularism is confined to the private spheres of the Hindu

community and Muslims must not involve into it (Gupta & Sharma, 1996). It is Hindu version of secularism which is advocated by the Hindu nationalists, according to which, Hindus were always secular, and the Muslim population would only be safe in the shadow of Hindus.

### **3.10. Capitalism, Press and the Muslim identity**

India is among those few nations which have witnessed the wide growth of press, across all barriers. Its circulation and editions have been increased with the open market regime after 1991. Hindi Newspapers became an active participants in the struggle against foreign rule from the Gandhian era. But the departure of British compelled Hindi newspapers to search for the new themes and readers, which it successfully found during the 80's. The improvement in economy and education had also been reflected in the emergence of the new middle class which was certainly not a low caste group, but it was the upper and middle caste which had been assertive for its representation. This new middle class was similar in their Hindu nationalist zeal which the Hindi press had developed. From an elite life world, newspaper entered in a common man world. They started giving importance to the common man's life and news about their day to day affairs. It was during the 70's Emergency, then people came to know the importance of day to day political affairs as a deciding factor in their lives. The 'massification of newspaper' (borrowed from Jeffrey, 2003) changed the whole essence where newspaper started giving importance to the local issues. Multiple factors are responsible for this change. Jeffrey (2003) has noted the role of capitalism and open market policy after the 1990s which made possible the introduction of new technology in the press. It also took the benefit of growth in literacy rate which attracted people for newspaper reading and made it a status symbol. These people were preferred for suggestions in important works. Jeffrey (2003) has termed it 'Newspaper Revolution'. In between 1990 to 2000, the circulation of Newspaper had been increased more than doubled. Jeffrey has also discussed the data of 2002, share of top two language newspaper at the top from a different region. It was only Urdu which had been at the lowest level (Jeffrey, 2003).

Scholars have looked at the distinctive character of Hindi belt and its relation with newspaper growth. From 1990 to 2000, the population of Hindi readers increased



from 7.8 million copies in a day to 25.6 million copies in a day. The growth of television also ensured the rise of newspaper. When the whole world noticed the decline in newspaper subscription with the coming of television, Indian newspaper industry was flourishing. Television has substituted the role of print media. In that way, it served the purpose of newspaper media (Jeffrey, 2003). Now one of the important questions is did Hindi Newspapers reach the local level? Its answer lies in the fact of localization of content. At the local level, people were desirous for news about their day to day life and it was the language press alone which could fulfil this. Hindi press started paying attention to the local news pages as well as also increased advertisement and content of their everyday politics and society. It provided a sense of 'publicness' to people (Jeffrey, 2003: xii).

Jeffrey's analysis of newspaper revolution focuses on the structural dimension of Hindi belt. Hindi newspaper were almost a family business, working under the influence of political bosses. This fact has also been noticed in the Press in India report of 1991. It seems a coincidence, but both print capitalism and Hindu chauvinist groups get momentum in the same period. It would be interesting to look at the merging point of both as it acquired potency in Hindi Belt after the incident of Ayodhya (Jeffrey, 2003). Gupta & Sharma (1996) have explained that from the period of Emergency, Hindu leaders started searching for the moment to control the Indian state, and they started ensuring the entry of journalists in the press industry, especially in North Indian Hindi belt. This development ensured the move of Hindi press towards Hindu nationalist viewpoint. Hindi newspapers have been very influenced by the Hindu nationalist leadership who started claiming for the homogenous Hindu India, which was based on the stereotype of Muslim. This leadership also projected the thought of insecurity and fear among majority community. The constructed fear of majority community was established on different occasions and by adopting different means<sup>30</sup>. One of the popular projections of this fear was the depiction of population growth of Muslims in India. Newspapers highlighted it as headlines. The Hindi media widely influenced the emerging new middle class which had been reflected in different forms. Although it was the movement of larger Hindu community, it was the middle class which had

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<sup>30</sup> Catarina Kinnvall (2006) has also discussed the construction of Hindu fear from the Muslim community which had been converted in a major win in the parliamentary elections by the Hindu nationalist party BJP after Ram Janmabhoomi movement.

a major influence on the movement. Scholars like Nandy (2005) has understood it as the movement of the middle class which helped in the construction of nationalism.

The growth of Hindi Press has noticed the decline of rational and the core value of the press of producing an inclusive and rational debate. Unfortunately, the expansion of capital has cherished the values of Hindu nationalist movement in Hindi press. The commercialisation of the press has moved it towards a profit generating business which is now being controlled by the big capitalist owners. It is the age of refeudalisation (term used by Habermas) of the public sphere where the other kinds of barriers are working to manipulate and mediate the views of the masses. The refeudalisation of public sphere refers to the same era when the public sphere was under the sieges of the royal courts and feudal lords; now it has been repeated by the new lords who have controlled the public sphere by the use of capitalist economy. Habermas (1991) in his public sphere has discussed the changing dimension of the public sphere in the age of capitalism which is more relevant in Indian context because the Indian press especially Hindi press has noted the wide rise in contrast to the press in Europe where it is declining. Habermas (1991) has argued that the press from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century has been changing a lot. Noting the change in the late nineteenth of the European dailies (applicable to India as well), Habermas argues:

The history of the big daily papers in the second half of the nineteenth century proves that the press itself became manipulable to the extent that it became commercialized. Ever since the marketing of the editorial section became interdependent with that of the advertising section, the press (until then an institution of private people insofar as they constituted a public) became an institution of certain participants in the public sphere in their capacity as private individuals; that is, it became the gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere (Habermas, 1991: 185).

The argument of Habermas took us towards the profit oriented press where the work of press has also been affected at a larger scale. Earlier the role of the press was limited to the transmission and elaboration of the views which has been altered by the introduction of the debate by the press itself. The capitalist oriented press has the tendency towards the homogenisation of the society on the lines of dominant views. Gupta and Sharma (1996) note that the capitalist urge of the press has persuaded them to expand in the far located areas by introducing the stringers.

These stringers are not only less paid but also less qualified, that consist lawyers, school teachers, shopkeeper, private job people who feel more respect in the journalism than the private job. Gupta and Sharma (1996) tell that the coverage during the Ayodhya movement was done through the stringers and the sadhus of temples in Ayodhya were the major stringers.

In another example of the *Samana* and *Marmik*, Gupta and Sharma (1996) have noted the investment of big companies like Larsen and Toubro, Bisleri, and Standard and Chartered Bank. These newspapers have not only challenged the communal harmony but also gave a new discourse apart from the mainstream. Gupta and Sharma note that the circulation of these communal press and magazine is more than the mainstream newspaper (Gupta & Sharma, 1996).

### **3.11. Conclusion**

The present discussion has tried to elaborate the construction of Muslim identity starting from the historical period to the current period of capitalism. Entering into the colonial construction of the communalism, it has argued that the postcolonial Indian public sphere adopted the same colonial categories of Hindu and Muslim. The early formation of the Indian public sphere in the British era doesn't remain intact over the period, but still, the private people have dominated the public sphere and the dominant discourses. The construction of identities has been changed over the period, but some factors have greatly contributed to the construction, basically stigmatisation of Muslim in the public sphere.

Hindi press has emerged as a sole representative of a larger Hindu and Muslim population in the era of capital expansion in the press. But, the source of values of Hindi press is still assimilative which used to be its part in *the age of Indian nationalism* during freedom struggle (Orsini, 2011). It was the period when the Hindi press had attempted to create a homogenous hegemonic national identity based on the values of Hindu religion. In that process, not only Muslims but Urdu as a language had been demonised and had been attached to a particular religion. This demonization has worked in the favour of Hindi as victorious in the Hindi-Urdu conflict. The making of Pakistan had already put Urdu in the position of defence, confined to the defence of Muslim stand before the aggressive questioning by the Hindi press. Another reason of the stigmatisation of Muslim identity is the

growth of Hindu nationalist movement in India which adopted the communication means to circulate their views. They openly challenged the cultural rights of the minority. Secularism had been made pseudo-secularism. Indianisation had been introduced by incorporating the hegemonic idea of Hinduisation of Muslim community by Savarkar and Golwalkar's idea of nationalism.

## Chapter 4

### A Sociological Analysis of Two Hindi Newspapers

This chapter would discuss the role of Hindi press in the construction of Muslim identity in North India. It is based on an open-ended analysis which would focus on the two major Hindi dailies. First, I have taken the Dainik Jagran newspaper of Kanpur edition which was started in 1942 from Jhansi, by Puran Chandra Gupta. It was the period of Quit India movement, and Dainik Jagran worked to evoke the nation's consciousness against British colonialism. The Kanpur edition of Dainik Jagran was started in 1947. However, it was confined to Uttar Pradesh for a long period. It was only in the 1990s when it began its national edition. The newspaper is owned by Jagran Prakashan Limited, a listed company on Bombay Stock Exchange and National Stock Exchange of India.

The second newspaper that has been selected is the Navbharat Times, which is owned by the Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd. The Company also publishes the leading English daily 'The Times of India'. So, it was obvious in the formation period of Hindi press that the Navbharat Times borrowed its stories and reporting style from 'The Times of India.' The Navbharat Times was launched in 1947, the year of India's independence with its four editions from Kolkata, Patna, Lucknow, and Jaipur. The coverage of four major cities along with national capital, helped the newspaper to establish itself as an all India Newspaper. For the purpose of analysis, I have selected the National edition of Navbharat times which is published from Delhi.

The expansion of both the newspaper is an interesting story. Dainik Jagran has the highest number of readership in entire country crossing all the barriers of language. It had the highest number of readership in Uttar Pradesh for a long time. It also had the largest number of readership between 1989 to 1993, the period under study. During the same time, Navbharat Times had the largest readership in Delhi. In the introductory chapter, I have already described the significance of this period in Indian society and politics in which these newspapers also participated with great zeal.

The selection of two newspapers from two different regions is an important part to look into. It will not only describe the regional differences of contents and coverage but will also highlight the similarities and difference of opinion in the editorial. The difference of local as well as a national newspaper would also be an important way to read the conflict of approach whereas the similarities would make it more clear, the role of media in the formation of the dominant discourse. For the present study of identity construction of Muslims in North India, I have taken the Ram Janmabhoomi Movement. Ram Janmabhoomi Movement has an important significance in the politics of nationalism and the construction of 'we' and 'other'. There are certain reasons to take this event only. The period of 1989 to 1993, which I have selected for the study, is the peak period of Ram Janmabhoomi Movement. The violent mobilisation during this period, helped, Hindu nationalist to move forward in the direction of '*Hindu Rastra*'. This movement was started in 1949 with the placing of an idol of Lord Rama in the temple of Ayodhya, which is assumed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama. Earlier to that, both Hindus and Muslims were allowed to perform rites and rituals at the disputed site. The Colonial government decided to continue the same situation and allowed both of the communities to worship, but the site was divided by the construction of the railing. The Hindus had been allowed to worship outside, on the railing whereas Muslim were given the right to worship inside the mosque. The mosque had become a disputed site after placing an idol inside the mosque. The disputed place had been locked after the placing of an idol. The interference of court decided the case in the favour of 'Hindus.' But the structure was always a matter of dispute for the Hindu nationalists. In the period of mobilisation, we notice the changes in discourses as well (Gupta & Sharma, 1996) (Van Der Veer, 1987, 1994) (Chandra, 1987).

The first major movement was launched in 1984 by VHP and other Hindu nationalist parties, but the political benefit couldn't be gained by the Hindu nationalists due to the sudden assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (Van Der Veer, 1987: 298). Later, another movement was started in 1989. This period is also known for the Anti-Mandal agitation that spread in many parts of the country. The Ram Janmabhoomi agitation was followed later in 1992, when Kalyan Singh, a backward caste, became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Ram Janmabhoomi mobilisation must also be understood in the larger framework of Anti- Reservation

movement in India. A sharp response from Hindi press had also been received after the Bombay bomb blast, just after the demolition of Babri mosque.

In this way, Ram Janmabhoomi movement provided the pretext; many issues came to be debated in this period which led to political, social as well as religious polarisation in the country. The depiction of two major Hindi dailies demonstrates that the popular understanding among media houses was also different. Dainik Jagran gave the religious dimension (as well as, it made Ram Janmabhoomi, a matter of faith) to the whole movement, whereas Navbharat Times appeared to maintain the ethics of journalism. Nevertheless, it too was influenced by the political mobilisation on the lines of the dominant discourse of Hindutva values and beliefs.

#### **4.1. Ram Janmabhoomi Movement and News Paper**

This section would discuss the participation of the Hindi press in Ram Janmabhoomi mobilisation. Both the newspapers differed markedly in their coverage and support to the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Dainik Jagran's language of mobilization makes it clear that it mobilized the larger section of the society at the local level whereas in contrast to that, Navbharat Times didn't take any firm stand on the Ram Janmabhoomi mobilisation. It tried to make Hindi public sphere, more representative, by providing an opportunity to a different section of society on its editorial page.

Dainik Jagran adopted the same colonial framework with highlighting the same mode of conflict at religious sites. Gyanendra Pandey (2012) has argued that the colonial rule in India constructed the idea of communalism by observing the Hindu-Muslim riots during Muharram and Dushara festivals. Pandey (2012) and Freitag (1989) have argued that these festivals are the example of the mutual participation of both the communities. It was the colonial rule which understood these riots as representing the core difference between both the communities on religious lines. They codified these differences in the form of Gazetteers and established it firmly. Pandey has argued that the leaders of freedom struggle had also accepted this construction of communalism and appealed to the communities to leave their violent tendencies. According to Pandey, by the acceptance of freedom fighters and expansion of these ideas through different means of communication, it got

established as a reality (Pandey, 2012: 6-12). In the post-colonial era, this assumed reality became more concrete as communication on the same lines continued in post-colonial India also. The creation of Pakistan worked as a catalyst to make the reality sustain in the last years of colonial rule. Dainik Jagran has presented the situation of crisis in the North Indian region through its daily coverage of news of riots, communalism and attack on religious processions during the festivals of Holi, Dussehra, Ganesh puja (especially during the *visarjan* of Ganesh statue) and Muharram<sup>31</sup>. The same story line has been followed by the Navbharat Times, but it didn't depicted these conflicts as headlines as it has been done by Dainik Jagran. It was easy for Dainik Jagran to mobilise the local masses for the Ram Janmabhoomi movement because of its reaches in the North Indian region, especially in Uttar Pradesh. Most of its editions come from the Uttar Pradesh itself. However, it can't be denied that both the newspapers were involved in false and inaccurate reporting during the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. The politicisation of the Hindu masses led to the acute polarisation of the two political communities. Apart from the news story, there was significant editorial activism (Pande, 2009) in which Dainik Jagran and Navbharat Times was deeply involved. They made the newspapers, a part of the Ram Janmabhoomi campaign themselves. It must be maintained here that the approach of newspapers to the Ram Janmabhoomi movement was different. Dainik Jagran emphasized on the issue directly. However, Navbharat Times, rejected the plea of Hindu nationalists for Hindu nation but accepted that the faith of Hindus must be preferred in the case of Ram Janmabhoomi. Asghar Ali Engineer has noted that editors of some Hindi dailies were directly involved in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement who sketched every Indian as Hindu, and it is their sole responsibility to construct the temple of Ram in Ayodhya. It made Rama, the ancestor of every Indian. It drew similarities between *Ram Bhakts* and *Karsevaks* (Engineer, 1995).

Asghar Ali Engineer notes further:

It is a fact that on the Ram Janmabhoomi question, the feeling of a larger section of Hindus in the north were running very high, and some media persons belong to this section. In fact, they did identify themselves as Rambhakts and Karsevaks. Perhaps they could not help what they wrote (Engineer, 1995: 117).

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<sup>31</sup> 22 October 1989 (p.1), 23 October 1989 (p.1), 2 October 1990 (p.1), 11 December 1990 (p.1), 25 July 1991 (p.4) Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition,



Asghar Ali Engineer (1995) and Arvind Rajagopal (2009) applauded Navbharat Times for maintaining the standard of journalism as the national newspaper (Rajagopal, 2009: 214)<sup>32</sup>.

One another reason for drawing the difference between Hindi and English media or other languages on this subject is the social and cultural location of the journalists of the Hindi Belt. One of the main concerns of local Hindi newspaper was that they were deprived of those scholars who writes in English only and have been recognized in all over the world. However, Navbharat Times extracted the benefit of this because it had an English edition also which was not confined to any particular region. It had published many special articles to make the in-depth understanding of the Ram Janmabhoomi issue. In that way, it tried to present an informative debate and discussion but couldn't detach itself completely from supporting the majoritarian values.

Dainik Jagran adopted a different strategy in which, it used a religiously influenced language<sup>33</sup> to unite the other Backward Caste, Schedule Caste and Scheduled Tribes along with women<sup>34</sup>. It applauded the inclusion of police in the movement, divided the policemen into religious lines, and it helped people to reach Ayodhya for Karseva<sup>35</sup>. Through its editorial, Jagran criticized the governments of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar for its negative approach towards Rath Yatra. It completely discarded the state effort to resolve the issue in the court by claiming that the historicity of Rama was beyond question<sup>36</sup>. After the first attack on the disputed site, the editor appealed in the language as he had participated himself in the movement. He wrote:

Ram Mandir ka nirman karya sanketik rup se prambh ho gya h. Ab janta ka ye aadarsh hai ki Bhagwan Ram ke anusar dinacharya banaye. Maryada Purushottam ke aadarsho ko aanch bhi na aaye, ye dekhna pratek Hindu ka kartavya hai, sath hi prateek bhartiya ka bhi kartavya hai.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> In footnotes, Rajagopal has described the Navbharat Times as a group of committed Marxist in the eyes of RSS.

<sup>33</sup> On 30 October 1990, Dainik Jagran has written that the enthusiasm of devotees of Ram was a miracle. Even they had not been allowed for Karseva and was being arrested, but still, they broke the barriers and entered into the Ram temple (Babri mosque). The reporter reported that the expression on the faces of devotees demonstrated that Ramlalla had himself appeared from the heaven to praise their bravery (Nandy, 2005: 36).

<sup>34</sup> 25 October 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p.1.

<sup>35</sup> 17 October 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. (1+11).

<sup>36</sup> 10 May 1989, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p 4.

<sup>37</sup> 31 October 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 1.

(The construction of Ram temple has been started symbolically, now it is the responsibility of the masses to work according to the ideals of Ram. It is the duty of every Hindu as well as every Indian to see that the ideals of Purushottam Ram couldn't be destroyed.)

The attempt of *Ram Bhakts* to enter the site and demolish the mosque was termed as a great sacrifice by the newspaper. Its editorial exhorted the Hindus;

Lathi, Goli, giraftari aur Satta ki pashvik shakti bhi Ramkaj ko rok nahi shaki aur Ram mandir ka nirman karya kam se kam sanketik rup me aarambh ho gya<sup>38</sup>.

(Lathi, Guns, arrest and the repressive power of state couldn't stop the work for Rama and work of Ram temple has begun symbolically.)

It declared that the next election would be fought on the issue of secularism versus nationalism. During the election period in Uttar Pradesh, it appealed to the masses to give Aahuti (as a vote) in the yagya (as ballot) of the election, for *Ram Rajya*<sup>39</sup>. In another editorial, it tried to attract people to show the threat to the Indian nationality and according to the newspaper, it can only be eliminated through the *Ram Rajya* (the rule of BJP)<sup>40</sup>. In a further news story, in the first-page news, it remembered Somnath by referring the press conference of Atal Bihari Vajpayee where a successful effort of making a grand temple had been made<sup>41</sup>.

Navbharat Times took a sincere stand on the Babri demolition and appealed to the masses to maintain calm on the pre-planned demolition of the mosque<sup>42</sup>. But it differed on the issue of neutrality on such an occasion and argued that rather than being neutral now, it is our duty to fill the gap between two communities. It accepted the role of newspapers in the demolition<sup>43</sup>.

Dainik Jagran was slammed by Press Council of India, for its false reporting along with three other newspaper. Press Commission of India noted,

Spreading panic and confusion in an already tense and polarised situation was dangerous to a fault in adding fuel to the fire (Engineer, 1995: 114).

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<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> 20 May 1991, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, Advertisement, p. 1

<sup>40</sup> 14 June 1991, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur Edition, Advertisement.p.1.

<sup>41</sup> 3 April 1989, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, pp. (1+ 11)

<sup>42</sup> 7 December 1992, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> 30 January 1991, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 10

Navbharat Times also wrote in its editorial, following the lines of Press Council of India that one portion of Hindi journalism became Hindu on the question of Ram Janmabhoomi. It said in its editorial,

If the news is power, then the rumour is more powerful than that. The newspaper is not the personal property of the journalist. It is a social weapon by which, the world of wide information unlocks. Journalist or the owner of newspaper can be the supporter of Marxism, socialism, or BJP, but the editorial is the right place to express these commitments, not the new column<sup>44</sup>.

On the other hand, Dainik Jagran criticised English newspaper for not supporting the issue of national interest (Ram Janmabhoomi) and took a different stand. However, Navbharat Times couldn't maintain its impartial stand and went on to argue for the construction of a grand Ram temple at the Janmabhoomi site and a small mosque in its shadow.<sup>45</sup> It was a major shift in the approach of the national daily (Navbahrat Times) where it realised and worked according to the popular perception in the North Indian region. It was the time when the question of Ram Janmabhoomi had been established as the national question and as a major Hindi daily; it was not possible from the commercial viewpoint also. In one of his editorial, it accepted that it is dominated by the Hindu religion<sup>46</sup>. In the similar argument, the editor of Navbharat Times, Rajendra Mathur had accepted that the nationalism in India is based on the values of majority Hindu community, and their sentiments can't be overlooked (Gupta & Sharma, 1996).

Dainik Jagran declared that now, Hindus have been awakened, and it is not possible for Hindus to detached themselves from Ram Janmabhoomi<sup>47</sup>. It mobilised the Hindu community by arguing that now, the Hindu population couldn't tolerate the situation of slavery in the independent country. It said:

Hinduo ke sath unke hi desh mein kuch sau varsho se nahi lagbhag dedh hajar varsho ( 1500) se anyay hota chala aa raha hai, Is Anyay ka pratikar kabhi na kabhi to kisi na kisi ko karna hi hoga. Kab tak Hindu apne hi desh mein dusre darje ke nagrik Bane rahenge<sup>48</sup>.

(Hindus are being suffered from the tyranny in their own country, not from some hundred years, but approximately from last 1500 years. Someone has to oppose

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<sup>44</sup> 2 February 1991, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> 8 December 1992, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> 26 October 1992, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 5

<sup>47</sup> 17 July 1989, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> 10 May 1989, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

this tyranny sooner or later. How long Hindus would be a second class citizen in their own country.)

In another editorial, it wrote:

Dukh to ye hai ki humare 'Aadhunik Hindu Surviro' me yha samartha to hai ki wo Masjid ki raksha k liye Aandolan kare aur Islam aur Isai (Christian) dharm ki rakhsa k liye aatmotsarg kar dene ki bat kare, lekin unme yha samarthyha nahi hai ki unka jo svartha ka dharm hai, uske bare me vastvik jankari prapat kar le.<sup>49</sup>

(It is sad that our 'modern Hindu warriors' are capable to launch a movement to save the mosque and talk to self-sacrifice for the defence of Islam and Christianity, but they are not efficient to get the real information about the religion of their self-interest.)

It is a different tactic of community mobilisation where the cowardice of the male member of the community is projected to provoke them to participate in the movement. Using the terms like '*Aadhunik Hindu Survir*' is an effort to relate the modern Hindu youth to the past glory of great rulers like Shivaji and Maharana Pratap, who had fought the Muslim rulers. The interesting thing to note here is the depiction of Christianity and Islam only (which appears an effort of giving more stress) in the above-mentioned editorial which is considered as non-Indic religions.

Around the same time, government-controlled broadcasting agencies, allowed for the serialisation of Ramayana of DD National with the idea to bound India in the bond of unity. The serialisation of Rama evoked the Hindus, 'the so call truly Indians' to look towards their Hindu self. Ram became the champion of national integration (Rajagopal, 2009). The '*ideal Rama*' and '*Rama in distress*' both constituted the paradox situation. One had become part of their everyday lives and the second one was presented in the vernacular press with the task of installing nationalism. Romila Thapar wonders how the serialisation of Ramayana had missed the different narratives and only pictured the dominant narrative of 'mainstream national culture' which could help to evolve a sense of Hindu community in Hindu masses (discussed in Van Der Veer, 1994). Both Dainik Jagran and Navbharat Times had discussed the episode of Ramayana in their respective newspapers. It is easy to imagine the situation during Ram Janmabhoomi when television was serving the growth of the press. Both television and Hindi press came together to forward the agenda of cultural nationalism.

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<sup>49</sup> 9 April 1992, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

According to Peter Van Der Veer (1994), modern state and the introduction of secularism had created frustration among the religious masses. In a country like India, where religion is deeply rooted in day to day life, the introduction of secularism had changed its entire essence on the lines of modern secular democratic state. It has created a gap between tradition and modernity. Peter Van Der Veer says:

Nationalism is generally assumed to belong squarely on the “modern” side of “great divide.” It is the result of the demise of “traditional” society and therefore a sign of modernity (Van Der Veer, 1994: 17).

Dumont has also noticed the same change while modernity invaded the Indian tradition and the uneasy combination of Indian communalism highlighted where religion has been mixed with nationalism (discussed in Peter Van Der Veer, 1994: 17). Peter Van Der Veer hopes that the tendencies of communalism would disappear from the public life when the Indian society would become truly modern (Van Der Veer, 1994: 17-18). The staunch believers of religion are not ready to accept such changes until and unless the proper efforts are not made. Habermas<sup>50</sup> has rightly argued that it is impossible for the state to retain secularism without its practice in the public first. Ashis Nandy, a noted scholar, has differentiated between religious and religious nationalism while arguing the difference between Hinduism and Hindutva. According to Nandy, Hinduism is a faith and a way of life, while Hindutva, Hindu nationalism of the Savarkar type, is an ideology for those whose Hinduism has worn off (discussed in Van Der Veer, 1994).

Peter Van Der Veer calls it a romantic simplification (Van Der Veer, 1994). Nandy has not dealt with the question of larger participation of Hindu population in the violent form of Hindu nationalist discourse who is the follower of ‘Hinduism’ at one time but at the next time, they acquire a different posture and become the proponent of ‘*Hindu Rashtra*’. The argument of Ashis Nandy has superseded the fact of VHP’s mobilisation and the larger participation of the common masses who had been part of Ram Janmabhoomi movement for different reasons. Ram Janmabhoomi movement cannot be called the movement of Hindutva only because in the wake of mobilisation, it didn’t maintain any difference between Hinduism

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[https://www.sandiego.edu/pdf/pdf\\_library/habermaslecture031105\\_c939cceb2ab087bdfc6df291ec0fc3fa.pdf](https://www.sandiego.edu/pdf/pdf_library/habermaslecture031105_c939cceb2ab087bdfc6df291ec0fc3fa.pdf)

and Hindutva at least for that particular period. The politicisation of Hindu community didn't maintain the difference between spiritual Hinduism and Hindu Nationalism of Hindutva. It couldn't delimit the domain of spirituality and Hindu nationalism.

#### **4.2. Muslim Identity and Hindi Press**

The anti-Muslim stand of Dainik Jagran was noted on several occasions during the Ram Janmabhoomi Movement. Many scholars like Jeffrey (2003), Ninan (2009) Gupta & Sharma (1996) mentioned it repeatedly through the analysis of its content. Jagran's editor Narendra Mohan is known for his close link with the Hindu nationalist parties. It didn't only give more space to the Hindu nationalist writers in the editorial and news coverage but also Anti-Muslim stigmatisation in its content. The regular reporting of the riots, the citing of historical events such as partition and Muslim invasion, through editorials, were part of its everyday construction of Indian nationalism. In doing so, probably it was aware that most of its readers come from certain religious and caste sections. Till the 1990s, there was a very tiny population of Muslim which looks towards the Dainik Jagran and a large section of Hindu community was its recent readers. This realization of fact can also be established with its structure where upper caste Hindus have a dominant control (Ninan, 2009, Friedlander et al., 2009). Contrary to that, Navbharat Times was very much influenced by The Times of India, an English daily. For its content, Navbharat Times heavily relied on The Times of India. Due to its attachment with English news daily, its nature and reporting of content were completely different. As Arvind Rajagopal has rightly pointed out:

For English-language audiences, objectivity and neutrality worked not only to enhance the informational value of news and to guarantee its truth content but also served as a marker of the relationship of these audiences to power. Objectivity, as a news value, corresponded to the history of English as a language of colonial and subsequently, technocratic nationalist rule, and rendered this history invisible, thereby avoiding a confrontation with English's status as the language of a tiny minority (Rajagopal, 2009: 209).

Depicting the differences with Hindi news, he further writes:

Hindi news audience had a more fraught and contested relation to power and couldn't assume a transparent, value-neutral approach to the news in quite the same way. Even as a means of informing citizen for active political participation, then

Hindi news was written quite differently from English news (Rajagopal, 2009: 209).

#### **4.3. Description of Islam and framing the Muslim identity in Press**

Dainik Jagran raised the question of Uniform Civil Code without giving voice to the minority communities. It was in the language of ‘must’ and ‘should be’ suggesting the necessity and urgency of implementing it. The newspaper did not care to give space to the differences among and between these communities. Contrary to Dainik Jagran, Navbharat Times gave a proper representation of the Muslim community while putting the larger debate of Uniform Civil Code. In an op-ed by Khushwant Singh, titled ‘*Kya Musalman Dharmandh Hai*’ (*Are Muslim Fundamentalists?*), newspaper (Dainik Jagran) depicted a paradox situation. Referring to the book ‘The Struggle within Islam’ (1989) of Rafiq Zakaria, it proposed that although the larger canvas had always been dominated by Mullahs and Imams but common Muslims prefer liberalism than fundamentalism.

In 1989, Salman Rushdie’s book ‘Satanic Verses’ was published which angered many devout Muslims. Both Navbharat times and Dainik Jagran highlighted this matter. Dainik Jagran questioned the formation of Minority Commission while covering RSS chief’s speech. The depiction of India as a secular country turned into pseudo- secular in the RSS and Hindu nationalist narrative. The frequent comparison of Arab countries, Pakistan and the situation of minorities there and in India is discussed in the Jagran. It found that Indian Muslims are in a better situation in comparison to Hindus in Arab countries. A Muslim can proudly claim his/her Muslim status, but the same claim by a Hindu becomes communal, it stressed.<sup>51</sup>

On the Ram Janmabhoomi issue, it prominently covered the majoritarian voice. From the Muslim community itself, they used the Hindu nationalist categorization of ‘nationalist Muslim’ who were mostly part of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Sikander Bakht, who was a member and national vice president of BJP claimed that the meaning of Hindu nation is not that it is the country of Hindus only, but it covers all those who are born on the laps of Bharat Mata. He further added that today people consider Muslims, out of the Indian framework.<sup>52</sup> It was the first-page news

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<sup>51</sup> 27 February, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p.1.

<sup>52</sup> 3 April 1989, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 1.

in Dainik Jagran. The one interesting point to note is its use of **highlighted brackets with pink and green colours** where it gave special emphasis on news.

It is the same framework where the Indianness of some communities (largely Muslim and Christians) has been questioned from long times. Even of their regular participation in the everyday life of the nation, their nationality had been interrogated. Indian constitution had provided certain rights to the minority community to maintain their faith and perform according to that. But the doubts have been raised about that also. Seeing the increasing rate of violence, Uttar Pradesh government decided to form a special peace force in which it was promised to ensure the representation of minority communities but in its editorial Dainik Jagran declared it completely narrow-minded and communal. It further appealed that the need of the hour was to create the mentality that they are Indian first, rather than belong to any community or caste<sup>53</sup>.

Hardly represented in the Dainik Jagran Press, Muslim discourse was always a fantasy based stories where no effort had been made to understand it deeply which can be understood by these lines:

At the time of ‘Namaz’ on ‘Juma’, every mosque talks about ‘Din’ first and then Duniya(World), and when the world is discussed, then such bitterness is discussed, by which the heart burst out, and it is only to maintain the religious empires of some people<sup>54</sup>.

Dainik Jagran quoted some lines from unknown scriptures of Islam to present the purported threat to Indian culture from *‘foreign cultural consciousness’*, a reference to Islam. It quotes:

Jab Uharam ke Mahine beet jaye to Mushirko( Murtipujako) ko jahan pao,katla karo aur unhe pakdo aur ghero aur ghat lagakar unki tak mein baitho,phir yadi woh tumse tauba kar le aur namaz padhne lage aur zakat dene lage to unhe chod do<sup>55</sup>.

(After the end of the month of ‘Umrah’, wherever you find idolatrous, catch them, murder them and surround them and sit with a squat in fries to them, if they repent to you and strat reading ‘Namaz’ and start paying ‘Zakat’, then let them leave.)

It further writes in the same language and says that our culture is in danger because of those people who says:

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<sup>53</sup> 8 April 1989,Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition,p.4

<sup>54</sup>14 June 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> 24 December 1992, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.



Nisandeh (Undoubtedly) Kafir tumhare khule dushman hai<sup>56</sup>.

(Undoubtedly disbelievers are your open enemy.)

The provocative language of the Hindi press continued to differentiate the values and religious beliefs within the community. It quoted further:

Jo humse inkar karte hai, hum jaldi hi unhe aag me jhok denge aur jab unki khale pak jayengi, tab unhe dusri khalo se badal denge taki wo yatna ka rasasvadan kar le<sup>57</sup>.

(Those who deny us, soon we will put them on fire and when their pelt would be reopened, then they would be changed by another pelt, so that, they could enjoy.)

In the similar construction of ‘other’, Navbharat Times writes,

Mahmud Gaznavi looted India, so that he could embarrass the people of the nation. Babar also demolished the ram temple and constructed mosque over there, so that he could offend the national identity of this nation. Aurangzeb had also insulted Baba Visvanath and Krishna Janmabhoomi so that non-believer (Kafir) could realise appropriate Islamic punishment<sup>58</sup>.

One of the primary tasks, which was achieved through these editorials, was the differentiation between a narrowly defined ‘Indian culture’ and ‘foreign cultures’ such as Islam. The forging of cultural differences is the major part of the historical construction of community identity. Benedict Anderson (2006) in his *‘Imagined Community’* has discussed the role of common history to develop the imagined community identity and the expansion of printing press had a major role in it. Dainik Jagran regularly provoked the differences and sought to establish them as part of common sense. The post-colonial North Indian press has adopted the same colonial strategy of highlighting the differences of the community rather than developing a common nationality.

Siddhartha Vardhajan (2009) has noted that the period of the early twentieth century was the period, known for the political mobilization of the Muslim community as well as the emergence of Congress party. The North Indian belt was highly politically charged in this period, and the biases of communities got established, especially through the Hindi public sphere that largely covers the literary arena, Hindu laws, press, and journals and so on. The stigmatisation of

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<sup>56</sup> ibid

<sup>57</sup> ibid

<sup>58</sup> 2 August 1992, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6

Indian politics was continued in post independent period also, where 'low-intensity communalism' (Vardhraj, 2009: 102) was spotlighted so that it became easy for the media to channelize the subtle utterances of the community leader. The thoughts of these community leaders were revealed as the thought of the entire community. It became easy for the media to draw the similar pattern during the communal riots. The depiction of Muslims as the appeased community was also established in a similar manner.

Stanley Tambiah has discussed two major concepts while analysing communal riots in South Asia. In the views of Tambiah, focalization and transvaluation are this two main concept which paves the way for the normalization of riots (discussed in Vardhraj, 2009). In my understanding, These two concepts can also be applied in the context of localization of Hindi news. Stringers have the main role in the localization of Hindi news due to the very high financial burden of the news gatherers. Neither they have been provided proper training in journalism, nor have they been rechecked. In localisation, newspapers democratized the Hindi press, but it also gave them the power to control the events and views regarding that. Localisation demands more and more criticality and space for proper representation, but the ground reality supports the competition and sharpening the communal identity. The coming of BJP in power helped them to make the entries possible of their activists and supporters as editor or journalist. In the wake of localisation, it became easy for Hindi newspapers to support their cause. These three concepts Focalisation, Transvaluation, and localisation have a clear cut relation which can be understood from the news coverage of Dainik Jagran and later on an editorial on the same. The small dispute in the locality of Kanpur was highlighted as a communal riot with regular reporting of the same news<sup>59</sup>. Later on, Dainik Jagran wrote an editorial piece<sup>60</sup> to make it more highlight with a historical analysis of communal riots and its relation with the people of the same mentality that directed to the Muslim community. This focalisation of the issue which was earlier a small dispute of the locality made a nationwide concern as communal riots. The assimilation of larger historical events transvalued the local issue in a national issue. The same kind of incident happened in Bareilly when the death of the monkeys

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<sup>59</sup> 11 December 1990, 13 December 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p.1.

<sup>60</sup> 13 December 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

was attached with Rama, and the blame was put on the Muslim community (Friedlander et. al., 2009). Due to the growth of news industry, newspapers have localised them through their stringers on a very small payment. Those newspapers flourished widely which focused on the local news.

#### **4.4. The emphasis on Historical Narrative**

**History is an important point of juncture in framing the identity of the community. Indian History has been divided into three parts where ancient India is considered as the Hindu History, whereas the medieval Indian history is depicted as Muslim history and the last one is considered as modern history which is still going on( Misra, 2004: 194-199).** In the discourse of Muslim identity, history is an important part which legitimises the communities historical belongingness. Hindu nationalists, Savarkar, and Golwalkar <sup>61</sup> have traced the historical belongingness of the community and tried to conceptualise that the outsider communities have to live as a second-class citizen. They have traced the historical development of Islam in India and argue to be assimilated in the larger Hindu framework (Savarkar, 2009).

The division of history had been established firmly during the colonial regime through the Orientalist construction of 'native' and 'other.' Gyanendra Pandey has also discussed the same colonial construction of communalism and the concrete division between Hindu and Muslim communities. The division of communities which followed the introduction of representative politics finally culminated in the partition of British India and the emergence of Pakistan. Partition is always a sensitive point in Indian history. Hindi newspaper has utilized this framework of othering by reminding the memory of partition and Pakistan as a natural enemy of India (Dainik Jagran).

The description of Pakistan is considered as a litmus test for the Muslims in India. They are expected to prove their loyalty towards India by publicly rebuking Pakistan. During the period of Ram Janmabhoomi movement, it was the part of the usual description of Dainik Jagran to communicate the news about Pakistan and Kashmir linking it with violent forms of territorial nationalism. Muslim leaders were expected to publicly refute the statements of Pakistan about minorities in

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<sup>61</sup> [http://www.rss.org/Encyc/2015/4/7/334\\_03\\_46\\_30\\_Bunch\\_of\\_Thoughts.pdf](http://www.rss.org/Encyc/2015/4/7/334_03_46_30_Bunch_of_Thoughts.pdf)

India<sup>62</sup>. This amounted to questioning the citizenship rights and nationality of the Muslim population in India (Fazal, 2015)<sup>63</sup>. The Muslim population is blamed for the partition, and the newspaper warns them to not to involve in the same kind of activity again<sup>64</sup>. Zaheer Baber calls it ‘the mobilisation of memory’ where the partition is generalised as the demand of Muslim population only and the present crisis is related to the past to construct the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ (Baber, 2006: 56-57). Sanjay Joshi found a similar attempt during the colonial period when nationalist newspapers tried to create a national consciousness, especially through the use of Hindi Language press and literature. This press not only contradicted the Muslim press but also openly created the differences (Joshi: 2001). In this form of nationalism, the nation was largely equated with Hindu. Dainik Jagran followed a similar strategy. In its editorial on July 10, 1989, titled ‘*Desh se Gaddari*’,<sup>65</sup> it wrote:

Siyasat mein musalmano ki alag pahchan bane, alag hissa mile-shabuddin ki ye mang prakarantar se waisi hi hai jaise azadi se pehle Muslim league kiya karti thi.

(The demand for distinct Muslim identity by Syed Shahabuddin (prominent Muslim leader) is similar to the one that Muslim League used to raise before India’s freedom.)

Further, the newspaper went on to warn the Muslims of India against any attempt to repeat the politics of pre-Partition days.

Gulami ke dino me Muhammad Ali Jinnah ke netritva me muslim sangathano ne jo gundagardi ki thi us samay unhe iska labh mil gaya tha kyoki ek ore to unhe Bharat par raj kar rhi videshi satta ki sidhi sahe mili hui thi, aur dusri ore Rastravadi saktiya paradhinta k karan apne aap ko ashaye pa rahi thi. Par Ab aisi sthiti nhi h<sup>66</sup>.

(During the days of slavery, Muslim organizations had done that felony under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, they got its benefit at that time because, on the one hand, they were being harboured by those foreign rulers on ‘Bharat’ and the other hand, the nationalist forces were being found themselves helpless. But now the situation is not the same.)

Navbahart times was also vocal and repeatedly argued that the memory of partition, must not be deleted. In one of its special editorial on the independence day, Suryakant Bali, wrote that either we should remind the memory of partition and

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<sup>62</sup> 6 Nov 1991, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition. p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> 5 June 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> 28 December 1992, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p.4.

<sup>65</sup> 10 July 1989, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition. p.4.

<sup>66</sup> 28 December 1992, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

must be ready to reunite the Akhand Bharat as it was before the birth of Pakistan or we should accept the two-nation theory of Muhammad Ali Jinnah<sup>67</sup>. Mahesh Chandra Sharma, in its special editorial, wrote that if we had already approved the two-nation theory, we must have exchanged the Hindu and Muslim population. If we had rejected it earlier, we must have to try for the reunification of two nations. But because of the failure on both the fronts, our national identity is still distorted<sup>68</sup>.

#### **4.5. Rama: The ancestor of Indian Muslims**

The one and the most important narrative that emerged from the Ram Janmabhoomi was tracing the ancestral roots of Muslim in India. The narrative of Ram had been used in the construction of Muslim identity. Dainik Jagran wrote in its editorial:

Ram is desh k vartmaan Hinduo aur bhartiya Musalmano ke bhi purvaj h. Is vastvikta ko sweekar kar lene me hi is desh mein rahne wale musalmano ka hit hai.<sup>69</sup>

(Ram is the ancestor of current Hindus and Indian Muslims too. It is in the interest of these Muslims, residing in this country, to accept this reality.)

This language of Hindi press supports the argument of Hindu nationalist politics. This assimilationist argument completely ruled out any cultural right to the minority community to maintain their distinctiveness in a Hindu majority country. The tracing of ancestral roots of the Muslims, by relating it to the Hindu god Ram is similar to the Savarkarite imagination of Pitrabhumi and Punyabhumi<sup>70</sup>.

Dainik Jagran depicted Babar as an invader and argued that it is problematic to accept Babar as an Indian ruler as he was an invader like British. For the newspaper, it was wrong to call Indian Muslims as 'children of Babar'. Instead, it suggested that they should rather be termed as Hindu as the Indian Muslims were descendants of Hindu ancestors.

Babar ne Hinduo ke sath anyay kiya, ye ek aitihasik tathya hai. Babar ek videshi tha aur ek hamlawar tha, wha bhi ek aitihasik tathya h. Par kya aaj is baat ko lekar

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<sup>67</sup> 15 August 1991, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6

<sup>68</sup> 30 December 1992, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6

<sup>69</sup> 6 August 1989, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>70</sup> Savarkar has imagined the idea of Pitrabhumi (Fatherland) and Punyabhumi (Holy-land). In his book he defines Hindu (Who is Hindu?), "A HINDU means a person who regards this land of BHARATVARSHA, from the Indus to the Seas as his Father-Land as well as his Holy-Land that is the cradle land of his religion(2009: from the first page)."

Hindustan me rehne waale logo se hi bair karenge? Sach baat to ye h ki Hindustan me rehne wala har vyakti Hindu hai chahe wo kisi bhi mazhab ko manta ho<sup>71</sup>.

(Babar did wrong with Hindus, it is a historical fact. Babar was a foreigner and an invader; this is also a historical fact. But, would we be hatred to the people residing in India, on this matter? The reality is that every person of Hindustan is Hindu whether he/she follows any religion.)

It further argued:

Jhagda yaha “Babar Ki Aulade” se nhi hai. Babar ki Aulade kaun hai, kaha hai ab yaha koi nahi janta. Babar to chala gya aur uski aulade bhi khak me mil gayi. Ab jo Bharat me rehne wale dikhai de rahe rahe hai, unke purvaj to Hindu the<sup>72</sup>.

(There is no battle with “children of Babar”, who is the children of Babar, where they are now, and no one knows here. Babar walked away, and his children met in Khak too. Now those who are seeing resided in India, their ancestors were Hindu.)

These arguments hinted towards the conversion of Hindus to Islam by force or allurement and claimed that most of the Muslims in India are originally Hindus. Thus, their Pitrabhumi (Father Land) was in India itself and those who don't recognize this fact and still consider their Pitrabhumi (Father Land) and Punyabhumi (Holy-Land) as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq, are not truly Indian<sup>73</sup>.

Constitutionally, while the cultural rights of the Muslim community have been accepted but in the public domain, there is always a question mark over their distinctive cultural and religious rights. Unlike, the Dainik Jagran, Navbharat Times understood the sensitivity of the matter as a newspaper, however, the influence of majoritarianism was visible as it agreed to the demand of Hindu nationalists and appealed to the minority community to bow to their demands. Taking the aid of a Court judgment, it argued that Ram had acquired a constitutional status.

High court has given the just judgement that Ram has been constitutionally legitimized. It means that he is not related to any religion per se. His vision can't be restricted. This historical judgement has given a new dimension to the Indian secularism. Ram is not only run through the Hindustan but in entire South Asia, which is beyond caste, religion, and boundary. A culture which is fulfilled by truly secular nature, Ram is the pleasing dimension of that culture<sup>74</sup>.

By making this demand, a professedly secular newspaper succumbed to Hindu majoritarianism. It raises the question whether the minority are required to alienate

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<sup>71</sup> 17 July 1989, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid*,

<sup>73</sup> 23 October 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> 13 January 1993, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6

themselves from their religious places on the demand of majority. As Gurpreet Mahajan points out about the dominant tendencies in the public sphere.

The preferences of the majority are accommodated in the public sphere. Moreover, the continued presence of the majority culture in national and public life gives that culture certain legitimacy. Its customs and practices appear to be neutral, and are often treated as symbols of a nation-state rather than those of community (Mahajan, 2002: 30).

The same kind of suggestion was being given to the Muslims from both the Hindi newspapers. Navbharat Times wrote that Muslim should come forward to agreement on Ram Janmabhoomi. It is always expected to the majority community to sacrifice, but minorities also have some responsibilities for the nation<sup>75</sup>. In another editorial, Navbharat Times appealed Muslim community to realise the 'emotional needs' of majority Hindu community about Ram Janmabhoomi<sup>76</sup>.

#### **4.5.1. The idea of *Ram Rajya***

The idea of *Ram Rajya* was frequently highlighted during this period of Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, too had desired for the *Ram Rajya*. But there is huge difference in both the conceptions, that of Hindutva groups and Mahatma Gandhi. Dainik Jagran in one of its editorials tried to link the Hindutva idea of Ram Rajya with that of Mahatma Gandhi, but the difference between both could be easily be discerned. Dainik Jagran's notion of Ram Rajya began with stigmatising the Muslims. In the following editorial, the reference to Babar Rajya was directed towards them.

Ram Rajya Gandhi ko Priya tha aur uski stuti Pradhanmantri ke rup me Rajiv Gandhi tak karte rahe tha Ram Rajya hai Desh ko priya hai, bahusankhyako ko priya h. Adhikansh alpsankhyak ko bhi priya hai aur jinhe Ram Rajya nhi Babar Rajya adhik priya hai, wo Bharat bhumi ke liye Kalank hai hai<sup>77</sup>.

(Ram Rajya was dear to Gandhi and it was praised by Rajiv Gandhi too as a prime minister. Ram Rajya is loved to this nation, dear to the majority. It is dear to the most of the minorities also and those who is affectionate to Babar Rajya, rather than Ram Rajya, they are stain (or stigma) for Bharat Bhumi. (Indian Land))

Dainik Jagran referred to Ram as the ideal of the Indian nation while Mughal rulers like Akbar were targeted. This idea is very close to the Hindu nationalist idea of

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<sup>75</sup> 30 July 1992, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6

<sup>76</sup> 23 October 1990, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6

<sup>77</sup> 24 December 1992, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

*Ram Rajya*, which can be translated aptly as *Hindu Rajya*. During the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, Lal Krishna Advani was positioned as Rama with bow and arrow on a Toyota car. The car was decorated as a Ram Rath. His attire as Ram had been much popularised during the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and covered by most news dailies. Christophe Jaffrelot (2007) discussed the idea of *Ram Rajya* with Advani during an interview which seems to be an appropriation of Gandhi for the interest of *Hindu Rashtra*. Jaffrelot notes:

Indian nationalism is rooted, as was India's freedom struggle against colonialism, in Hindu ethos. It was Gandhiji who projected Rama Rajya as the goal of the freedom movement. He was criticized by the Muslim league as being an exponent of Hindu Raj. The league did not relish the chanting of Ram Dhun at Gandhiji's meetings or his insistence on Goraksha (cow-protection) (Jaffrelot, 2007: 291-92).

Peter Van Der Veer (1994) argues that Gandhi used the language of Ramcharitmanas to communicate his political ideal of *Ram Rajya*. He communicated that it is the Ramcharitmanas which would be helpful for Indians to adopt the high ideals of Ram in their life to eradicating the problem of untouchability, poverty, and foreign rule. Van Der Veer argues that there is very little doubt about the impact and acceptance of Gandhi's constant reference to the just rule of Ram among the Hindu population. Van Der Veer further notes that the Gandhian appeal of Ram Rajya completely detached and ignored the presence of 'Muslim' in India and went in the ancient Indian tradition. Gandhian appeal of *Ram Rajya* was inclusive but Hindu nationalist used to interpret his message for "anti-demonic" purposes (Van Der Veer, 1994: 174).

For Gandhi, it was the expression of a utopian dream for the Indians who would be self-governing as well as will live according to the highest moral and political values (Lal, 2008: 55). Gandhi had imagined Ram Rajya as a rule of morality and self-governance where none would be deprived of their basic rights. Apart from this, the Hindu nationalist conception is not only male-biased but also does not recognise the co-existence of other faiths. It was the consistent fear of the Hindu nationalist which culminated in the murder of Gandhi by Nathuram Godse, a proponent of Hindutva.

In another explanation, Ashis Nandy has explained the Ram Rajya conception of Hindutva as a male-centric. Ashis Nandy has given the reference to Gandhi's visit to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh office where there was not a single photo of



Hindu god Ram among the other idols and photos. It was explained to Gandhi that Ram is not appropriate for our purpose because of his feminine temperament (Nandy, 2005: 99). It is not only Ram alone which had been imagined by Gandhi, but, Ram had always been remembered as *Sita Ram*. His favourite song, '*Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram, Patit Pavan Sita Ram*' is the true reflection of his conception of Ram.

#### **4.6. Citizenship, Nationality and Muslims in India**

T. K. Oommen (1997) argues that there are three necessary criteria to construct the national identity-religion, language, and tribe. The Hindu claim of nationality is based on its assumption of homeland or being the original inhabitants of India. While the claim of Muslims is often refuted by their non-Indian origins (Oommen, 1997). The Hindi press constantly questioned the minority claims of the Muslim population arguing that it makes them a privileged community vis-à-vis the Hindus. In its editorial Dainik Jagran questioned the categorisation of majority and minority, and argued against the granting of minority rights.

Why do you think that minorities should be given those rights which are not delivered to the majority community<sup>78</sup>?

The Muslims were reminded that Indian was their primary identity and being Muslim, secondary. It wrote in its editorial:

Musalmano ko bhi ye samajh lena hoga ki wo log pehle Bhartiya h aur bad me Musalman<sup>79</sup>.

(Muslim should understand that they are Indian first and Muslim later.)

Ram Janmabhoomi movement was projected as one moment for the Muslims to prove their Indianness. Dainik Jagran put forward that it would be appropriate if Muslim leadership themselves surrendered the Babri mosque to the Hindus and thus prove their association with Indian culture. It dismissed any argument against Hindu communalism. It maintained this stance even after the demolition of the Babri mosque. Thus, Narendra Mohan, chief of the editorial board of Jagran wrote;

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<sup>78</sup> *ibid*,

<sup>79</sup> 25 October 1989, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4

There is no difference between Hindu and Muslim in Indian culture. If Muslim start assuming themselves as Hindu, then they become Hindu. It is the spirit of Indian culture<sup>80</sup>.

Arvind Rajagopal has analysed the language of newspapers during Ram Janmabhoomi movement, and he has focused on the subjective approach of Journalist during the reporting of Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Arvind Rajagopal exemplified further:

For the Hindi press, the Ram Janmabhoomi movement was not only a legal and political issue but a social and cultural one as well, whose symbols and rituals were discussed in often fluent and racy prose (Rajagopal, 2009: 223).

#### **4.7. The category of Rioters and Victim**

Gyanendra Pandey (2012) has discussed that the postcolonial Indian state adopted the same criteria for defining the community identity as the colonial rule. Communal riots started in post-Independent India in the 1970s. The state adopted the colonial mechanisms and saw riots as primarily law and order problem, hence frequent imposition of curfew in areas prone to riots. Along with that, the post-colonial state adopted the colonial treatment of communal riots as treating it as a Law and Order problem<sup>81</sup>. In this categorisation, a community was always framed and assumed to have triggered the riots. The Hindi Press in the 1990s indulged in the same categorisation of the category of rioters and victim. Dainik Jagran made it explicit by coming out in favour of Hindu majority. The news coverage of Dainik Jagran prominently accused the minority community of being the provocateurs.<sup>82</sup> In one of its editorials, it wrote:

Dhauspatti, Dhingamusti, Aatank aur Sudh Takrao aur Sangharsh ki jo rajniti desh me idhar badhati ja rahi hai, uska hi ek Sabut hai Kanpur Police par prahar ka vah sangathit prayas jo Muslim Samudaye (Community) dwara kiya gaya<sup>83</sup>.

(The politics of menace, bullyrag, terror, not collision and struggles are nourishing in the country, and its proof is the organized attempt to attack the Kanpur police by Muslim community.)

It further added,

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<sup>80</sup> 16 May 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4

<sup>81</sup> 18 April 1989, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 1.

<sup>82</sup> 22 April 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>83</sup> 5 December 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

Pichle dino Delhi me alpsankhyak ne jis tarah nangi talwaro aur bhaalo ke sath bade aakramak nare lagate huye jo pradarshan kiya tha, uske parinamsavarup jo dange huye the wo abhi thama bhi nahi tha, ab yaha naya silsila prarambh ho gya<sup>84</sup>.

(Recently in Delhi, minorities have aggressively rallied with naked swords and spears, and as a result, riots took place. The flames of this riots were not even quiet, and these chains of events have started anew.)

The demarcation between the rioters and victims was very clear because the newspaper had already recognized that Hindus could not be the rioters and that 90 per cent of the riots are started by the Muslims. It argued that riots were completely against the values of Hindu culture. Another major way of distinguishing between the rioters and the victims was the use of the word '*Dangai*' which was frequently used<sup>85</sup> for the Muslim community. It is hard to find a single instance where this equation would be refuted or where the minority community had been presented as a victim. The Muslim bodies figured only as numbers while a clear identification of the community was made when the deceased happened to be a Hindu.<sup>86</sup> During the days of the *Karseva*, it was the *Karsevaks* who were depicted as victims, while other victims found mentioned only as anonymous numbers.

The demolition of the Babri mosque put the entire north India in the fire along with Surat, Ahmadabad, and Bombay. The sharpest reaction on the Babri demolition had been felt in Bombay, which is known as the economic capital of India. Muslim started not only attacking bus and taxis, public property but temples also. Hindi newspapers, especially Dainik Jagran used these riots to polarise the major religious groups. It failed to notice the casualties among Muslims in the riots that followed the Babri demolition. Instead, Dainik Jagran started depicting Muslims during these riots as '*Dangai*' (Rioters)<sup>87</sup>. They appealed to change the mentality of the government to not to treat Hindu- Muslim problem as a common problem. According to it, most of the riots after independence had been started by Muslim fundamentalists and extremist<sup>88</sup>. In another editorial, it wrote:

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<sup>84</sup> *ibid*,

<sup>85</sup> 14 October 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 1

<sup>86</sup> 11 October 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 1

<sup>87</sup> 12 January 1993, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 1

<sup>88</sup> 15 January 1993, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

Bombay ke mafia sardaro ko Bharat virodhi Rastro aur Islami ugrawad ka khula samarthan mil rha h. Ye nirvivad satya hai ki Bombay ke mafia jagat ke 90% log kisi na kisi prakar se Islamic ugrawad k samarthako se sambandith hai<sup>89</sup>.

(The Mafia chiefs of Bombay are openly supported by anti-India nations and Islamic extremists. This is a non-debateable truth that in the world of Mafia of Bombay, 90% of them are somehow related to Islamic extremists.)

They repeated the same anti-Muslim propoganda which was part of the Ram Janmabhoomi mobilisation, clubbing it with the two nation theory<sup>90</sup>. The editorial provocation of Dainik Jagran was continued, and it warned Muslim to leave their mentality to look towards the other nation for their development. It reminded that Pakistan was born after the partition of India and from its birth itself, it was the enemy of India.<sup>91</sup>

While the Hindi media supported the Janmabhoomi movement in its best possible manner, it could not become the platform for expressing the Muslim grievances, rather the Muslims themselves became the problem community. It seemed that some sections of the Hindi press, specifically, Dainik Jagran, was working as the voice of Hindus. In comparison to Dainik Jagran, Navbharat Times, criticized the language of Shiv Sena where it (Shiv Sena) had warned the Muslims of continuing with the religious war if they did not change their approach. The Navbharat Times maintained that it was not the time to threaten any community but to wage war against communalism.<sup>92</sup> It highlighted how the migration of Muslim community from Bombay could adversely impact the economic order.<sup>93</sup>

#### **4.8. The idea of Hindu tolerance and Minorityism**

Hindu nationalist discourse has prominently highlighted the assimilative nature of Hindu religion. It used to be argued that many communities came from outside India and became part of the Indian nation. It is commonly held that this was so because of the tolerant and accommodative nature of the Hindus.

The tolerance and intolerance debate is linked with the minority identity, and Hindu nationalists claim that Indian tradition is very tolerant which had been highlighted

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<sup>89</sup> 19 April 1993, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid*,

<sup>91</sup> 15 March 1993, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> 18 March 1993, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p.6.

<sup>93</sup> 16 January 1993, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6.

in the orientalist discourse (Van Der Veer, 1994). The pre-Muslim period, largely a Hindu-Aryan period is considered as the golden age of Indian History. The most important question here was the subjugation of Hindu community by the Muslim invaders. It was the period of decadence of Bharat Bharti. This discourse of Aryan-Hindu model of the rule was said to be maintained until it was attacked by the Muslim invaders. Even of the assimilation of immigrant communities, the 'pure model of Aryan-Hindu' polity was still prosperous (Orsini, 2002) The demarcation of Indian history into ancient, medieval and modern periods served Orientalist agenda. These three different periods were also paired with the different rulers. The ancient Indian period was glamorized as the period of Hindu rulers whereas the medial period had been demonized as Muslim period and the modern period is understood from the start of colonialism itself. It worked well with the Hindutva imagination too. As Partha Chatterjee rightly argued:

The theory of medieval decline fitted nicely with the overall judgement of the nineteenth-century British historians that "Muslim rule in India" was a period of despotism, misrule and anarchy-this, needless to say, being the historical justification for colonial intervention.' This theory also fitted Islam as 'essentially' cruel, fanatical, bigoted, warlike and dissolute (discussed in Orsini, 2011:186).

Following this, newspapers such as Dainik Jagran continued to maintain that Islam in India was established through the sword<sup>94</sup>. It highlighted the frequent resistance of Hindu rulers against the outsiders and argued that Islam could not be a part of the Indian culture. The newspaper separated the communities by whether they were intrinsically tolerant or intolerant. The strength of the Hindus was their tolerance which was absent in the case of non-Hindus, it wrote:

Hinduo ki sabse badi takat sahisnuta rahi hai aur yaha sahisnuta yadi Hindu chod denge to jo kuch phir janam lega, use Hindu kaise kaha ja sakta hai. Hindu aur ahindu mein yahi to fark hai ki Hindu sahisnu (tolerant) hai aur ahindu (non-Hindu) asahisnu (intolerant)<sup>95</sup>.

(The most significant power of Hindus is tolerance and if this power is abandoned by them then consequently whatever will take birth out of it, how would that be called as Hindu? This is the basic difference between Hindu and Non-Hindu that Hindu is tolerant, and Non-Hindu is intolerant.)

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<sup>94</sup> 14 July 1992, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>95</sup> 17 July 1989, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

In one of its special editorial, Navbharat Times has also written that the idea of co-existence is primarily a Hindu and Indian conception. It wrote:

Those people who are distraught to teach Hindus, a lesson of secularism, must know that Hindu and only Hindu is secular, those who are not Hindu, it is impossible to them to be secular.<sup>96</sup>

The newspaper criticised Indian secularism for its tendency towards minorityism. It regularly repeated that in the name of secularism, minorityism is preferred. In one of its editorial it wrote:

Dharmnirpecheta ke naam par alpsankhyakvad (minorityism) ko badhava diya ja raha hai, aaj usi ka pratifaal dekhne ko mil raha hai. Hindu jiska Mul aadhar hi sahisnuta, udarta aur sarvatra ekatva darshan hi raha ho, wo bhi ab sankirn aur anudar hota chala jaraha hai<sup>97</sup>.

(On the name of secularism, minorityism is encouraged. Its retaliation can be seen today. The Hindu, whose basic principles are tolerance, generosity and philosophy of ubiquitous unity, are becoming narrow-minded and conservative.)

Dainik Jagran discussed the idea of pseudo-secularism and lamented that it is the faith of Hindus which was always disrespected. Secular political parties and governments run by them were criticised for being anti-Hindu. They were termed as pseudo-secular, a phrase popularised by the Hindutva politics. The secular/sacred dichotomy was declared as the western origin of religion. Here, Indian religions are considered secular in nature, and it is those foreign religions which are outsiders and based on conversions of Hindu masses were declared as intolerant.

In a similar kind of argument, Navbharat Times discussed the idea of pseudo-secularism by featuring ideologues of Hindutva on its edit pages. Members of Jan Sangha and RSS were the prominent authors of these edit page articles. Thomas Bloom Hansen has noted that during the 1970s Muslims started migrating to the Gulf countries to seek employment which benefitted them monetarily as well as enhanced their status in society. The emerging sense of pride and a new flow of wealth reflected in the Shah Bano case when Muslims agitated in large numbers in Gujarat, Bombay, and Kerala. Hansen notes:

The development of ties between Indian Muslims and the Gulf countries and the conservative postures of Muslim leaders seemed to confirm all the run-of-the-mill stereotypes about inherently “anti-national” Muslims. This contributed in no small

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<sup>96</sup> 11 January 1993, Navbaharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6

<sup>97</sup> 16 December 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

measure to making the Indian Muslims a perfect and demonized other in the Sangh parivar's subsequent mass production of communal stereotypes (Hansen, 1999:151).

#### **4.9. Language politics and Hindi Press**

Language is one of the major sources of identity construction. Benedict Anderson (2006) has discussed the role of language in community formation and identity construction. It was the development of press which expanded the horizon of language and united people, even in the far reaching places. In India also, language played a major role in unifying people from different regions. In North India, politics around Hindi and Urdu languages were a major cause of polarisation right from the colonial period. The Hindi Press campaigned to make Hindi as the national language. In this whole propaganda, the Urdu language had been stigmatised. Sanjay Joshi in his study of the Hindi public sphere provided descriptions of this conflict between Hindi and Urdu. Before the colonial rule, Persian and Urdu were considered the dominant language because most of the government works were done in this language only. After the colonial encounter, it came in direct opposition to the English language. During this time, the Hindi language started flourishing. Now Urdu came in direct contrast to both Hindi and English (Joshi, 2001).

**The issue of language had been come in the limelight due to its conferring of the status of the second language to Urdu in Uttar Pradesh. This issue had been circulated widely in Uttar Pradesh, which became the cause of many riots. Hindi newspapers also participated in this discourses with two different opinions in the newspaper I have selected. In their own public, they also circulated their ideological influence.**

Dainik Jagran along with some other newspapers like, Aaj established the same antagonism of past against Urdu press again in the Hindi belt. Balraj Madhok, the president of Bharatiya Jan Sangh, was given prominent space in the Hindi press. In one of the editorials in Dainik Jagran, Madhok argued for the Indianisation of Urdu language. Here *'Indianisation of Urdu language'* means, Urdu must be written in

Devanagari script<sup>98</sup>. Dainik Jagran blamed that the status of the second language to Urdu was a political ploy informed by vote bank politics. It opposed the decision and openly supported the agitators against the government decision.

In contrast to this, Navbharat Times highlighted the pathetic condition of Urdu. According to NBT, it is completely a political decision where one side government conferred the status of the second language to Urdu, but on the other hand, it had made the condition of Madrasas so miserable<sup>99</sup>. Navbharat Times thrashed all the concern of Hindi speaking population. It pointed out that it is not going to affect the status of Hindi. For the survival of any language, the efforts of masses are more important than the government interference.<sup>100</sup>

Gurpreet Mahajan points out that:

the choice of official national language creates the distinction between the majority and minority as it distributes resources and opportunities unequally in society (Mahajan, 2002:30).

This hostile situation cannot be understood without understanding the efforts of establishing Urdu's identity with a particular community. The slogan of 'Hindi, Hindu and Hindustan', proposed by Bhartendu Harishchandra became synonymous with the majoritarian idea of the Indian nation. In the Constituent Assembly too, R.V. Dhulekar, who belonged to contemporary United Province (now Uttar Pradesh), argued along similar lines:

I say it is the official language of and it is the national language. You may belong to another nation, but I belong to the Indian nation, the Hindi nation, the Hindu nation, the Hindustani nation (Cited in Fazal, 2014: 80).

The recognition of Sanskritized version of Hindi with Devanagari script as the official language of India corresponded with the slogan of 'Hindi, Hindu, and Hindustan'. The ire of partition made Muslims a villain of Indian nationalism. The proponents of Hindu nationalism were not in favour to accept Urdu. Newspapers exhibited the Urdu language as antagonistic to the consciousness of Indianness and argued against any official support or recognition to it. (Fazal, 2015:79-84). Dainik

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<sup>98</sup> 25 August 1989, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>99</sup> 27 November 1989, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 4.

<sup>100</sup> 30 September 1989, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 4



Jagran's opposition to the acceptance of Urdu as a second language in Uttar Pradesh can be explained with the given historical and political background.

#### **4.10. Ram Janmabhoomi verses Babri Mosque**

A major point of dispute during the Ram Janmabhoomi campaign was its identification whether Rama was born or no temple has been broken to build a mosque. This debate also took a major turn when VHP, declared it a temple and became ready to an agreement. But it was a strategic turn where there would be no claim of the temple because it already exists there.

This discussion had also been taken place in the Hindi public sphere. There is two kind of categorization of this debate.

1. There is one kind of newspaper which was talking about the disputed place as a dispute of Ram Janmabhoomi and Babri mosque. In these newspaper, there is also some newspaper who changed the whole discourse without any objective and rational participation. This kind of newspaper was involved in a very linear kind of picture which was again and again repeated.

2. There is also another kind of newspaper, who promote a larger level discourse through the engagement of archaeologist and historians. These are those newspapers whose editorial decisions also favoured the participation of historians and archaeologist. But it must not be ruled out that, these newspaper were not apart from the larger discourse of Hindu nationalism. It reflected in their space allocated to the academicians, politicians, and activists.

Dainik Jagran, which was directly involved in the Ram Janmabhoomi Movement, tried to justify the Hindutva stand on Ram Janmabhoomi liberation earlier. It argued on the emotional lines to attract the sympathy of larger Hindu population. It presented the Hindu God Rama, as the sole representative of Indian culture. Dainik Jagran became the voice of VHP and RSS and changed the narrative when VHP started calling for an agreement with Muslims that the disputed structure was already a temple, and no temple had been demolished to build the mosque.<sup>101</sup> Earlier

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<sup>101</sup> 11 February 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p.4

Dainik Jagran had argued for the making of a new Ram temple at the same place where the mosque existed. Now the new demand was the renovation of the temple. Already there was wrangle among the scholars for the identification of disputed site and the historicity of Rama. Dainik Jagran smashed the argument of another group of scholar and publicised that almost 40 historians of the nation were arguing in the favour of Ram Temple, but didn't consider another group of scholar<sup>102</sup>.

It (Dainik Jagran) resisted against these group of scholars and said that no evidence could be given for the birthplace of Ram. It favoured the ancient Indian legal system where '*Shruti*' was also considered as evidence.<sup>103</sup> The major tussle was between the two groups. One was the Allahabad School of History, and another was the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. In contrast to the Dainik Jagran, Navbharat Times gave proper space to both the groups by publishing their special article on the claim of the disputed site. Navbharat Times was more balanced and rational. It argued according to the results of the excavations on the disputed site by B. B. Lal who discarded any claim of Ram temple there<sup>104</sup> but later Lal mentioned his fault of not documenting the excavation properly, and he missed some of the important archaeological proofs which heralds that site as Ram Janmabhoomi (Mandal, 2003). Navbharat Times called the change in discourse by the newspapers on the lines of VHP and RSS, a political slickness<sup>105</sup>. Both the newspapers came on the similar argument when it is suggested to hand over this matter to the court. Both of them argued that court can't take the final decision on this issue. Dainik Jagran mentioned that it is the question of faith of the Hindus and court has no right to asking the historicity of Ram<sup>106</sup>. On the other hand, Navbharat Times argued that court must look into the matter of faith of Hindu community as well as the claim of historicity by Muslim parties while pronouncing the verdict on Ram Janmabhoomi. At the same time, it also mentioned that Supreme Court must work as a public court rather than a civil court<sup>107</sup>.

#### **4.11. Reservation and Hindi Press: The dilemma of the Upper Caste Press**

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<sup>102</sup> 12 October 1992, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 1.

<sup>103</sup> 13 October 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>104</sup> 25 June 1992, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6.

<sup>105</sup> 8 July 1992, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6.

<sup>106</sup> 10 May 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>107</sup> 22 October 1990, Navbahrat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6

The period of 1989 to 1993 was the peak period of Anti-Mandal movement. Specifically, 1990 was the period of trouble and tension in North India. Apart from Ram Janmabhoomi Movement, the lower caste, particularly OBCs started demanding for their political, social and economic rights. In northern India, the situation of OBC gave an opportunity to the political opposition to utilise the situation for the political benefits. The Janata Dal tried to forge the alliance among the landowning castes like Jat and Yadav, who were already a dominating agrarian caste in the northern India. During the farmers movement, these caste groups had been successfully mobilised which heightened their ambitions (Hansen, 1999). Thomas Blom Hansen notes that the emergence of middle class and the commercialisation of agriculture also helped them in their political assertion. Hansen notes the two powerful logic worked behind the mobilisation of these agrarian classes. First, it was the compulsion of 52 per cent vote sharing of the OBC group which was helpful to form easily a majority government in a democracy where numbers are ultimately counted. Second, the representation of the communities in government services and education opportunities had been used as a “clientelistic device for securing the electoral support of disadvantaged groups” (Hansen, 1999: 142). This example had already been established in the southern part of the India where the non-Brahmin groups had been mobilised without any larger conflict. Gujarat was one of the first states of north and western India, which noticed open conflict over the reservation. The issue of reservation helped to unify the lower caste vote in North Indian political constituency.

The whole North India flamed in the fury of Anti-Mandal agitation. Especially, during the mid-90s the Hindi press in North India created such atmosphere where the upper and lower caste came into open conflict over the issue of reservation. They also tried their best to merge the communities in the name of Hindu Identity. The best example is the Yadav community whose attachment with Lord Krishna had been mobilised in the framework of Sanskritization had already made the Yadav's close to the Hindu community (Jaffrelot, 2003). The upper caste dominant media houses also tried to influence the views of their readers by news coverage, editorials, and special articles. Journalism in India for lower caste is not the bed of roses. Hardly, there is any Dalit journalist in mainstream media houses for long. At

least the situation till the 90s was the same<sup>108</sup>. Apparently, it clears the larger picture.

The two selected newspapers belong to two different publics, and both elicited different concerns. One common thread between both of them is their coverage of news regarding reservation. The regular coverage of the same kind of news with pictorial depiction influenced the lives in North India.

Navbharat Times understood the whole reservation movement as a political discourse, but it raised many practical concerns about reservation. It questioned the meritocracy, which doesn't consider, Brahmin and Yadav equal with similar educational qualification. Accepting the historical caste discrimination, it demanded making it more inclusive by including backward caste people from other religions also<sup>109</sup>. Conversely to this approach, Dainik Jagran completely denied the caste oppression with other backward castes; it argued that reservation will negatively impact on merit. It further argued that there is also a larger population of Brahmins, who also hail from a poor background, as similar to the Yadavas from Other Backward Caste<sup>110</sup>.

In another editorial Navbharat Times wrote:

In the absence of time limit, there is no meaning of reservation. Not that meaning, which legitimatizes the philosophy of reservation. If the reservation is an effort to eradicate some historical injustice, then the honesty of this effort lies only in this fact that it should be completed within a time limit. Absolute reservation can only be given for those disadvantages which present beyond time limit in any society. Mockingly, it argued what happened with the schedule caste and schedule tribe reservation, and now the same political development would hamper the cause of OBC reservation<sup>111</sup>.

It mentioned that the reservation must be expanded to the admission, bank loan, and other services also. However, it favoured reservation on the economic criteria also, whereas Dainik Jagran maintained that reservation would lead to antagonism in society.

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<sup>108</sup> <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/missing-from-the-indian-newsroom/article3294285.ece>

<sup>109</sup> 6 Sep 1990 Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6.

<sup>110</sup> 2 July 1989 Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4

<sup>111</sup> 30 August 1990 Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 4.

The discourse of reservation changed with the idea of including the economic factor in it. Navbharat Times asked the government whether the reservation was a poverty elimination scheme or a medium of ensuring social justice<sup>112</sup>. Later, economic criteria of the reservation were refused by Supreme Court<sup>113</sup>. In its headlines, Navbharat Times penned down that when the implication of Mandal Commission recommendation was announced, then North India responded with anarchic and bloody reaction and many students attempted to self-immolation. The implication of this decision will take time, but it will give new hope to the backward caste, excluded for centuries<sup>114</sup>. It further included the caste biases of the upper caste in the ongoing agitation, but it told that it is the failure of the system<sup>115</sup>. It appealed to its readers that wider social change cannot be achieved by the intervention of court alone.

The debate of reservation would be incomplete without referring its relation to Ram Janmabhoomi Movement. Referring to the idea of RSS, Dainik Jagran wrote:

Hindu unity is more important than Social justice.<sup>116</sup>

This statement must be looked into wider social implication where one side the domination of particular caste had been challenged, on the other hand, it questions the idea of Hindu unity. Dainik Jagran looked at the entire issue as a division between Hindus and created a suspicion among the readers that after the 60 percent of reservation, the rest would be given to the minorities<sup>117</sup>.

In one of his articles, published in Navbharat Times, Suryakant Bali, a sympathiser of RSS wrote that reservation would improve the caste history by challenging the Savarna mentality. In the same manner, the bill of constructing three temples in Ayodhya, Mathura, and Kashi, must be passed symbolically to challenge the offensive mindset of Muslim invaders.<sup>118</sup> (Understood as national history).

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<sup>112</sup> 26 Sep 1991, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 5

<sup>113</sup> 17 November 1992, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 1

<sup>114</sup> *ibid*,

<sup>115</sup> 19 Nov 1992, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p.5

<sup>116</sup> 4 May 1991, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p.1.

<sup>117</sup> 28 Sep 1991, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p.4.

<sup>118</sup> 26 July 1992, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6

The politics of Hindutva is largely linked with the caste consciousness, and its demonstration depends on the share of power. The share of power in the public sphere is an important concern which can't be replaced until and unless we reach the status of proper representation. This lacuna was highlighted in the reservation debate where almost all Hindi newspapers were anti- reservation. In one of his statements, Vinay Katiyar, the founder president of Bajrang Dal, a youth wing of VHP, declared that we would use Kamandal till they use Mandal. The aggressive use of such religious symbols was very much affected by the unexpected divide of the Hindu vote (Rajagopal, 2009). The Kamandal is a Hindu symbol which is used in worship and very much situated in the Hindu public life. The use of Hindu symbols to unite the *Hindu jati* was a political effort that could also be located in the social processes.

The question of reservation also prompts us to see the assertion of lower caste identity in North India and its political implication. Brahminical roots were always present in the feudal structure of North Indian society, and it reflected in the public sphere too. The assertion of lower caste in North India took the roots of Sanskritization where the role model was always to achieve the lifestyle of an upper caste. The starting of different reform movements in Hindu religion also encouraged the lower castes to adopt the Hindu framework. Arya Samaj, Gayatri Parivar are the examples of such developments. According to Jaffrelot, although, from a long time such reform movement were linked with the social, economic and cultural reform, but it was the late 90s when the political development of lower castes started taking place (Jaffrelot, 2003).

#### **4.12. The Imagination of Nation in the North Indian Public Sphere**

The various imaginations of the nation in India do not revolve around its discussion in geographical terms alone. The historical development of the idea of India, its culture, language, symbols as well as its ideals is all contested in the public domain. Those who propagate monocultural nationhood, consider differences of opinion, art, culture and practices, as aberrant to the unity of people. In a larger sense, the historical development of such nationalism founds its base in the cultural history of the majority community, which can be viewed as cultural nationalism also. As Orsini pointed out:

This history helped crystallize modern 'Indian' identity as being essentially the same as modern Hindu identity. Literature and education were crucial in disseminating this historical discourse (Orsini, 2011: 176).

The public discussions in the Hindi newspapers contributed in the legitimization of the cultural values of majority community as part of the national mainstream. The symbols and historical depiction made the voice, values and ideology of the dominant, the voice of entire structure. Intrinsic to this process was the otherisation of the Muslims and other minority groups. As Ewing notes:

Minority religious practices received different treatment, and what is perhaps even more significant is that these aroused greater suspicion. It was seen as being 'outrageous, ostentatious or even meant to proselytize (Ewing, 2000:41) (Cited in Mahajan, 2002: 27).

During the Ram Janmabhoomi campaign, Hindi newspapers such as Dainik Jagran sought to provide a new legitimacy to Ram, as a national and constitutional icon. Ram was no longer just a religious icon of a section of the Hindu believers but a constitutional figure who was to be revered by all<sup>119</sup>. The debate around Ram Janmabhoomi movement tried to show that how the conception of the nation is unfulfilled without its cultural connotation. Efforts were being made to establish Hindu culture as synonymous with Indian culture. Appeals were made to Muslims to become part of the mainstream that was dominated by Hindu symbols and icons. Dainik Jagran wrote in its editorial:

Every Muslim has a full right and freedom to spiritual development according to Koran Sharif and performs according to Islamic culture in their home, but if they want to roam on the Indian Land, then they have to perform according to the mainstream of Indian culture. The offence of rape, which foreign invaders have wreaked on Indian culture, if it would be continued and given divinity, it is a matter of severe insult, and it would be a symbol of the decline of the nation, not of its self-respect. Every nation has this right to protect its freedom and none can snatch this right of Bharatvarsha<sup>120</sup>.

It emphasized on the development of Indian art which could also be an ideological weapon. According to the newspaper, after independence, the nationalist feeling was declining steadily<sup>121</sup>. The danger was obviously from those 'outsiders' against

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<sup>119</sup> 13 January 1993, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6

<sup>120</sup> 18 July 1992, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p.4

<sup>121</sup> *ibid*,

whom the whole Ram Janmabhoomi movement was launched. Referring to the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, Dainik Jagran declared,

It is impossible for average Hindus to bargain further with their self-respect and the nation's self-respect.... Hindus themselves have become second-class citizens in their own country. In the same way, as the mosque was built to destroy the temple, the mosque can be destroyed to build a temple<sup>122</sup>.

In the Hindutva discourse, Mughal period is understood as an important challenge to the Hindu culture. After the Khilafat Movement, there were some efforts made to present positively, some of the Muslim rulers like Akbar and Shahjahan, so as to develop a 'Sanjhi Virasat' (mutual heritage) but such efforts were not much successful as it faced the ire of Hindu nationalists. The institutionalisation of national identities takes place with the help of formal settings like education, news and popular media and various other mediums. Education became one of the tools to circulate the majoritarian idea of nation. Questioning the identity of Mughal rulers, Dainik Jagran argued:

If we were ever asked to choose between Akbar and Sivaji as a defender of Indian culture, then Sivaji must be given importance. Anyways, Akbar was called great because he respected the Indian culture. Some British governors were also liberal towards Indian culture, but we can't call them the defender of Indian culture. Foreign invaders would only be called foreign invader, and their introduction in the same form is in nation's interest.<sup>123</sup>

Thus, Mahmud Ghazni and Babar were demonised as invaders<sup>124</sup>. The newspaper suggested people to look towards these rulers as invaders only and cautioned the Muslim community against accepting them as their ancestors. In contrast, Navbharat Times argued that the current generation of Muslim were being targeted as though they were responsible for Babar's actions<sup>125</sup>. Navbharat Times questioned this understanding about Muslim rulers and wrote in its editorial:

The offensive Hindu mentality has made Babar and foreigner synonymous. From Mohamad Bin Qasim to Mohammad Ali Jinnah, they observe every Muslim from the same viewpoint. This mindset tells that we can re-acquire our glorified identity through the Hindu nation.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> 21 October 1990, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition. p. 4

<sup>123</sup> 3 Feb 1993, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>124</sup> 6 November 1991, Dainik Jagran, Kanpur edition, p. 4.

<sup>125</sup> 26 Dec 1991, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 6.

<sup>126</sup> 31 March 1991, Navbharat Times, Delhi edition, p. 3



#### **4.13. Conclusion**

The detailed analysis of the two Hindi dailies has highlighted the role that Hindi press has played in the stigmatisation of Muslim identity. According to Habermas, the public sphere is a space which would be neutral, inclusive and free from any bias. Contrary to that, Hindi public demonised Muslim identity without giving proper voice to them. In Dainik Jagran, it is only Hindus, preferably upper caste Hindus, who were given a prominent place in any discussion. On the other, Navbharat Times did give some space to Muslim authors and activists to present their viewpoint.

To conclude, it can be said that the Hindi dailies at different levels, the press in general and the Hindi press, in particular, was not neutral and was not merely a provider of news. It interrogated the rights of the minority community and provided legitimacy to the larger politics of Hindutva. It did not seem concerned about the secular values, enshrined in the constitution. The analysis enabled me to conclude that secularism in constitution and secularism in the public sphere, both are two different things. Secularism is only possible through a representative, objective and rational public sphere, a truly ideal one in Habermasian sense. The use of reason in the public sphere is important, especially while discussing the rights and citizenship like concerns. But it seems difficult to refute that political interest would not affect the entire discourse. At the same time, it can be expected that the already established biases would not influence these debates in the public sphere that needs to be deconstructed.

## Chapter-5

### Conclusion

This dissertation has discussed the role of Hindi press and the construction of ‘self’ and ‘other’ in Hindi public sphere. It has elaborated in detail, the different narratives around the idea of nation and nationalism. The idea of other in Hindi public sphere has differentiated between Indic and non-Indic communities which depend on the origin of religion in the defined territorial boundary. Hindi press has not only carried out the idea of nationalism around certain themes but has also constructed the news with its vital potential to influence the larger masses. Benedict Anderson (2006) has only considered the significance of print capitalism to develop the idea of nationalism. In Anderson’s sense, print provided the opportunity in the changing circumstances to develop a sense of belongingness among the communities which constructs ‘self’ and ‘other’. Jurgen Habermas (1991) conceptualisation of the public sphere has also explored the role of Press and its development in Europe. Habermas imagined a public sphere which would be inclusive, democratic and based on the idea of equality, rationality, objectivity and participation of common man.

This dissertation has looked the construction of ‘other’ in the context of the Muslim community in Hindi press. Print- capitalism in India noticed a significant growth during the 1990s. The growth of Hindi press not only suggests its importance but also submits its role in the everyday construction of Nationalist self and other. Jeffrey (2003) has argued that press has only carried out the idea of nationalism rather than constructing it. **This work also supports that press has played a role of carrier of news and themes from the society, but it has also argued that the role of Press, especially Hindi press is not confined to the carrier of the idea, but it has also constructed some of the themes and news which have a major role in the otherisation process.** It is important to note that Hindi press has influenced the larger mass by repeating the same story in different ways, at the same time, it had the power to minimize the impact of news to delete it from the memory of masses. The regular reporting of communal riots, its relation with Muslim community, the construction of news around the same theme, writing editorials to

support the construction of self and other with the special emphasis on the cultural attributes of Hindu community suggests that news is a powerful tool which impacts the construction of community identity in the larger framework. Hindi press did the same to convey the distorted image of Muslim community among their readers.

Ram Janmabhoomi is the reference point of this study. Ram Janmabhoomi was not the only period when the Hindu nationalist ideology revived the myths, past, and traditions, to establish the historicity of the Hindu community. It provided a particular context when the Hindu nationalist movement tried to construct the 'self' and 'other' identities around the theme of nationalism. It is the movement which links past, present as well as the colonial context. It is still a relevant issue in the 20<sup>th</sup> century which demonstrate its vividness. The period of 1989 to 1993 was the peak period of Ram Janmabhoomi movement. During this period Hindu nationalists mobilised Hindus with the aim of a Hindu nation. The differences of views among historians and archaeologists reflect its importance when the issue of the Hindu nation, the historicity of Ram, excavations of important sites of Ramayana and Mahabharata had been discussed around nationalism. One of the important ways to construct the idea of 'self' is the focus on the question of the historicity of communities. Eric Hobsbawm (2000) thesis on Nationalism has suggested on the invention of tradition which is an important base to establish the claim of the existence of communities from time immemorial. Hindu nationalists also claim that Hindu civilization is one of oldest civilization of the world. Oldness gives a sustainability to the claim of the community. It creates a sense of self among all those who shares the same historical memories. On the other hand, it constructs a sense of 'other' for those who are not the part of the 'self'. Some major organizations have played a major role in the entire Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Hindu Mahasabha along with RSS and its sub-organization like VHP, Durga Vahini, Bajrang Dal, helped to reach the movement in different corners of the North India. Primarily, this dissertation is heavily relied on VHP site and the documents it has provided, in a way to understand the logic and base of Hindu nationalists argument of building a Hindu 'self' and Muslim 'other'. I have also viewed the slogans during the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, which is an important way to understand the mobilisation. These slogans are the easy way to reach to the people. Hindu nationalists tried to draw the similarities between Somnath and Ram

Janmabhoomi movement. The Rath Yatra during the Ram Janmabhoomi movement was started from Somnath, to symbolically develop the relation with one of the successful movement of temple construction in Somnath during the 1950s.

The next chapter has focused on the construction of Muslim identity in Hindi public sphere. The development of public sphere from the colonial times and the major changes in its structure in the post-colonial period has also been highlighted. It has also addressed the issue representation in colonial as well as a post-colonial public sphere. The colonial rule has a major role in the formation of Public sphere in North India. The colonial rule didn't only develop the different laws for the Hindu and Muslim communities but also gave a permanence to the Hindu-Muslim riots by codifying in the form of Gazetteer. It has built a relation between press, public sphere, imagined community and the idea of nationalism to focus the Habermassian (1991) conception of the public sphere and has related it with Benedict Anderson's (2006) work on imagined community and the spread of nationalism through print-medium. Partha Chatterjee's (2002) construction of inner and outer domain has been critically analysed and it has been argued that Partha Chatterjee has conceptualised Bengali nationalism as Indian nationalism. However, the relationship of communities in North India was different than Bengal. In Bengal, language played a unifying role, but in North India, there was already a tussle between Hindus and Muslims over the linguistic issues. The conception of the inner and outer domain has itself constructed an insider and outsider realm. It considers that the roots of Indian nationalism are ancient Indian civilization. It rejects the development and changes in the spiritual domain of Indian nationalism over different periods. This chapter has also included the argument of Gyanendra Pandey (2012) with critical analysis. Gyanendra Pandey has discussed that colonial rule constructed the idea of communalism. The colonial rule has a major role in the construction of relation between Hindu and Muslim communities, but it is not the colonial rule only which constructed the idea of communalism. They formed a terminology which can have a role of catalyst in Hindu-Muslim communalism. But, colonial rule didn't draw the entire discourse of communalism. Gyanendra Pandey (2012) has further argued that colonial and post-colonial India adopted the same construction and it got establish, but he has not discussed the reason behind the acceptance of the same colonial construction without any objection. In the same

chapter, I have looked the different juncture of the history when Hindi press constructed the community relations. In this chapter, I have focused on the cow protection movement, the question of partition and Hindi press along with the formation of the public sphere in the post-colonial India where the values of majority religion dominated in the public sphere. There is a direct linkage between the growth of Hindu nationalist wave and the development of Hindi press. This dissertation has argued that during the 1980s Hindu nationalists enter into the media houses. It was the time when Hindi press expanded its coverage and reached to the larger masses. The expansion of education also helped in the expansion of press. The structure of Hindi press had been changed at a larger level with the entry of capital. The commercialisation of Hindi press changed its structure as well as its influence. Commercialisation of Hindi press increased the process of homogenisation in the public sphere. Habermas (1991) in his thesis on Public Sphere has discussed the refeudalisation of Public sphere. The refeudalisation of public sphere suggests the limited representation in the public sphere.

The two selected newspapers for this work, have also played a major role in the construction of 'self' and 'other' while discussing various news stories. The construction of self in these newspapers became possible through news coverage, editorial writing. These news and editorial writings discussed history, myths, traditions and the collective sufferings of Hindu community by the invader Muslim community. There are similarities as well as differences in the reporting of content. Dainik Jagran constructed the category of Indian Muslim and Muslim in general. It reported during Ram Janmabhoomi movement as it is the part of the movement itself. It regularly questioned the Indian identity of Muslims and suggested them to be assimilated into the mainstream Indian culture. It discarded any claim of national identity beyond the mainstream Indian culture. The mainstream Indian culture is a hegemonic idea which is based on the values of Hindu religion. Dainik Jagran has preferably used the term Indianisation and Indian, synonymous to the Hindu religion. The language of Dainik Jagran, seems proactive, which prompted Hindus (specifically Hindu youths) to participate in Ram Janmabhoomi movement. During the same period, the telecast of Ramayana and Mahabharata added newness in the entire mobilisation. It highlighted important news regarding Ram Janmabhoomi in pink and green brackets which demonstrate the significance of Ram Janmabhoomi

for the newspaper (Dainik Jagran). Dainik Jagran drew several references and cited from Islamic texts to construct the idea of 'other'. It argued that those text which suggest their devotees for violence, can't be called Indian. It appealed Islam to change according to the Indian circumstances. To put forward the text of violence, it also constructed the idea of Hindu tolerance and violent nature of Islam. Dainik Jagran wrote extensive editorials on national identity, nationalism, Indianness and communal violence, and it specifically emphasized the involvement of Muslim in these violent activities. Although, Navbharat Times has also discussed the tolerant nature of Hinduism, but it has not referred any contrasted religious identity. It accepted that by nature, Hindu religion is based on the idea of tolerance. It highlighted that 90% cases of communal riots had been started by Muslims and Hindus had only responded after the start of riots.

Dainik Jagran played an important role in the politicisation of Hindu community, but at the same time, it opposed the demand of political representation of Muslim community. It constructed and searched the ancestral roots of Hindu and Muslim communities. It made Ram, the ancestor of all Hindus and Muslim in India. Dainik Jagran constructed the category of 'Rioters' and 'Victim' during the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. It argues that Hindus are the victim community which is suffering the plight of communal riots started by the Muslim communities. Hindus have only responded to Muslim communities against the riots, started by them. It is the Hindu body, which had been counted in communal clashes, as 'Hindus', however, Muslim has been discussed as 'person'. On the other hand, Navbharat Times didn't adopt the similar construction.

However, Navbharat Times has a different way to approach the entire debate of Ram Janmabhoomi and the construction of Muslim 'other'. In its news coverage and editorials, it didn't reflect its inclination towards the Hindu nationalist ideology and ensured the balance reporting. But, still, it can't be argued that it was completely neutral about Ram Janmabhoomi movement. It has been argued in this dissertation that Navbharat Times approached to the critical issues with special editorials and articles. The analysis of these editorials and articles demonstrated its preference to the majoritarian values. Some of the authors, who are known as a sympathiser to Hindu nationalist views, had been given preference in the special editorials. Along with these differences of approach, Navbharat Times suggested

for an agreement to the Muslim community on the question of Ram Janmabhoomi. It also depicted Ram as, the ancestor of all the Indians and claimed him as immortal. In its special editorials, the authors also suggested for the agreement to the Muslim community and depicted the historical narration of violence and tyranny of Muslim invaders.

The differences of opinion is also an important part of Navbharat Times. Navbharat Times didn't only give space to the Hindu nationalists, but it also gave space to secular writers. It highlights the effort of Navbharat Times for making a more democratic and inclusive public sphere.

There are differences as well as similarities between the content of both the newspapers. Both the newspaper used the historical narratives extensively. Pakistan seems the litmus test of nationality for the Muslim community in India. Both the newspapers have used the reference of Pakistan in relation to the Muslim identity in India. The division of India and Pakistan made the relation of communities more static and it was expected to be loyal and patriotic to defined territories. Being patriotic had been assumed as the evident of Indianness. Muslim communities became the suspect communities whose nationhood claim had been questioned as Pakistan had been established on the basis of Islam. The memory of partition has been revived on the regular basis to remind that Muslim communities were solely responsible for the division of their (Hindu) ancient Indian land. The idea of territoriality is an important part of the construction of nationalism as the modern nation-state are based on the conception of citizenship which bonds the communities and state by conferring them certain rights. Hindi press demanded to seize the citizenship rights of Muslim communities on the suspicion over their loyalty. Dainik Jagran suggested Muslims to not to indulge in the divisionary politics. However, in its special editorials, Navbharat Times, argued in favour of the idea of 'Akhand Bharat' or suggested to exchange the Hindu and Muslim population, as it was demanded during the partition. The memory of partition is a way to 'mobilise the community identity' against a constructed enemy identity.

The similarities between both the newspapers are that both have discussed the similar issues, but, in different ways. Both the newspapers made Ram, the ancestor of Indians, but at the same time, Navbharat Times didn't support a violent form of

nationalism. Navbharat Times discussed Ram Janmabhoomi movement, as the political and cultural movement of Hindu nationalist, while highlighting its role in the vote bank politics. On the other hand, Dainik Jagran made it completely, a religious issue where it argued that majority Hindu community can't tolerate the tyranny of Muslim for so long. Navbharat Times used a moderate language and suggested minority community for the sacrifice to save the nation from violent nationalism.

The issue of language was one of the major questions in the Hindi Public sphere either in colonial period or post-colonial period. Literature and Press have played an essential role to disseminate the language to the people. During the 1990s the question of homogenisation of language became a burning issue. It was demanded to write Urdu in Devanagari script. Both the newspapers has also discussed the question of Hindi and Urdu language. The issue of language came in publicity after the decision of Uttar Pradesh government to confer it the status of the second language. Dainik Jagran completely rejected the idea of the second language to the Urdu language and linked it to the Muslim community. It reminded again that Urdu had a major role in the partition of India and Pakistan. Unlike, Dainik Jagran, Navbharat Times, raised the genuine concerns regarding the upliftment of Urdu language.

In the case of Dainik Jagran, it exemplified openly that it supported the Hindu nationalist movement. On the other hand, it is interesting to look the differences in the editorials and special editorials of Navbharat Times. It seems important to analyse the language, content and the similarities and differences in the special editorials of Navbharat Times. It is an important way to look the entire discourse that had been created by Navbharat Times. The paradox of approaches has made it difficult to argue whether it supported the Hindu nationalist construction of 'Hindu self' and 'Muslim other' or rejected it. It is also the limitations of this study that I couldn't look parallel the organizational structure of both the newspapers in detail. This dissertation has only tried to understand this dimension from some of the literary sources.

Public sphere works on the basis of reasoning, representation, and inclusion. Press has an important role in bringing the important questions as well as construct a



discourse in the public sphere. It draws its content from the cultural milieu where it is located, at the same time, it also constructs the debate by own which is one of the major features of the refeudalised public sphere. Hindi press induces its content from the established Hindi public sphere where the question of the nation, nationalism, national identity, and culture were a core part of the debate and discussion from the freedom struggle. The representation of the community in the press is one of the important questions which ensures the participation of the community in the formation of discourse and makes it more inclusive, however, both Hindi press are dominated by the upper caste Hindus only, as it had already been discussed by Robin Jeffrey<sup>127</sup>. The paucity of Muslim representation confined Hindi press to a certain section of the society and it couldn't address the real issues of the 'other' community. The objectivity of press depends on its inclusiveness, but a larger section of Hindi press not only failed to include each and every community of society but also stigmatized them by their reporting, editorial as well as advertisement.

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<sup>127</sup> <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/missing-from-the-indian-newsroom/article3294285.ece>

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