The Changing Content of Indian Nationalism (Rise of Hindu Militancy in the 1980s)

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled "THE CHANGING CONTENT OF INDIAN NATIONALISM (Rise of Hindu Militancy in the 1980s)" which is being submitted by MUNESHWAR YADAV for the award of the DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY is his own work. It may be placed before the examiners for evaluation. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or elsewhere.

(PROF. C.P. BHAMBHRI)
CHAIRPERSON

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SUPERVISOR

TO

MY   MOTHER

AND   FATHER

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The major objective of this study is to analyse and understand 'The Changing Content of Indian Nationalism' (Rise of Hindu Militancy In The 1980s). Nationalism is the product of multiple historical processes. As a dynamic concept, 'the concrete historical process'[1] has its specific content which is conditioned by time and space. There can be various forces at work which influence and in turn are influenced by nationalism.

The subject becomes significant, at this particular juncture of human history when, various national and ethnic identities are on the march, irrespective of political organisations and ideological commitments of the state. Whether it is in Assam, North East, the Punjab or Kashmir in India, Quebec in Canada, Lithuania, Moldova and Lativia in the erstwhile Soviet Union, Croatia and slovenia in Yugoslavia or the Blacks in South Africa --all these nationalities are demanding their liberation and self-emancipation. Even during the Indian freedom struggle, there were several circuits within the circuit in operation - local and national - but the commonality of task to liberate themselves from colonial subjugation brought them together.

The scientific and technological revolution, the decline of feudalism, and the emergence of upward mobile

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1.   Bipan Chandra, The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India, (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1966. Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India, (New Delhi: Orient Longman Ltd., 1979.

middle class have made their significant impact on the origin and evolution of the modern concept of nationalism. It has been one of the motivating factors of the mdodern world in which, the loyalty and allegiance of the individual are held to be due primarily to the nation state. It is the reflection of the desire and "general will" of a people to be united as sovereign. Throughout history, men have been moved by an attachment to their native soil and to local traditions and conventions, but the nation state as we know it today is essentially the product of the modern era.

The nation state is not only the ideal, natural or moral form of political organisation rather an indispensable framework for all social, cultural, and economic activities. It was in the 16th and 17th centuries that it developed in western Europe.[2] Subsequently it has spread through the five continents of the world. It has been immensely significant in the 20th century – Asia, Africa and Latin America.

India came of age as a nation, it inherited powerful humanistic tradtions emanting from a dynamic interaction between the western world and reawakened orient in response to the western challenge. "Dominant among the values that were imbibed as a result of this interaction were those of freedom and democracy, of national self determination, of

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2.   Hans Kohn, The Idea of nationalism (New York: Macmillan, 1944). The Age of Nationalism (New York, 1962). Nationalism, its Meaning and History (New Jersey: Princeton, 1955).

equality and social justice, of service to the poor and society at large together sysnthesised in the Gandhian concept of <u>Swarajya</u>".[3]

MAIN CONCERNS OF THE STUDY:

This study is an attempt to comprehend certain aspects of the change in the context of Indian nationalism. The context and content of Indian nationalism requires a historical perspective. Therefore, the central focus is to understand the rise and growth of Indian nationalism in the context of freedom struggle. Secondly, the long history of anti-colonial struggle, the emergence of nationalism as a concrete phenomenon - and finally the new independent nation-state of India. An attempt was made to create a political order in which each segment of nascent nationalism can find its proper place. Another important aspect of this study is to explain the major trends and tendencies of the secular polity of India. First, the appropriation of the concept of nationalism purely in the context of majoritarian hegemony. Secondly, the attempt is made by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS) to redefine Indian nationalism in terms of Hindu Rashtra (Nationalism).

This dissertation after the study of different stages of Indian nationalism claims that any attempt of 'totalisation', to capture the essence in terms of Hindu Nationalism would be futile, erroneous, empirically untenable

and dangerous for the unity and integrity of the <u>nation</u>. In fact, India is a multi-national state consisting of innumerable, socio-cultural, and ethnic identities.

In order to reflect on the subject - "The Changing Content of Indian Nationalism", let us put forward a few qustions: What is Indian nationalism? What were the aims and objectives? What has happened to them over the years? What are the causes and consequences of the tyranny of majority and insecurity of the minority? Therefore, one must explore compelling factors which make people to rebel, revolt and ask for liberation in the liberated India. This throws up certain questions regarding the ability of Indian nation-state to encompass within the due development of various 'ethnic'[4] and cultural identities.

<u>METHODOLOGY</u>:

A historical - analytical approach has been followed, because of the fact that Indian nationalism is itself the

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3. Rajni Kothari, <u>State Against Democracy</u>, New Delhi (1988), p.24.

4. "The <u>ETHNIE</u> is a people who share a common history, tradition, language and life-style, but are unattached to a homeland. The term 'ethnicity' is an American coinage in contrast to the notion of 'ethnie', which is a French word. The U.S. is a country' of immigrants and a poly-ethnic society. The point to be noted is that the currency of terms and concepts in social science need not necessarily reflect their appropriateness but the political and economic prowess of their progenitors.'

- T.K. Oommen(1990)".

product of history. Again, the changes over the years in the nature and character of Indian nationalism can be understood in historical perspective. The essence of the continuity and change can be captured only with a sense of history.

Sources:

Mostly this study relies upon secondary sources. It relies on commentaries and studies of historians and analysts of Indian politics.

Outlines of the Argument:

1.	Chapter	:	INDIAN NATIONALISM: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
	1.1		Cambridge School
	1.2		Early Marxist Writings
	1.3		Nationalist School
	1.4		Subaltern studies
2.	Chapter	:	THE CONTENT OF INDIAN NATIONALISM
	2.1		Legacies of freedom struggle
	2.2		Aims and Objectives
	2.3		Nehruvian and Post Nehruvian eras.
3.	Chapter	:	INDIAN NATIONALISM IN 1980s
	3.1		Changing orientation of the State
	3.2		Appropriation of Indian Nationalism
	3.3		An Attempt to Re-define it.

In the first chapter, "Nationalism: A Historical Perspective" an attempt has been made to explain different approaches to the study of Indian national movement. Some of the major approaches are: the imperialist school, the Cambridge school, the early Marxist writings by Rajni Palme Dutt,[5] A.R. Desai,[6] and others; The nationalist Marxist School; and the latest Subaltern School. All of them are challenging as well as challengeable. They reflect conflicting views on the rise and growth of Indian nationalism; the nation-in-the-making. The point we have been trying to make is that mono-causal, unilinear kind of explanation can never be acceptable to all. A creative critique of the existing theoriesand thereby the evolution of a historical perspective on Indian nationalism has been the key idea in this chapter. If all interpretations are equally valid or false, how can we criticise one and privilege another? How can 'Subaltern' history claim a status more privileged than elite history? "Even within the hermeneutic (especially the interpretation of scripture) tradition the concept of critique has now found an important place (J. Thompson)".[7]

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5. Rajni Palme Dutt, _India Today_ (Originally published in 1940), Manisha, Calcutta, 1986.

6. A.R. Desai, _Social Background of Indian Nationalism_ (Bombay, 1948).

7. N. Bhattacharya, _Seminar_, October 1987, Rethinking Marxist History, p.34.

In the second chapter, 'The content of Indian Nationalism' - central thrust of the argument is the historic ideas of liberty, development and democracy as the major driving forces of freedom struggle against the colonial rule. The common human suffering and shared sense of the belief system of the pople compelled them to make tremendous sacrifices. In the context of imperial repressive state structure, one can quote Herder, "nature creates nations not states. Millions of people on the globe live without state[8] - father and mother, child friend and brother through we become happy. what the state can give us is artificial, mechanical arrangements, unfortunately it robs us.[9] Herder raises the banner of revolt against the uniformity and imposition of another culture.[10] "His nationalism is not

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8. The state in the form of its monstrous domination, and excessively centralised power which creates apoplexy at the top and anaemia at the bottom has to be rejected.

9. As the British state did it - hence, the perception of a colonial state.

10. Here, the point that has been made is to be understood in two senses:

    a) uniformity should not be imposed from the above. One should not deny the multiplicity of culture and tradition - where the 'self' of human being gets its reflection. For example, modernity becomes the creed of the micro-scopic minority, totally bereft of popular content.

    b) 'cultural uniformity' in terms of Hindi, Hindu, Hindutva and Hindu Rashtra" cannot be acceptable to the masses. Any attempt of imposition would be loss of the essence of freedom and the 'composite culture' of Indian nationalism.

political rather a cultural entity".[11] It has been one of the vital points of people's participation in anti-colonial struggle and also constitute the content of Indian nationalism.

"The leading ideas of the nationalist elite were sovereignty, unity, order, a strong state, secularism, democracy and parliamentarianism, economic self sufficiency and the need for social and economic reform".[12] The constitution of India makes a sharp break with the British colonial past, though not with British political practices. Firstly, the constitution adopts in total the Westminister form of parliamentary government rather than the mixed parliamentary-bureaucratic authoritarian system which actually existed in India. Secondly, fundamental rights were included in the supreme document of independent India, but not in the Government of India act of 1935. Thirdly, the constitution introduced universal adult suffrage.

Secularism has been widely shared and deeply felt value of the Indian freedom struggle. "It has two major aspects – negative and positive. Negatively, the secular idea stands against communal and political demands of any sort based on religion. The concept of secular electorates had to be replaced by joint electorates so that all communities could

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11.   Isaiah Berlin, Vico and Herder, p.155.

12.   Paul Brass, The New Cambridge History of India: Politics of India since independence, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.10.

discuss issues of economic well being and advancement on common ground. Positively, it means every socio-cultural group in India is entitled to promote, preserve and protect its cultural life, its language and script".[13]

Observers like Myron Weiner, W.H. Morris Jones and others tried to encapsulate the process of contradiction and adjustment in our national politics. Several 'idioms' are being used in fundamental conflict with each other. One finds the 'modern' or 'western' idiom centred in the ideas of the nationalist elite and the institutional arrangements in New Delhi; secondly, a "traditional idiom" rooted in the kind, caste and commercial relations of village, locality and province and finally, a saintly idiom associated with Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave - which involves self-less devotion to constructive work for the good of entire society. It is something immense from the blind imitation of the West as well as free from the contamination by the archaic superstitions and feudal practices of Indian society. All these things put together constitute the content of Indian nationalism.

"The political leadership of 1870s and 1880s had a vision of United India, "secular and modernist in content". But due unity had been fragile and superficial as it was confined to an anglicised upper class elite "Bhadra lok".[14]

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13.   Ibid., p.2.

14.   Sumit Sarkar, Swadeshi Movement in Bengal (1903-1908), People's Publishing House, 1973; Modern India (1885-1947), Macmillan, 1985.

After the negotiated transfer of power the same social forces captured political power at the national level. It is quite apparent today that the ruling coalition of classes is not homogenious. Arun Bose in his book "India's Social Crisis" characterises India as a democracy of contradictory forces". It is a contradictory conglomeration of classes say, industrial and agrarian, rural and urban, anglicised, upper class elite, and the self-assertive vernacular speaking rural elite etc.

The politics of accomodation of contradictory forces has its own limitations. There is an uneasy relationship and critical balance between the industrial classes and the agrarian kulaks.

But it is this kind of social forces (the upper class elite) that constitute the most important content of Indian nationalism, although a microscopic minority which tries to shape and control the majority. In fact, "the bourgeoisie creates the world after its own image".[15]

In the liberal democracy of India, the public consciousness moves from one euphoria to another. From the 1950s to 1960s, it was atom for peace, the final solution of energy crisis, in 60s and 70s, it was the Green Revolution; a major shift from begging bowl to generous philsanthropy; in the 70s and 80s. It was operation flood the talisman for

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15.   Karl Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, (1848).

malnutrition. To quote Ashis Nandy, "in this environment it does not matter whether technology is innovative or replicative, moral or immoral, obsolete or new. For technology comes to represent an escape from the dirtiness of politics"

The masses are alienated from the main stream politics of modernization and development. The prrincipal problem and its manifestation is that various national and ethnic identities in India demand for their national self-determination. Its too difficult to call them something like popular people's uprisings, since each one treads lonely path isolated from others. And in that isolation lies the seeds of each one's defeat. The threat from a highly centralised bourgeor's state power is fundamentally to diversity that is spelling the doom off our age old inter-communal, inter religious harmony and unity.

In the third chapter, "Indian Nationalism in the 1980s" - the central focus of the argument is on a major shift in the orientation of Indian - nation state. In fact, the closing years of the Indira Gandhi era were marked by the break down of the secular consensus moulded by Nehru. In the event, the leading ruling class party was apprehensive that its close identification with the minorities bore the risk of alienating many of their constituents . In their calculation, Muslim had begun to drift away from the congress in States like U.P., Bihar and West Bengal. "In the 1980 elections in

Bihar and U.P.; the Lok Dal carved out victories in Muslim dominated constituencies. The gradual diminishing of the congress base made it possible for communally oriented groups to step into the political vacuum. It is interesting to note that the congress itself responded by appropriating communal themes, especially themes of Hindu hegemony, that appeal to the Hindi heartland".[16]

It is not only the appropriation of Indian nationalisation in terms of the hegemony of the majority (with 83% Hindu population)[17], but the 're-definition' of Indian nationalism in terms of "Hindu Rashtra" which is most dangerous for the unity and integrity of India. Here, it would be wrong to say that militant Hindu nationalism is a recent phenomenon. Our contention is that since the late nineteenth century there have been numerous movements of "Hindu" political mobilisation. "These include Gaurakshini (Cow protection) Sabhas formed in 1890s, which agitated for laws preventing cows slaughter in India from time to time, and launched a major mass movement as recently as 1960s in favour of Hindi language in the 'Devanagari' script. Hindu Mahasabha has been trying to create a Hindu political community and to define the Indian nation through symbols

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16. See Zoya Hasan: Changing Orientation of the State and the Emergence of Majoritarianism in the 1980s. Social Scientist, vol.18, nos.8-9, August-September 1990.

17. See T.K. Oommen: State and Society in India: Studies in Nation Building (Delhi: Sage Publications, 1990), p.38.

drawn exclusively from "Hindu" text, beliefs and practices and from non-Muslim history".[18]

Today, militant Hindu nationalists organisations insist that Hindu and Indian are virtually interchangeable categories. The message has been spread well beyond the confines of their organisational structures. The subtle attempt is being made to 'secularise' the meaning of the term Hindu by going back to its earlier meaning "native of India" and identifying India as the nation of Hindus (Paul Brass, 1990).

Therefore, the major shift in the ideas and ideals, the structures and institutions,[19] programmes and policies together constitute "The Changing Content of Indian Nationalism".

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18. Paul Brass, <u>Ethnicity</u> and <u>Nationalism Theory</u> and <u>Comparison</u>, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991).

19. Those political analysts and commentators who were never tired of the concepts like 'nation-building', 'nation-in-the-making' - are making the point of 'de-institutionalisation' (Kothari, 1988); something like 'political decay' (Samuel P. Huntington) and the 'Crisis' of liberal democracy in India.

within Hindu elitist, almost comprador, framework."[15]

Class striving for class hegemony and social production is important. Without such a class 'the cultural influence of intellectuals is reduced to an essentially abstract phenomenon giving no consistent direction of significance social renewal. Because mere acceptance of new ideas or their original structure of assumptions did not in themselves mean much; major changes in thought were brought about 'by the capacity of nascent social forces to achieve goals of social transformation, which were not clarified in the original postulates of reasoning or speculation. In fact, "their influence is limited to tiny intellectual groups who have no creative bonds with a broader social consensus".[16]

Partha Chatterjee opines "never did the thought occur in the minds of these newly enlightened intelligentsia, despite their fondness for justice and liberty to question the legitimacy of British rule in India."[17]

The perception about colonial rule was entirely different. The very existence of British power was regarded as the final and most secure guarantee against lawlessness, superstition and despotism. One finds excellent example in

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15. Partha Chatterjee, 1986. P-24.

16. Ashok Sen, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and his exclusive milestone (Calcutta-Ridhi India, 1977) P157

17. Partha Chatterjee, 1986. P 26

Dinbandhu's "Neel Darpan".[18] Here, an enlightened liberal, conscious of his individual rights, willing to go to great lengths to defend those rights against recalcitrant officials, even succumbing to 'brief intermittent burst of violence, but all the while believing in the fundamental legitimacy of the existing social order.

In the early nationalist thinkers, the formulation of problem encompasses a great deal of complexities in the relations between thought, culture and power. And there lies the fact of the effectivity of thought as a vehicle of change.

Secondly, the relation of thought to the existing culture of the society is not always clear. The existing culture is the way in which the social code provides a set of correspondences between signs and meanings. Therefore, the logical question that a researcher can ask - Had the nationalist thought been succeessful in replacing the old, obsolete structure of society?

Thirdly, can there be a framework of analysis and understanding neutral to the cultural context? Was the national movement completely neutral to it?

Fourthly, when the new framework of thought is directly associated with a relation of dominance in the cross cultural

18. See Ranjit Guha, "Neel Darpan - The image of a peasant revolt in a liberal mirror"; Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol. 2, No.1 (Oct 1974)

context of power, what, in the new cultural context, are the specific changes which occur in the original categories and relations within the domain of thought? That is to say, if relations of dominance and subordination are perceived as existing between cultures, which is what happens in the colonial rule, what are the specific ways in which frameworks of nationalist thought conceived in the context of the dominant culture, received and transformed in the subordinate culture?

Finally, the above said relation between thought and culture have a bearing on crucial question - the changing relations of power within the given society under colonial domination. Because the social consequences of a particular framework of thought produced in metropolitan countries would be drastically different from the colonised countries; the historical correspondence between thought and change witnessed in the age of enlightenment in the West would not be obtained in the colonised East. We would have to answer the question what are the specific relations between thought and change which do obtain in our parts of the globe?

Unlike the sociological determinist who is satisfied with the supposedly empirical 'fact' that all nationalist leaderships manage 'somehow or other' to transcend the problems of cross cultural relativism inherent in the colonial situation. But the question of fundamental significance is the relationship between colonialism and

nationalism, and secondly, the specific structure of domination which is built under the aegis of the post-colonial national state.

The critique of the 1970s made a serious attempt to damage the old structure of assumptions about the Indian 'renaissance'. It emphasised at numerous points the impossibility of making the distinction between progressive and a conservative trend within the 19th century intelligentsia. In fact, the whole intelligentsia shared the same presuppositions on most fundamental questions. But those presuppositions were neither unambiguously modern, nor unambiguously national. Liberal secular and rational attitudes were invariably compromised by concessions to scriptural or canonical authority and individual's material advancement. Sentiments of nationalism flowed out of an unconcealed faith in the basic goodness of the colonial order and the progressive support of the colonial state.

All this reflected the absence of a fundamental social class infused by a revolutionary urge to transform society and to stamp it with the imprint of its unquestioned hegemony. India's 'renaissance' had no historical links with the revolutionary mission of a progressive bourgeoisie, seeking to create a nation in its own image'. Partha Chatterjee says, "as the harbinger of a bourgeois and national revolution, the 'renaissance' was partial, fragmented, indeed it was a failure".

Therefore, what was meant to be modern became increasingly alienated from the masses. What seemed to assert greater ideological sway over the nation were newer forms of conservatism. The central features of Gandhi's thought "Hind Swaraj" is the negation of progress as well as European science.[19] And yet these movements in thought were themselves premised on the same presuppositions - 'modern', presuppositions as those of renaissance.

The relations between culture and politics as suggested in the writings of Antonio Gramsci, has brought to the foreground of discussion, several problems regarding the conventional Marxist approach to the "national and colonial question" and the nature of 'nation-state' in post colonial society. "In the East as well as the West, Marxism had to reject the interpretation scheme based on the relation of cause and effect between structure and superstructure. It had to reintroduce the concept of social relations of production in political science".[20]

Nationalism denied the alleged inferiority of the colonised people. It also asserted that a backward nation could 'modernise' itself while retaining its cultural

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19. For details see Romain Rolland's Mahatma Gandhi: A study in Indian nationalism; as quoted by Partha Chatterjee, 1986.
20. Leonardo Paggi; Gramsci's General Theory of Marxism: In Chartal Mouffe, ed Gramsci and Marxist theory (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 13-67. Quoted by Partha Chatterjee; 1986

identity. It thus produced a discourse in which even, as it challenged the colonial claim to political domination; it also accepted the premises of modernity on which colonial domination was based - say the police, military and the entire immense structure of bureaucracy. These contradictory elements in nationalist discourse are yet to be understood properly. Because one finds the same logic of development and modernisation as the dominant order of the day. Similar kind of argument is found in the works of Subaltern school. Today, it is possible to talk of a ' new social history'.[21] The focus is shifting away from economy and politics to issues of culture, consciousness and power. The earliest Marxist book by R.P. Dutt and M.N. Roy were written in the context of anti-imperialist struggle and meant as interventions within the movement. They were concerned with the most apparent aspects of colonial exploration and the class basis of the national movement. In the post-independent India these isues continued to be explored but at a different level of complexity. Confronted with the problems of a backward economy, economists were preoccupied with issues of productivity constraints and resource allocation, while

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21. Sumit Sarkar 'Popular' movements and 'middle class' leadership in late colonial India: Perspectives and problems of a history from below (Delhi 1983); Social History: Predicaments and possibilities. Economic and Political Weekly, 1985 June 22-29, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya; Presidential address, Indian history congress, Modern Indian History, 1982; "Paradigms Lost; Notes on Social History in India" Economic and Political Weekly Annual Number 1982 April.

Marxist historians reflected on the roots of under development. By the 1970s the mode of production became the central issue of debate amongst Marxists, and younger scholars trooped off to study 'agrarian transitions' in the different regions of India.

In the meantime, since the 1950s, a series of important marxist studies on the national movement had been published.[22] General surveys were followed by numerous regional monographs.[23] It was a shift of a totally different order. Initially the organisational categories were in a familiar mould: a concern with organisation, social basis, programmes, leadership tactics and strategy. But an increasing pre-occupation with the nature of popular initiative was evident.

It was only in the 1980s that 'History from below' acquired a greater popularity, particularly with the publication of Subaltern Studies.[24] The earlier marxist

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22. A.R. Desai; Social Background of Indian Nationalism (Bombay 1948). Bipin Chandra, Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India (New Delhi, 1966).

23. Sumit Sarkar, Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903 to 1908 (New Delhi, 1973). Gyan Pandey. Ascendancy of Congress in U.P., 1926 to 34. A study in Imperfect mobilisation (Delhi 1978); Majid Siddiqui, Unrest in North India: United provinces 1981-82 (New Delhi, 1978). David Hardiman, Peasants Nationalism of Gujarat (New Delhi, 1981)

24. Ranjit Guha ed; Subaltern Studies; Writings on South Asian History and Society. Vol 1-4 (New Delhi).

tradition came under attack as being 'elitist', concerned as it was with the elites rather than the subalterns. The subordinate groups, it was argued, appeared in this 'elitist' historiography as an inert object of mobilisation and not as human object making their own history. The Subaltern studies agreed with E.D. Thompson, Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm and others, that workers and peasants also have their mind, and it was necessary to understand their vision of the world, their practices, their way of life. Therefore, it becomes imperative to rethink our agendas of research, reorder our definitions of historical relevance and our notion of historical facts. Working class culture, codes of peasant consciousness, spirit possession, crime and criminality, desease and death are becoming important themes of marxist concern. Now the general trend is to study the symbolic order, perceptions and discourses.[25]

Historians are thinking the relations between culture and economy, material and ideal, being and consciousness, objectivism and relativism, structure and process, teleology and progress This kind of approach is against the logic of reductionism. In England and France, social history developed in opposition to political history. Politics, excommunicated for over a generation as the subject of old fashioned history; was rehabiliated in France in the late

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25.   N. Bhattacharya. Seminar October 1987. P. 31

1960s as the history of power, authority and institutions. In India, the new social history does not attempt similar rupture with the domain of politics. Issues of power and idealogy, domination and subordination, conflict, struggle and insurrection, remain integral to most marxist projects.

The trend against reductionism is nothing new in the Marxist historical tradition of India. Bipan Chandra's 'The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India (1966)' is a critique of a deterministic theory of ideology - the tendency to read off ideology and consciousness from a class position. In the highly reductive Marxism of Rajni Palme Dutt nationalism appeared as a direct articulation of bourgoeis interests, and political leadership acquired meaning only when the leaders were seen as 'agents' of specific classes: so Gandhi became the 'mastiff' (watch dog) of the bourgeoisie, the 'betrayer' of the masses.[26] On Chandra's framework, ideology, leaders, parties, were granted 'relative autonomy'. Anti reductionism has been the consistent feature in the writings of several other historians (Barun De, Asok Sen, Sumit Sarkar, K.N. Panikkar, S. Bhattacharya, etc.). Now the argument has been extended to the study of 'crowd' action, working class behaviour, aspects of peasant militancy.

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26. For details see Rajni Palme Dutt, India Today Manisha, Calcutta, 1946.

In Subaltern Studies, the subordinate classes have a more active and creative presence. Statements of leaders or political programmes are seen as carrying no universal message. Different meanings were constructed by different classes and groups, and often in contradiction to the construction of leaders. Subaltern actions derived their intelligibility from these specific interpretations, from the way messages were decoded, and not from the absolute logic of a universal programme.

The argument deepens our understanding of the nature of popular action and experience. But critics say reductionism persists, in an inverted form. Codes, rules, norms, values, rituals, pre-figure and govern action, perception, interpretation etc. have their own meanings depending upon the specificity of context. The peasant rebel, in Guha's fascinating and highly influential book, which sets out to negate the world 'could do so only by translating backwards into the semi-feudal language of politics to which he was born'.[27] Discussing the amazing freedom of the rumour process, the transformation of utterances in the process of circulation, Guha says: 'this freedom is not unlimited. A rumour can be improvised only to the extent that the relevant codes of the culture in which it operates permit.'

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27.   Ranjit Guha, Elementary Aspects of Peasant insurgency in colonial India (New Delhi, 1983) P. 76

Challenge to political authority was in terms of 'pre-formed schemes or code of political thinking' and spoken utterances were assimilated, to 'pre-existing ideological patterns. Similar formulation are to be commonly found in Subaltern Studies. Thus, it appears that cultural norms are something like tradition, pre-given and pre-structured not constituted and reconstituted through practice; actions become pre-regulated, and perceptions are pre-defined. N. Bhattacharya calls it determinism in the reverse form.

Instead of 'economic' being determinant, 'politics' gains command, or culture governs. This problem is linked to a continued discretist treatment of these spheres a tendency to see them as distinct discreet entities. Their inter connection is never desired, but their domains in effect remain separate. Unless this separation is transcended and attempts are made to work out their mutual mediations, reductionism of one sort or the other is bound to recur. That the standard opposition betwen 'material' and 'ideal'/'symbolic' is false. It has been increasingly recognised by those who have attempted to develop the dialectical rather than the reductive perspective.

To E.P. Thompson and Godelier, 'Material experience, the meaning of life, is culturally structured'. 'Kinship relations, presupposing as they do rules governing marriage, consanguinity, inheritance, can be very much a part of

relations of production'. Social relations cannot be produced and reproduced without their representation in thought without symbolic ordering. Relations of power are formed and sustained by everyday social practices and legitimating discourses, through the mobilisation of meaning, thought social and cultural hegemony.[28]

Many of the Subaltern School share a deep commitment to a concept of structure borrowed from a variety of structuralisms - linguistic, anthropological, Althussarian and to some extent from some historians of France. On the other hand, their emphasis on 'making' derives from the presuppositions of 'history from below'. Where the static promises of the former is not always reconciled with the constitutive perspective of the latter.

In Subaltern Studies of Indian nationalism, human activity is seen trapped within pre-constituted structres of consciousness and power. The limits and patterns of Subaltern understanding and action, even in insurrection, was pre-defined by the internal grammer of a pre-existent language. The creativity and constitutive power of the Subalterns could not transform the limits which these structures imposed. Such assumptions seriously compromise the fundamental premise of Subaltern Studies, that Subalterns make their own history.[29]

28. As quoted by N. Bhattacharya in his article "Rethinking Marxist History". Seminar October 1987. P 32

29. Ibid. p.33

In fact, the relation is one of 'dialectical tension', if one is subordinated to the other, their internal relation is rendered either unproblematic, or the argument becomes inconsistent.

If all intepretations are equally valid or false, how can we criticise one and privilege another? How can Subaltern history claim a status more previleged than 'elite history' of Indian nationalism. Recent trends in human sciences suggest the possibility and the need to go beyond both objectivism and re-lativism (Rechard Bernstein, Ricoeur, Bourdieu, Charles Taylor). Even within the Hermeneutic tradition the concept of critique has now found an important place.

The teleological aspect in the national history of India has a multivariant existence. In the colonial discourse, of scholar officials of the 19th century, India was seen as progressing towards a whig society through legal educational and social reforms under the benign guidance of their benevolent masters. British faith in the 'pupil's progress' paradigm was weakened by the late nineteenth century, but the whig teleology was appropriated by Indian notionalists.[30] The enlightenment ideals of nationality and progress were accepted as the natural basis for the

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30. S. Bhattacharya, "Paradigms lost" as quoted by Partha Chatterjee 1986

development of the nation. Indian history was seen as the unfolding of the ideals of liberal democracy and nationalism. The spirit of national unity was traced back to the remote past, kingship in ancient India was interpreted as constitutional monarchy, the social and cultural movements in the early nineteenth century were compared to the European Renaissance. The idea of freedom, it was assumed, spread through education, and social reforms led to national awakening.

Although, the argument shifted in the early marxist accounts of national movement but teleological perspectives continued to persist. Instead of seeking the intelligentsia as the prime bearers of the spirit of nationalism and freedom, popular manifestations of nationalist spirit were highlighted. Articulation of nationalism in its embryonic forms, was discovered in all popular revolts of the nineteenth century. The rebellions upto 1857 became the first phase of national struggle, the revolt of 1857 itself was termed as the 'first war of independence'. 'Renaissance' remained the relevant model for studying socio-religious movements.

This teleological thinking came under severe attack in the 1960s. "In fact, it is anachronistic to talk of constitutional monarchy in ancient India [31] or discover

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31. See Romila Thapar, The past and prejudice (Delhi 1975).

nationalist ideals in the early nineteenth century, or apply the concept of 'renaissance' to the colonial situation. In any historical discourse on nationalism, ideas and institutions had to be analysed through concepts appropriate to the specific historical context. It would be illegitimate to expect a person to express himself or herself through categories unavailable at that time . Such kind of discourse may be at the 'elite' level and hence the history from above.

A historian's task is to study the nationalist ideology through the various phases of its development. The concept of nationalism cannot be extended back to the period before the late nineteenth century. The post 1880s period may be regarded as the less problematic period of the unfolding of nationalist. This is the universal theme of the period. Each nationalist leader should be studied in the context of his complex thought structure with all its contradictions and ambivalences. The concept of nation-in-the making provides one major principle of intelligibility in modern Indian history. It also offers the principle criteria of relevance in drawing up research agendas. Regional studies are undertaken to explore the manifestation at a local level, and amongst diferent classes, of the unfolding of the grand process.

It would be difficult to operate with a thorough going anti-teleological perspective. For this requires that we

suspend any notion of where the national history is moving towards. We refuse to construct a vision of a world as the basis of existence and action. In fact, this vision surfaces even in accounts which criticise teleology. Ranjit Guha sees the peasant rebel of the 19th century India as 'the infantile, blundering and alas invariably frustrated precursor of a democratic revolution in the sub-continent, who had set out to learn the very first lessons in power...' One does not find any ambiguity about the telos towards which the history of peasant insurrection leads. The logical conclusion of a consistent anti-teleological perspective can only be an argument for quietism or inactivity which is difficult to reconcile with any notion of Marxist practices.

This does not mean to disregard the critique of whig teleology. Because it is essential to reject a notion of unilinear progress of the nation-state, and take account of cycles, reversals, or the dialectic between contestatory tendencies. It is imperative on our part to reject the history which is ethnocentric bias.

Finally, a dialogical encounter created space for divergent voices, in tense challenging relation to each other. The encounter has to be dialogical, in the sense, Bakhtin defined it, rather than monological. It proposes a 'persuasive discourse' on nationalism which follows for 'responsive understanding' of, as well as vigorous struggle

with other discourses, internal and external to the tradition of Marxism itself.

To conclude, Indian nationalism has constituted itself into a state idealogy. It has appropriated the life of the nation into the life of the state. It is rational and progressive, a particular manifestation of the universal march of reason. It has accepted the global realities of power, and found a place within that scheme of things. But the question is - "has the history of nationalism exhausted itself?" Such a conclusion is unwarranted. For hardly anywhere in the post-colonial world has it been possible for the nation state to fully appropriate the life of the nation into its own. Everywhere the intellectual moral leadership of the ruling classes is based on a spurious ideological unity. The figures are clearly marked. Where then will the critique emerge at nationalism? How will nationalism supersede itself? A historical discourse can only struggle with its own terms. Its evolution will be determined by history itself.[32]

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32. Partha Chatterjee; 'The constitution of Indian Nationalist Discourse in Bhikhu Parekh and Thomas Panthan,ed.Political discourse, explorations in Indian and western political thought. (London: Sage Publications, 1987), P. 265

CHAPTER III
INDIAN NATIONALISM
IN THE 1980S

* INTRODUCTION

* HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

* ELEMENTS OF HINDU NATIONALISM

* CONTEXT OF THE 1980s

* STRATEGY OF BJP, VHP.

The 1980s witnessed significant shifts in the Indian political processes. Firstly, there were major changes in the people's participation from the radical socio-economic issues to their steady involvement in communal sectarian conflicts. Secondly, since the beginning of 1980s, communal mobilisation has become a dominant mode of political activity and is seen now as a long term trend in politics. While the political mobilisation of the 1970s was based on serious socio-economic problems which was essentially democratic, anti-authoritarian and secular in character, in contrast, the mass discontent and dissatisfaction of the 1980s has not been articulated in a democratic and secular mode.[1] These shifts have affected the debate and orientation of Indian nationalism. The major pressure for a reorientation of Indian nationalism has come from the BJP-VHP whose effort is to push nationalism in the direction of militant Hinduism.

The nature and character of Indian nationalism has recently became a point of debate. One view, propagated by Hindu communal idealogues is based on an identity between Indian nationalism and Hindu culture. Culture is an integral part of national consciousness, but culture in no society is synonymous with religion.[2]

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1.   See Javeed Alam, "Political Articulation and Mass Consciousness in Present Day India" in Zoya Hasan, et.al., eds., State Political Process and Identity, New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1989, p.237.

2.   K.N. Panikkar, Times of India, September 5, 1991.

The Indian nationalism inherits the consensual style of the Gandhian nationalist movement which tried to base the concept of Indian unity on a confederational or agglomerative approach to cultures. A number of concepts were tried out during the long history of nationalist movement. The one that it found most sustainable took concrete shape in the Gandhian phase, when the nationalist movement at last became pan-Indian and mass based. This Gandhian concept of national unity used a style of handling diversities which could be called Hindu in the broadest sense of the term but not that of BJP variety.

Gandhian approach to nationalism consists of a plural style of livigng which avoids the extrmes of the melting - pot model, on the one hand, and 'distant strangers model' on the other, in order to create what could be called a 'salad bowl' model.

The psychological counter part of this approach traditionally typically South Asian - lies in the specific nature of self-definition in the society. Aspects of it, too

In the present political discourse on communalism we have beend discussed by many, notably Mckim Marriott, Sudhir Kakar and, recently, Prakash Desai, usually without being aware of its full political implications.[3]

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3.   Mckim Marriott, "The open Hindu person and interpersonal fluidity", paper presented at the Annual

It is possible to extrapolate from some of these works to argue that the self in the public realm in South Asia is left blurred or permeable at the edges and, as a result, it is more open to social inflows and outflows than the more individuated modern self is. The permeability can be conceptualised more or less in the manner in which some clinical psychological studies in the 1960s spoke of the permeability of the body image boundaries.[4]

The political implication of such a self-concept is that, whenever there is confrontation with another, singificant aspects of that other could be accommodated in the self, and the self redefined as a consequence of the accommodation. this altered self then becomes the defensible self. In the process, many debates between the self and the other get internalised to become internal self self-debates, Sharp, uncompromising definitions of the self and the others and the possibility of conflicts arising from such definitions - are, thus, lessened, though not avoided.

Contd... F/n.3

Meeting at the Association for Asian Studies, 1980, Sudhir Kakar, the Inner World: A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), Alfred collins and Prakash Desai, "Selfhood in Context", in M. White and S. Pollak, eds., The Cultural Transition (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986).

4.   Ashis Nandy, "Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance", Alternatives, 1988 13(3).

In the context of defining the self, the tradition of Hindu nationalism has a long history going back to the nineteenth century. There have been several movements of 'Hindu' political mobilisation. First of this kind was the Gaurakshini Sabha (a group of people associated with cow protection). It was founded in 1890s, agitated for laws preventing cows protection. Hindu Mahasabha was founded in the early part of the twentieth century.

In 1937 Vinayak Damodar Savarkar became the President of Hindu Mahasabha. Under his leadership, the Hindu Mahasabha was projected as an alternative to the Congress and the Muslim League. It took interest in elections and party politics. But it failed to make a major breakthrough. In the post-independent India, it existed only as provincial Hindu Sabha and strongly identified with upper caste and socially conservative views.[5]

The militant organisation, RSS was founded at Nagpur in 1925. Its first leader was Keshav Baliram Hedgewar. Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar succeeded K.B. Hedgewar. He contributed to the development of the organisation's philosophy and

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5.   See, Indra Prakash, A Review of the History and work of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Hindu Sanghatan Movement (New Delhi, 1938), pp.1-31; Richard Gordon, "The Hindu Maha Sabha and Indian National Congress, 1915 to 1926", Modern Asian Studies, vol.IX, no.2 (1975), pp.145-71; Mushirul Hasan, Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1916-1928 (Columbia, MO, 1979), pp.254-6.

doctrine. The Swayamsevaks (volunteers) were encouraged to think of himself as a brotherhood. They were asked to dedicate themselves to the improvement of Hindu society and to the eventual creation of a Hindu Rashtra (Nation).

Nehru and the liberal wing within Congress were on the defensive till January 1948. Patel was of the view that the Hindu traditionalist wing of the party would be strengthened to the point where some connection with the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS would be possible. But after the asssassination of Mahatma Gandhi the Hindu Mahasabha was obliged to give an undertaking that it would leave party politics altogether. 'The RSS found itself the object of a comprehensive political ban'. To quote B.D. Graham, "Nehru and the liberals were given a valuable breathing space, within which the war in Kashmir was brought to an end, the major task of rehabilitating the refugees was set in motion, and memories of the partition riots faded to some extent".

The constitution upheld the values of social and religious pluralism. Its section on fundamental rights guaranteed equality before the law, freedom of speech, assembly and movement, and freedom of religion; It stood for the cultural and educational rights of minorities. Hence, it cleared the way for the introduction of far-reaching social reforms. The Hindu traditionalists accepted this much. But

the pressed the claims of Hindi in the Devanagari script[6] as official language of India.

Hindu Code Bill was one of the most controversial issues. The central crux of the bill was to provide a unified system of law governing Hindu marriage and inheritance. It was an attempt to extend the rights of Hindu women by enforcing monagamy; It recognised the principle of inheritance through daughters, hence, the complete control of her property. Many orthodox Hindus were opposed to the measure and its passage through the Constituent Assembly. They continually delayed it.[7] The fear was that the central government would use the powerful regulating institutions. These institutions were inherited from the British Raj to intervene in areas of custom hitherto lain outside the domain of public law. In fact, senior Congressmen were also sympathetic to the aims and objectives of RSS.[8] The Congress President, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, stated at Kanpur on 10 October that the RSS was not the "the enemy of the Congress", nor was it a communal political organisation like the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha. 'It may be and is a

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6.   One finds excellent debate on the language issue in Granville Austin, The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation (Bombay, 1972), pp.265-307.

7.   See D.E. Smith, India as a Secular State (Princeton, 1963), pp.279-80.

8.   Statesman (Calcutta), 6 February 1948, p.5.

communal body but it has repudiated all connection with politics'.[9]

The division between the Hindu traditionalists and the liberal secularists within the Congress was widened by their divergent reactions to the outbreaks of communal violence which occurred in East Bengal and West Bengal during the winter of 1949-50. In India there was a widespread belief that the disturbances had begun in East Bengal because of the discriminatory policies of the Pakistani authorities. Consequently there was strong public pressure for the government to deal firmly with Pakistan. Nehru himself was obliged to consider war as a possible course of action.[10]

Shyama Prasad Mookerjee is reported to have expressed a lack of confidence in Pakistan's good faith. He demanded the insertion of a penal code in case a country fails to honour the agreement. Nehru and others rejected this demand of Mookerjee. Finally Nehru and Liaquat Ali signed the agreement on 8 April 1950. This was the agreement to uphold rights of minorities, to facilitate the movement of migrants and restore harmony in the two Bengals.[11]

On the 6th April 1950, Mookerjee submitted his resigniation as a minister to Nehru, Mookerjee's views had

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9.   Statesman (Calcutta), 11 October 1949, p.3.

10.   See Savepalli Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, Vol.II, 1947-1956 (London, 1979), pp.82-7.

11.   Ibid., pp.87-8.

much in common with Hindu traditionalists with the Congress Party. They disliked Nehru's secular policies; and supported Purushottamdas Tandon for the national presidency of the Party. Tandon was opposed to partition. He worked hard in the cause of Hindi. From a traditionalist position, he contested presidential election of 1948. According to Tandon the main difficulty for the Hindus in East Bengal was the Pakistan being administered as an Islamic state.[12]

J.B. Kirpalani, another presidential candidate, was identified with Nehru's position. Therefore, ordinary Congressmen came to regard the election as an indirect trial of strength between Nehru and Patel. In the event, Kirpalani was narrowly defeated by Tandon.

After the death of Patel on 15 December 1950 the Hindu traditionalists became leaderless. Tandon was forced to resign as Congress President and Nehru himself was elected to the post at an AICC meeting on 8 September 1951.[13]

In the meantime, Mookerjee raised the idea of a new party. He met Golwalkar, the RSS leader, Mookerjee told him that 'the new political party could not be made subservient to any other organisation.[14] Initially he said that Hindu

12.   Statesman (Delhi), 30 July 1950, pp.1 and 6.

13.   For details see A. Kochanek, The Congress Party of India: The Dynamics of One Party Democracy (Princeton, 1968), pp.27-53.

14.   See B.D. Graham, Hindu Nationalism and Indina Politics (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Mahasabha was "communal in as much as it believed in Hindu Rashtra'. But Golwalkar categorically said that 'we of the RSS had equal, if not more, emphatic belief in the Bharatiya Rashtra being Hindu Rashtra, and as such RSS would be for him equally desrving to be kept at arm's length'. After Mookerjee's acknowledgement that he had made an inadvertant remark and expressed full agreement on the Hindu Rashtra idea', Golwalkar agreed to assist him and chose some of his colleagues, 'Staunch and tried workers' to help in establishing new party.[15] Mookerjee also conferred with N.B. Khare, then President of the Hindu Mahasabha and asked for his support. According to Khare Mukherjee asked him "to wind up the Hindu Mahasabha and join his new party which he was going to establish under his own leadership with the help of Mr. M.S Golwalkar of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh".[16]

It was on 21 October 1951, in a convention at Delhi that the Bharatiya Jan Sangh (Indian people's party) was founded. Mookerjee was appointed the first president.

The manifesto of the party clearly defined its place in relation to other groups. It adopted liberal approach to the socio-economic issues of the country; a restricted role for

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15. Organiser, 'A Tribute to Dr. Shyama Prasad, How Jan Sangh was Born', 25 June 1956, pp.5-7 Reproduced Souvenir 1973, (New Delhi, 1973), pp.183-85. Quotations from pp.184-85.

16. N.B. Khare, My Political Memoirs or Autobiography(Nagpur), p.427. Organiser, 10 July 1966, p.12.

the state in the regulation of economic life. The party was against the Jagirdari and zamindari systems of land tenure; compensating the former owners and distributing land to the tillers. It promised to imrpove conditions in the villages. It aimed at popularising cottage industries and preventing cow-slaughter issues of concern to Hindu nationalists were relatively moderate in emphasis.

The Jan Sangh believed that the future welfare of the people of India and Pakistan demands a reunited India, and it will work towards this end. It declared that India should take full responsibility for the protection of minorities in Pakistan. So far Kashmir is concerned its one-third is under the control of Pakistan. 'It must be freed from her clutches at any cost'.[17]

Since politics is the reflection of the deeply embedded societal structure; let us examine the dialectical relationship betwen the two.

In the post independence India of 1950 one finds deep ideological schisms between communalists on the one hand and champions of secular and composite culture on the other in the realm of Indian civil society. The Indian state was conceived in a secular and non-communal mould. The agenda of secularism and the secular ideology were considered to be the

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17. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, "The Bhartiya Jan Sangh", Statesman (Delhi), 21 December 1951, p.4.

basis of integration; a common binding thread of a nascent Indian nationalism. Nehru categorically stated: 'The Government of country like India can never function satisfactorily in the modern age except on a secular basis.'

Nehruvian model of secularism rested on the notion that religion is an erroneous view of the cosmos that will yield to more rational understanding as scientific and economic growth advance. On the contrary, the scientific and technological advancement has led to the vulgarisation of religion in the form of ancient myth on modern Toyota and Advani's Riot Yatra, plastic Ram and Hanuman in buses, where cannot be any concept of purity of time, space and material objects. Religion is being used to secure the secular goal that is political power. Therefore, while in the Gandhian framework it is the means which justifies the end, on the contrary, the BJP would say it is the end which justifies the means. Here Gandhian philosophy is not only rejected thoroughly but Gandhi himself is put upside down. Hence, whatever Godse did to Gandhi, the BJP is a logical extension of that very fact; Gandhi was not only killed, posthumously his philosophy is being rejected for petty political gains.

Nehruvian thought entails the construction of an edifice of public law that is applicable to all persons. An edifice of politics that recognises individual, not group identities.

Gandhi's secularism rested on the notions that all religions are true that they give meaning to moral life; and that Indian society can be built on a community of religious communities. The policy implications of this position are more responsive to group identities. Here, one can clearly observe the dichotomy between Nehru and Gandhi. Prof. T.N. Madan's argument although does not rest on the same ontological premises as Gandhi's, but his position is closer to Gandhi rather than to Nehru. He argues "where religion persists as a powerful element in personal identity, secular policy cannot build on a rationalist avoidance of religious community but must take it into account.[18] Because the peaceful social co-existence demand inter-religious harmony with human dignity and equality.

S The Indian civil society and politics are being influenced by several concurrent conflicts in the socio-political system. The first and oldest conflict on the continent divides the older Dravidian culture from the newer Aryan culture, which entered the subcontinent about 1500 B.C. Until relatively recently this conflict existed without serious disruption. The Aryan civilisation moved glacially from the North-West toward the extreme South, overwhelming the indigenous cultures while leaving enclaves here and there to endure as tribal remnants of the earlier culture. Violence broke out in Madras and political change occured in the same

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18.   See T.N. Madan, "Secularism in its place", The journal of Asian Studies, vol 46. no. 4. November 1987.

state in 1964. Therefore, "the position of the Jan Sangh on the North-South becomes a central thread in the narrative"[19]

A second and more violent conflict is the rivalry between Hinduism and Indian Islam. The two ancestors of Jan Sangh, the Hindu Maha Sabha and the RSS, were born in the atmosphere of Hindu-Muslim conflict and sporadic violence between the two communities culminated in the extensive rioting at the time of partition of the sub-continent in India and Pakistan. Communal disturbances recurred in each of the newly independent countries as a logical conclusion of the policy of divide and rule followed by the British. In most of the cases the ethnic crisis and communal violence is the natural outcome of the exploitative policies followed by the British Raj - which led to social degeneration, economic exploitation and political distortion.

Relations between India and Pakistan, never cordial, deteriorated so greatly in 1965 that open warfare brokeout in September of that year. The Jan Sangh's position on the status of the Muslim and other minorities in India and its views on Pakistan and Kashmir are another important factors of Hindu revivalism.

The ideology of Hindu fundamentalism makes an attempt to redefine the meaning and essence of a newly emerged nation

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19.   Craig, Baxter. The Jan Sangha: A biography of Indian Political Party. (London: Oxford University Press,1971).

state in the changing context and content of nationalism in India. During people's struggle for freedom, Hindu revivalists were convinced that only Hindu thought would motivate the society to achieve independence and restructure it. While identifying the Hindu - psyche with Indian nationalism, they believe that only the Hindus - had sacrificed during the anti-colonial movement. the history of the Sikh wars against the British, the Muslim Wahabi revolts and the succession of tribal insurgencies against colonial rule in the 19th century are conveniently ignored.[20]

The evolution of Hindu social structure goes back to the days of the Rig Veda. It pictures human society as evolving from *Purush* (supreme person) and compares the four social divisions to the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the supreme person.[21]

It is the concept of an organic society. there is a powerful persuasive argument for the specific purpose of social unity and nationalism. the revivalists employed it to emphasise inter-dependence of all members of soceity and to suggest the necessity of a single political system at the

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20. See Sumanta Banerjee, <u>Economic</u> <u>and</u> <u>Political</u> <u>Weekly</u>, January 19, 1991.

21. This passage, explaining the origin of the caste system is found in the 12th verse of the 19th hymn of Mandala 10 of the <u>Rig</u> <u>Veda.</u>

national level.[22] They used metaphors consisting of a body politic in which members are bound together by mutual concerns and a common sense of self-preservation.

This conception of an organic social body functions only when individuals perform their economic, social and religious duties (Dharma). The founder of RSS concluded that Hindu social body was weak and disorganised because Dharma was neither clearly understood nor correctly observed. They perceived disintegration of the so called united Hindu society and the malady was traced back to Islamic invasions of India, approximaltely at 1000 A.D. Golwalkar said that creative Hindu though ceased to inform Hindu society about new ways to respond to changing conditions. But the allegation that Islam is responsible for disintegration of Hindu society is erroneous. The reality is that Hindu society, has never been united, is not united, will not be united without having the common human cause. There is an inbuilt hierarchical social structure based on domination and subordination, superiority and inferiority, purity and impurity.[23] If the people of submerged strata of society

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22. See Michael Walzer's discussion of a similar political purpose of the organic image in the English Puritan movement in The Revolution of Hindu Saints: A Study of the Origins of Radical Politics (London, 1966), pp.171-83.

23. We find excellent explanation of the Hindu social structure in Louis Dumont Homo Hierarchicus.

tolerated the unequal inhuman social structure, that was not a voluntary acceptance by either of the two rather a 'powerless intolerance'. Therefore, the claim that Hindu society is plural, open, tolerant and democratic is not true. Philosophically, it might be open but socially close, it was the 'tolerance of powerlessness'.

The term Hindutva is not synonymous with Hinduism. V.D. Savarkar says, "Hindutva is not a word but a history". Not only the spiritual or religious history of our people as at times it is mistaken to be by being confounded with other cognate term Hinduism, but a history in full. Hinduism is only a derivative, a fraction, a part of Hindutva. An "ism" is a theory, a doctrine or a code more or less based on spiritual or religious dogma or system. Murli Manohar Joshi, the party president of the BJP says that "Hindutva is not a communal concept as alleged by pseudo-secularists... call it by whatever name you like, 90 per cent texture of Indian culture is Hindu".[24] Therefore, "Hindu interest is the national interest".[25]

Ashis Nandy challenges the idea of Savarkar and others, he said, "Hindutva will be the end of Hinduism".[26] Hinduism is the faith by which majority of Indians still live.

24. Murli Manohar Joshi, Organiser 3 February 1991.

25. See the editorial, Times of India, 12 March 1991.

26. Ashis Nandy, "Hinduism Versus Hindutva: The Inevitability of Confrontation", Times of India, 18 February 1991.

Hindutva is the ideology of a part of the upper caste, lower middle class Indians, though it has now spread to large parts of the urban middle classes. The ideology is an attack on Hinduism, an attempt to protect the flanks of a minority consciousness which the democratic process is threatening to corner.

Ashis Nandy further says that it is an ideology meant for the super market of global mass culture where all religions are on their consumerable forms, neatly packaged for the buyers. But Hindutva has its geographical limits. It cannot spread easily beyond the boundaries of urban, semi-westernised India. It cannot penetrate southern India where Hinduism is more resilient, where it is more difficult to project on to the Muslim the feared and unacceptable parts of one's own self. Hindutva cannot survive for long even in rural north India, where Hinduism is more self-confident and citizens have not been fully brain washed by the media to speak only the language of the state. Nor can it survive where the Hindus are willing to be themselves – proudly 'backward', 'superstitious', sanatanis, rooted firmly in their 'svadharma' and 'svabhava'. It is simply because of the absence of consumerism in that part of the society. In order to attract the poor, igrnorant illiterate masses of India – "the slogan is Ram and Roti both".[27]

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27.   Murli Manohar Joshi Sunday Observer, 3 January 1991.

The protagonist of Hindu Rashtra (Nationalism) argues that there are hostile forces which plot against the nation, and they are held responsible for the disruptive strains in the country. These forces are often identified with particular social groups, who are different, united and powerful.

There are mainly two types of identified potentially 'disruptive' forces in contemporary Indian society:

1. Muslims and Christians who propagate values that might result in the denationalisation and,

2. The 'westernised' elite who proposes capitalism, socialism or communism as solutions for Indian development.

The argument against Christians is that they are culturally different, they have separated themselves from the national soul, because Hindu Dharma is the repository of the "nation's soul".[28] For a nation state can neither be without Dharma nor can it be indifferent to Dharma just as fire cannot be without heat. If fire loses heat, it does not remain fire any longer. If the state is 'Nidharmi', (a state without religion) it will be a lawless state, and where is the question of existence of any state?[29] In other words,

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28. Deendaya, Upadhyaya, Integral Humanism, (New Delhi, Navchetana Press, 1965), p.46.

29. Ibid., p.55.

the concept of 'Dharma Nirpekshta' (secularism) and a nation state are self-contradictory. The state can only be a theocratic state and nothing else. Prof. Sankhadher says, "Hinduise politics, secularise the nation... in the sense that state would be rescued from the clutches of pseudo-secularists".[30]

'The Organiser' of 3rd September 1963, charged that subjects taught in the Christian schools of a tribal area in North Eastern India are typically western with no relation whatsoever to the Indian environment. It is these students who, coming out of the missionary institutions agitate for the creation of Nagaland.[31] In fact, Christian converts were given psychological affinity with the people of western countries, hence, they are completely isolated from the national soul.

The allegation against Islam is the similar one. For a Hindu fundamentalist Islam is a more serious threat to national integration or the realisation of Hindu Rashtra. It is a serious problem because of the size of Muslim community, the recent history of communal animosity between Hindus and Muslims, and the existence of Islamic states in the subcontinent. To quote Golawalkar, "Muslims look to some foreign lands as their holy places. They call themselves

30. Sankhdher Organiser 10 February 1991.

31. Organiser 3 September 1963.

"Sheiks" and "Syeds". Sheiks and Syeds are certain clans in Arabia. How then did these people come to feel that they are their descendants? That is because they have cut off all their ancestral national moorings of this land and mentally merged themselves with aggressors. They still think that they have come here only to conquer and establish their kingdoms".[32]

So far the model of development is cocncerned, Hindu thought structure claims that demcocracy, capitalism and socialism are western concepts that have failed to improve the human conditions. To them these concepts are contrary to the traditional principles of Hindu thought, completely bereft of spiritual content.

Their argument is that each of these cocncepts limits itself to the premise that man is a bundle of physical wants. Although they agree with the notion that passion is natural to man; but foreign philosophies stimulate the quest for material gratification which results eventually in greed and 'class antagonism' attitudes that lead to exploitation, social warfare and anarchy. On the contrary Hindu philosophy offers an alternative, a blue print that minimises social conflict and functionally links the various units together into an organic whole.

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32.   Golwalkar, Bunch of Thoughts (Bangalore: Vikram Prakashan, 1966), p.128.

For the transformation of man, revitalisation of society is necessary. The ideal person has four virtues. The first is "invincible physical strength". Physical strength means calm resolve needed for commitment to disciplined activity. The second virtue is character, a personal resolve to commit oneself to a noble cause. These two virtues must be guided by 'intellectual acumen' i.e. the third virtue. Lastly, 'fortitude' is a virtue which permits the honourable person to persevere in a virtuous life characterised by industriousness, combined with a zealous and painstaking endeavour i.e. Dharma. Life is considered a struggle against disorder, anarchy, and it requires organised calculation and systematic endeavour. Because disorder and anarchy are presumably strengthened by human 'passion', the individual must deligently tame and discipline his energies. The inspiration for fundamental reform would have to come from a more lofty source i.e. classical Hindu tradition and character building training.

In fact, the aforesaid picture of the so called Hindu society is not complete, because the whole tradition of materialistic philosophy has been completely ignored. The philosophy of Lokayat and Charvaka has not been discussed, interpreted and understood in its proper manner.

Another important source of Hindu Rastra is the philosophical stream of 'Advait Vedanta'. It provided core

concepts around which solutions for revitalising society have been constructed. Different sub schools of Vedanta are based on Upanishads, a set of over two hundred texts, which Hindu commentators have traditionally considered divinely inspired wisdom.

Upanishadic speculation explores the relationship of the individual soul to the universal soul. It is a philosophy of non-dualistic monism systematically formulated around 800 A.D. by Shankara. The key idea is that material world is created by spiritual energy (shakti) which emnates from universal soul.[33] The Brahma as God knows that the created world in his object and only Ishwara is the true reality. Illusion (maya) is manifested when the impermanent divine object is perceived as the real which is not. It is something like Hegelian scheme of thought in which the only thing permanent and immanent is the 'Giest' and its manifestation in the lived experience of life. This is an attempt to mystify human history, a metaphysical argument which covers the objective reality of human social existence.

Jnana (Knowledge) of the truth achieved through meditation is necessary, it is preceded by correct observance of dharma. Moral perfection and religious devotion enable the seeker after truth to perform his worldly obligations with ditachment and humility, the psychic state required for

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33. See a comprehensive discussion of this doctrine in Heinrich Zimmern: Philosophies of India ed. by Joseph Campbell (New York: Panthean Books 1951), pp.209-63.

the final state of the search or enlightenment. This doctrine was developed during the discourse between Krishna and Arjuna in the Bhagwad Gita. "Krishna informs Arjuna, that an act performed without thought to its consequences

Without taking into account the condition of human (i.e. nishkama karma) leaves no *karmic* bonds that link the soul to a future of material existence".[34] social existence in a nation state the protagonist of Hindu Rashtra talks about a genetic code: (a) Satva (Clarity), (b) Rajas (activity) and (c) Tamas (darkness). The national organism is sustained through the contribution of individual's talents. The set of talent which any person possesses is determined by this "genetic code". In conventional Hindu practice, Dharma is that set of obligations observed by the Jati - a community into which a person is born i.e. simply the accident of birth. According to Hindu belief system, every individual must locate himself in the social system so that he contributes to the well being of the national body in a way that does not result in conflict between its constituent parts. Such a person is referred to as Karma - yogin. In its most developed form Karma - Yoga is combined with a form of Bhakti-Yoga.

The content of Indian nationalism is being appropriated and redefined by the B.J.P., when it talks about a militant

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34. See Edgerton, The Bhagavad Gita (New Delhi, Navchetana Press, 1988), vol.2, p.47.

Hindu nationalism, identified with living God, Jagamata, Adishakti, Mahamaya, Mahadurga, Matribhumi, Dharmbhumi, Devabhumi, Mokshabhumi etc. In that scheme of Hindu nationalism, the primary goal is to prepare the mind of individuals to act in a detached manner for the well being of the divine object, the Hindu Nation. In this scheme of thought the mental progression of individual involves bursting through a set of circles of attachment. It has its goal to be achieved when individual experiences a greater loyalty to the nation than to any other lower form of attachment.

In brief, the metaphor of the Divine Mother is used to describe both the nation and the sacred geography where the nation resides. Both are considered to be the material emanations from the 'Shakti' (power). The Goddess may have benigh and negative aspects as creator, sustainer and destroyer. The mother image informs feeling for the homeland that piece of earth which has nourished and sustained the people. In the decade of 1980s, the R.S.S. and its affiliates used the symbolic expression of mother Goddess in mass campaigns to inspire loyalty to their version of a nation state and for their own political gain.

The concept of sacred geography which is the first aspect for Hindu nationalism consists of an impressive amount of real estate. Golwalkar forcefully spoke of it as "extending from Iran in the west to the Malay Peninsular in

the east".[35] The whole area is an integral part of Bharat Mata, (Mother India), which should be brought together into some kind of political relationship. Staunch advocates of Hindu Rashtra are of the opinion of having a loose federation to achieve their desired unity of Hindu Rashtra or 'Brihatar Bharata'.[36] In addition to an ambitious sacred geography and the dilemma of bourgeois communal politics, the nation is said to have a soul - defined as Chiti in classical Hindu mythology. Chiti is a kind of higher law that takes precedence over any political institution or man made rules. It determines the social frameworks within which Dharma is worked out. The concept of national soul is strongly based on the assumption that the cultural heritage of India is desired from a common source.

Golwalkar makes a powerful statement in favour of a common source. To quote, "the same philosophy of life, the same goal, the same supremacy of the inner spirit over the outer gross things of matter, the same faith in rebirth, the same adoration of certain qualities like Brahmacharya, Satya, etc. the same holy Samskars (rituals), in short, the same life-blood flowed through all these limbs of our society".

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35. See Edgerton, The Bhagavad Gita (New Delhi, Navchetana Press, 1988), vol.2, p.47.

36. Golwalkar, "Bunch of Thoughts" (Bangalore, Vikram Prakashan, 1966), p.140.

To further strengthen his organic concept of the social structure of Indian state, Golwalkar said that the people in the south were always considered to be as much Aryan as those in the north, and that source of inspiration all these Dravidian languages has been that queen of languages, the language gods - Sanskrit.[37]

People with special insight, the sages are considered the most legitimate interpreters of the "national soul", they are commentators on the higher law. "Ultimately, they are beyond the laws of men as they speak for higher authority".[38] If that is the case, it would be an orgument entirely against the concept of public opinion and democratic process of participation in decision making body. Because the ultimate power of interpretation of human laws is with the traditional sages. But the post renaissance phase of human history in a nation state is assertion of human rights and authority, as well as the total rejection of metaphysical, super natural entity. Ours is the philosophy of 'here and now', a philosophy of human dignity and assertion, as a maker of his own destiny. It is a serious attempt with vested interest to mystify the human history of nation state.

There is a perceptible shift in the orientation of the national politics. Although, the expansion of fundmentalism

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37. Deendayal Upadhyaya, "Integral Humanism", (New Delhi, Navchetana Press, 1965), p.52.

38. Golwalkar, Bunch of Thoughts, p.102.

and revivalism is not specific to India alone, In South Asia, a number of developments in Pakistan, Bangladesh and recently Afghanistan have led to an assertion of Islamic codes of conduct and behaviour. In India, the Muslim Women Protection or rights on diverce Bill, 1986 and the decision to formally open the Babri Mosque to Hindu devotees in February 1986 were two decisions that not only marked a turning point in the History of Hindu Muslim relations but also acclerated the pace of communal polarisation.

To the framers of the constitution, it was quite necessary to avoid an óvert politicisation of communal identities. This could not always be achieved, because the scularisation process has lagged behind the well developed electoral process. Therefore, political parties use narrow caste and communal categories for political mobilisation and shift attention away from developmental to non-developmental issues.

Going back to the late 1960s one finds a tremendous spurt in communal violence which had relentlessly blodied the Indian landscape, Communal forces caused serious damage to India's secular fabric. But the recent polarisation of Indian society on communal and sectarian lines is even more dangerous. Nearly 4000 people were killed in communal violence. This is almost four times the figure of 1970s. The number of districts affected increasd from 61 in 1960s to 250 in 1988-89. In U.P. alone, between February 1986 and

early 1988, nearly sixty major and minor riots had taken place. Killing over 200 people, leaving more than 1,000 injured and causing damage to property to the tune of 1.5 crore.[39] In the past these communal incidents occured mainly in urban areas, recently they have also spread to rural areas. Equally significant has been the growth of communal organisations. Over 500 militant organisations have an active membership which runs into several millions.

At the level of political process significant changes took place with the imposition of emergency, followed by the defeat of the ruling party and the election of the Janata party in 1977. The Congress party changed its strategies of political mobilisation. The defeat caused the congress party to disintegrate. Indira Gandhi's answer was to reconstitute the Congress in an increasingly personalised fashion. From the late 1970s the Congress tried to move into the terrain which was traditionally occupied by the rightist parties. It is difficult to regard the right ward shift as something that happened without the Congress realisigng its consequences.

The Congress moved away from the left of centre values of secularism and socialism towards an ideological discourse, hitherto identified with right wing parties, such as the BJP. It led to the breakdown of the secular consensus moulded by

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39.   Mushirul Hasan, "Indian Muslims since independence", in search of integration and identity", Third World Quarterly April 1988, pp.829-30.

Nehru. The Congress was apprehensive that its close identification with minorities bore the risk of alienating many of their constituents. For their part, Muslims had begun to drift away from the Congress in states like U.P., Bihar and West Bengal. In the 1980 elections in Bihar and U.P. the Lok Dal carved out victories in Muslim dominated constituencies. The gradual diminishing of the Congress base made it possibele for communally oriented groups to step into the political vacuum. The congress responded by 'appropriative communal themes', especially themes of Hindu hegemony that appea to the Hindu heartland. Sometimes durigng 1982, congress leaders recognised that a confrontational posture towards the National Conference and sikh extremists might gain them support of many Hindus in Kashmir and Delhi.[40]

The move to the right is an attempt to appropriate the symbols, appeals and idioms of the rightist parties, mainly the BJP which posed a threat to the congress in the north. This strategy was put to strident use in the 1984 elections.

A narrow and intolerant rhetoric of all out confrontation was adopted. The opposition parties were routinely attacked as anti-national forces. This sort of

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40. James Manor, "Parties and party system" in autl Kohli ed., India's Democracy (Princeton University Press, 1988), pp.80-91.

strategy catalysed communal sentiments and provided the congress an opportunity to become the 'chief spokesman' of majroritarian interests by curiously concluding that in doing so congress was protecting India from the dangers of communal strife and disunity. This sort of thing was extremely dangerous when see alongside figures of steady rise on disorder and riot in the closing years of Indira Gandhi regime climaxing in the slaughter of 2400 Sikhs in Delhi in 1984.[41]

Indira Gandhi's rightward move was more pragmatic less ideological. The shift in orientation was evident in several policy areas. Anti poverty programemes were given low priority, there was a change of attitude toward the International Monetary Fund (IMF); negotiations for the largest ever loan granted by the IMF were completed during this phase.[42] The process is continuing unabated, with Manmohanomics as the unprecedented attempt of total liberalisation, devaluation of rupee by 20 per cent, double digit inflation, cut in fertiliser subsidy, surrender before the conditionalities of the IMF and the World Bank; the biggest stock exchange market scam, all are likely to compound the crisis of balance of payment, and the yawning gap between the rich and the poor. Four decades of

41. Ibid., p.80.

42. Atul Kohli, "Politics of economic liberalisation in India", World Politics, vol.17, no.3, pp.309-11.

development has led to further dependency. The major chunck of our income is being spent on interest payment, the single largest item of our expenditure. The direction of development has resulted in deepening inequalities in terms of access over food, education, health care and productive assets. The social logic of the state and the nature of the class coalition place, class constraints on state intervention.

The congress government was not in a position to transform reclacitrant structure or change the patterns of policy in ways that ease the burden on the oppressed classes, and avoid the political consequence of growing inequality and the crisis of legitimacy. The unevenness of capitalist development heightened social tensions providing a political space for the activation of excluvist interests and ideologies seeking to appropriate limited opprotunities for economic propensity. This often manifests itself in social reaction against minorities and dalits in different localities and regions.[43]

Growing alienation of the people at large has led to the worsening of the conditions of social existence. The uneven regional growth and continuous aggravation of inequalities of wealth and income distribution, resulted in

43. Zoya Hasan, <u>Social Scientist</u>, Changing orientation of the state and the emergence of majoritarianism in the 1980, vol.8-9, August -September 1990.

the growth of oppositional movements and mobilisation for land rights and regional autonomy. The agitations in Gujarat and Bihar as well as innumberable protests in the 1970s were organised against the background of governments failure to fulfil its electoral promises; growing unemployment, soarigng inflation and shortages of foodgrains and essential coomodities which imposed several hardships on different sections of society. By contrast, the discontent and dissatisfaction in the 1980s was not frequently articulated in democratic struggles.[44]

Infact, the challenge to centrist politics in 1960s was from the left democratic secular forces, in 1970s it came from the communal politics, but 1980s signalled the possibility of a national resurgence congregational politics. Religious festivals, celebrations, Rath yatras, Ekta yatras and various movements spearheaded by communal, divisive and sectarian forces like Vishwa Hindu Parishad became more strindent and militant. Media played vital role. The proliferation of religiosity was aided by the religious extravaganza on the electronic media. Much of the social support for resurgence of religiosity in our national life comes from the newly rich groups in the rural India, professionals and entrepreneures in the urban areas.

44.   Javeed alam, "Political articulation of mass consciousness in present day India", in Zoya Hasan et.al. ed., State, Political Processes and Indentity Reflections on Modern India, Sage 1989.

The crisis of legitimacy in our national life is the major factor which explains the shift in the orientation of the centrist parties. It is difficult to mobilise the majrority of the people who are poor, deprived, eexploited within and outside the fold of so-called Hindu society. The BJP, VHP, RSS, Bajrang Dal combine cannot mobilise the poor, untouchables. Dalits and have nots who made the brick, built the temple, but were denied the entry for centuries.

Secularism and socialism offered a distinct ideological platform, initially adotpted by the centrist parties like congress. But the absence of any significant improvement in the living conditions of the poor, not much political capital can be drawn any more from the rhetoric of the Nehruvian model of socialistic pattern of society.

Political mobilisation assumed an urgency in the context of the defeat of the congress party in North India, in 1977, and the subsequent defeats of the congress in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in 1983. Successive failures at the hustings brought to the forefront an alternative strategy of mobilisation. This strategy involved direct appeals to the majority community, often against the minorities, thus down playing broader social issues at the expnese of narrow sectarian one. But this strategy did not generate large scale support for the congress in 1986 by elections. So the

ruling party again made renewed efforts to the woo the Muslim vote, this time around the Muslim women bill.

The controversy generated by the Muslim women Bill highlighted the role of government in permtittigng the growth of a fundamentalist movement, and then making use of it in arousing sentiment among large sections of the people against the so called appeasement of minorities.

We have an empirical evidence of the electroal defeat in the bye elections in Assam, Bijnor, Kishanganj, Bolapur, Kedrappa, Baroda and the belief that everwhere Muslim vote had tipped the balance in favour of the opposition parties. Important congress leaders advised Mr. Rajiv Gandhi against the dangers of a confrontation with the fundamentalists. Syed Shahabuddin's victory in a bye election was a sharp reminder that conggress would suffer electoral reverses in other constituencies as well unless it regained Muslim support. The decision to bring the Muslim women Bill was part of the strategy to reverse the risigng tide against the congress party's efforts to woo the Muslims. Hence, the intervention in favour of the fundamentalists was a desperate bid to regain the Muslim constituency. "The dubious plea given by the congress was that the Bill was in accordance with the wishes of most Muslims. But the fact is that conservative Muslim groups were consulted and they were passed off as the representative opinion of the entire community".[45]

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45. Ibid.

Within the congress government Arif Mohammed Khan raised the banner of revolt. Because the government ignored the secular and progressive opinion in the community. As if Muslims constituted a self-contained and monolithic community, whose interests were represented by the Muslim MPs and a section of the Ulama., The policy of this kind gave a fillip to fundamentalist forces.

Ram Janma Bhoomi Action committee emerged on 7 October 1984. It launched a "Tala Kholo" agitation and a Rath Yatra. Although, the assassination of Indira Gandhi led to its suspension. The VHP revived the campaign from 25 places on October 23, 1985. In February 1986, the local district judge decided to open the gate on the argument that looking was no longer necessary for the maintenance of law and order and the protection of the idols. February 1, 1986 is the darkest day in the history of the secular polity of the nation, when the disputed place of worship was opened to innocent devotees amidst much fanfare which actually opened the flood gate of communal violence and hundreds of innocent human beings were killed.

Though the origin of the controversy dates back to 22nd December 1949, the idol of Lord Ram was kept in the Babri Mosque. The dispute attracted public attention only when the Faizabad District Magistrate opened the locked gates of the Babri-Masjid on the orders of Faizabad district court judge and it received wide publicity by the public as well as

private media. The judgement was, by all accounts, controversial and politically calculated. The procedure adopted in passing the order is unprecedented in so far as the whole affair was conducted with undue secretary and haste, as the verdict was given within two days and executed within half an hour.[46]

The judge in his verdict said, "if Hindu᠆ are offering prayers and worshiping the idols though in a restricted way for the last 35 years, the heavens are not going to fall, if locks of the gates are removed". But within 24 hours of the opening of the gates, all hell was let loose and 30 people were killed in the communal riots by the 6 April 1986.[47] The 1986 verdict brought the sterile dispute on to the streets and subsequently tot the political arena. Uttar Pradesh became communally the most sensitive state. Between January and June, 238 communal riots occured over the Ram Janma Bhoomi Babari Masjid controversy.[48]

In fact, the handing over the disused Babri-Masjid to Hindus, the Muslims have been told, would end their district cultural and social identity and inagurate "a fascist rule

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46. See M. Mahmud, <u>Fact</u> <u>Vs.</u> <u>Fiction</u> (Faizabad, New Delhi, 1990), p.36.

47. See Ashvini Bhatnagar, "Opening the Flood Gates", <u>Illustrated</u> <u>Weekly</u> <u>of</u> <u>India</u> (Bombay), 6 April 1986, p.32.

48. See the <u>Illustrated</u> <u>Weekly</u> <u>Review</u>, Who will get the Muslim Vote", 9 July 1989, pp.14-15.

based on Hinduisation". Muslims are being incited by the firebrands to be ready to shed their blood for the protection of the mosque. Since the issue of restoration of Babri Masjid has been symbolised as a critical determinant of the Muslims social life in India. Many Muslims are prone to feel that they are unequal and inferior to Hindus by virtue of being Muslims. This kind of insecure feeling is further reinforced by the steady decline of the secular forces in the body politic, especially the changed style or posture of the congress party during Mrs. Gandhi's and Rajiv Gandhi's period.

The Ayodhya dispute has become one of the most important tools for communal mobilisation by the BJP in the national politics of India. The dispute revived a debate on the nature of Inddian nationalism and secular policy.

"In religion, it is a matter of faith and not of proof... so, by faith and faith alone, Christians accept Jesus christ to be the son of God and by faith and faith alone Muslims believe Muhammad to be the prophet of Allah and by faith and faith alone Hindus believe Ramjanma Bhoomi at Ayodhya to be the birth place of Rama. The very place is the birth place of Lord Ram can neither be ascertained by the government, or facts of history.[49] The question of faith

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49. See the pamphlet political abuse of history published by the centre for historical studies, JNU, New Delhi.

also takes the form of asserting the identity of a community and seeks to redefine it.

In the present agitation to liberate the Ramjanma Bhoomi, we are told about something like a battle for "national self-assertion". "It is nothing short of phase for the liberation of the national soul".[50]

The BJP has been the chief beneficiary of the communal politics in 1980s. The electoral victory of the party improved dramatically on its 1984 performance, winning an estimated 15 per cent of the popular vote, the BJP won 88 seats in the 1989 elections. there is a major shift in the orientation of the BJP - it has moved away from the phase of liberalism identified with Gandhian socialism to a clear identification with the militant Hinudism of RSS.

One can point out two major decisions which have strengthened this position of the BJP. The first was the decision to accept an alliance witht the Shiv Sena and secodnd was the decision of the national executive to fully endorse and support the Ram Janma Bhoomi campaign of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). the leadership has admitted the fact that atleast 30 seats were ensured due to Shila Poojan, and VHP againtation. In fact, "saffron is no longer the colour of renucnciation but that of reassertion".[51]

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50. H.V. Seshadri, "Wiping out the blot of foreign slavery", Organsiser, 5 January 1985.

51. The Times of India, July 16, 1990. India Today, March 31, 1990.

The communal politics and majoritarian identity is being projected as a form of cultural nationalism. The concept of Hindu Rashtra is regarded as one, unified, monolithic, tolerant social and national identity. But the fact that Hindu society is completely fractured, fragmented, hierarchically organised with well defined status and role by the accident of birth, purity and impurity, high and low with racial, ethnic, linguistic and divisions and identities of their own are being conveniently ignored.

There has been merger of serveral cultural organsisations with the aim of creating among Hindus a sense of belonging to a homogeneous and centralised entity. Among them the VHP and Hindu Ekta Manch have played a crucial role in promoting an unification of the majority community part of the inspiration came from the unpreceedented accent put on national security. The subtle message of a threat to Mother India beamed every night on or the television. The ruling class in India treated the complex issue of national unity primarily from the standpoint of the need to consolidate and legitimise a strong central authority in order to strengthen national identity. The excessive institutional centralisation was based on the hope that this would promote an enduring cohesion and assimilation. The powerful argument in favour of a federal structure with strong centralising tendency has found support and legitimacy. The Indian state makes a legitimate claim in the context of lived reality and historical experience of partition.

Zoya Hasan would argue that the centralising tendency of the Indian state requires an ideology of unity and the contours of this ideology are now increasigngly drawn from those elements of larger social consciousness that are inimical to secular nationalism. But the fact is that secularism is not merely an idea it is a question of life and death for India.

Arvind N. Das in his article, opines that India has to be invented. But the invention has to be first and foremost of an ideal for Indians. The ideal can only be equity, participation, plurality. Otherwise, state instruments with gravitational disequilibrium will crumble and organic unities which do not account for living particularities will putrify.

Once India was invented by its constitution makers to an ideal of democracy, social change and equity. "The ideal has got subverted by status - quoism, over centralisation and sectarianism, the votaries of homogenised Hindutva eroding the idealism on the one side. On the other, we have pragmatists, bending with the prevailing economic wind, undermining national autonomy, and hence the very concept of nationhood. This is a dangerous situation. For, if the ideals around which India has been fashioned go, India cannot survive".[52]

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52. For details, see Arvind N. Das, 'India Invented: Ostrich Approaches to national unity'. Times of India - 17 Sept. 1991.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of foregoing discussion the study makes a claim that Indian nationalism is mutli-national in its character. Right from the beginning of its formative years, there have been three major trends and tendencies: First, the consensual model which was concretised in the Gandhian era of political mobilisation, the constitution is the expression of consensual model and composite culture of India. Second, the conflicting and competing ideology of the left. Third, the rightist wing has been found in terms of the hegemonic community of Hindutva. Initially, all these trends and tendencies found expression in the Indian National Congress.

There are different approaches and stages of Indian nationalism. They are summarised below.

Early attempts at understanding Indian national movement is represented by R.P. Dutt whose book 'India Today' from Marxist perspective is still rated very high. He clearly saw the contradiction as well as the process of unification of the people against imperialism. Unlike the nationalist historiography of A.C. Majumdar, R.G. Pradhan, Pittabhi Sitaramayya, and Surendranath Banjerjee, he took full note of the inner contradiction in the colonial society of India. In his 1947 edition of 'India Today', he opined that "the unity of the Indian people in their struggle for freedom against imperialism... does not mean that Indian people must therefore be regarded as a single homogenous whole on the contrary, there are strong grounds for

recognising the multinational character of the Indian people".

From the early 1970s archieves have been opened up. Historians got startling facts and figures and started region based studies. All these together have thrown up fresh perspectives on Indian nationalism. Among these new perspectives we can discern two distinct approaches which are radically different from each other. One approach is represented by historians like Bipan Chandra. This approach uses many Marxist concepts. But the approach has certain features of nationalist school as well. Because of this the school is called as neo-nationalist school.

To the historians of neo-nationalist school the Indian national movement was a popular movement. It was a movement of all classes. Nationalism is the product of a primary contradiction between Indian people and imperialism. This approach accords inflated importance to the Indian National Congress as a party of anti-imperialist struggle, and under plays the class character of Indian national movement. It does not allow any class contradiction within the Indian national movement. It is because of this that Sumit Sarkar opined, "though the language is that of standard Marxism, its content is nearer to the official nationalism". Therefore, this nationalist school of historiography does not perceive any possibility in which the interests of workers and peasants can come into conflict with the dominant leadership in national movement.

The Subaltern School argues that in 'elite' historiographies and Marxist nationalist historiographies 'Subaltern Groups' appear as inert objects of manipulation. They are not recognised as independent subjects making their own history. This school emphasises the initiative of the people from below. In elite historiographies the interests of subaltern classes are subordinated to that of elites.

However, no unified position can be attributed to the Subaltern school on many questions. It is a heterogenous enterprise. Partha Chatterjee is one important historian who deals with the question of nationalism in subaltern studies. He tackles the question at the level of discourse and constitutes a framework of meaning in various agents acted. But this kind of explanation of the bourgeois nationalism does not give exhaustive framework of analysis. In fact, Walter Banjamin's dictum that "the past itself is at stake" is illustrated forcefully in the historical writings on Indian nationalism. Benjamin argued that the perspective from which we view the past will be shaped by the struggles in which we engaged in the present.

On 15 August 1947, the new Indian nation state was born. The peoples struggle for freedom was successful. The masses looked forward to the creation of a new political order in the hope that "problems and conflicts associated with the British Raj would vanish like the morning mist" But something contrary to that has happened.

Unlike the liberal interpretations, one can point out some of the major crises which Nehru had to face in his initial years. Nehru tried to overcome these crises by using state power ruthlessly. He was successful in suppressing the Telangana movement. It was not only Telangana, but also the police action in Hyderabad, Goa operation and the reorganisation of states on linguistic line which are the trouble spots of Nehru era. Therefore, to say that outstanding feasures of nation building and consensus are to be attributed to Nehru would be erroneous. It was not the peaceful transition rather a number of conflicts and contradictions were there. Atul Kohli has a point, "sooner or later all developing countries become difficult to govern, and over the past two decades India has been moving in that direction".

Even then the ruling coalition of India is said to have arrived at the so called consensus and declared a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic of India. There was a consensus about which the masses did not have any knowledge. The ruling class elite had a consensus on having "the right to private property" as the fundamental right, and the "Directive Principles of State Policy", the charter of a public welfare state, beyond the purview of judiciary.

The national culture is the culture of upper middle class with greater emphasis on the Western pattern of modernisation and development. "The need for a national

culture was underlined and this remained essentially a middle class culture and largely 'Hindu'. The insistence on a single culture breeds its own opposition and groups fissioning off one characteristic of the ferment within the smooth exterior of the nation. The fact of the plurality of Indian cultural expression was not worked out*.

India is a "multinational state". Different nationalities would be eager to assert their cultural identity. Therefore, it would be wrong to characterise immediately their movements of self-assertion, as parochial, chauvinistic, regional', anti national and secessionist. There might be something wrong with the process of national integration itself. India may be anything but it is not Gandhi's India. Mahatma Gandhi described as "the India of My Dreams", "an India, in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice... an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony". But it is not the same India.

During Nehru era, there was a conscious attempt on the part of political leadership to liberal political institutions. They could undertake this project because they inherited legitimacy from Indian national movement. But this attempt has been squandered away during the later period. Under Indira Gandhi regime, liberal democracy was increasingly managed in authoritarian framework. This has led to the slow but steady deterioration of democratic institutions which finally culminated in the imposition of

emergency.

In the eighties an attempt was made by the Congress Party to apropriate the theme and appeal of the communal forces. But the major beneficiary has been the B.J.P. The B.J.P. and its allies resorted to militant Hindu nationalism. Ram has been projected as the symbol of 'Hindu Rashtra', culture and tradition of India. It became the rallying point to unite the majority community.
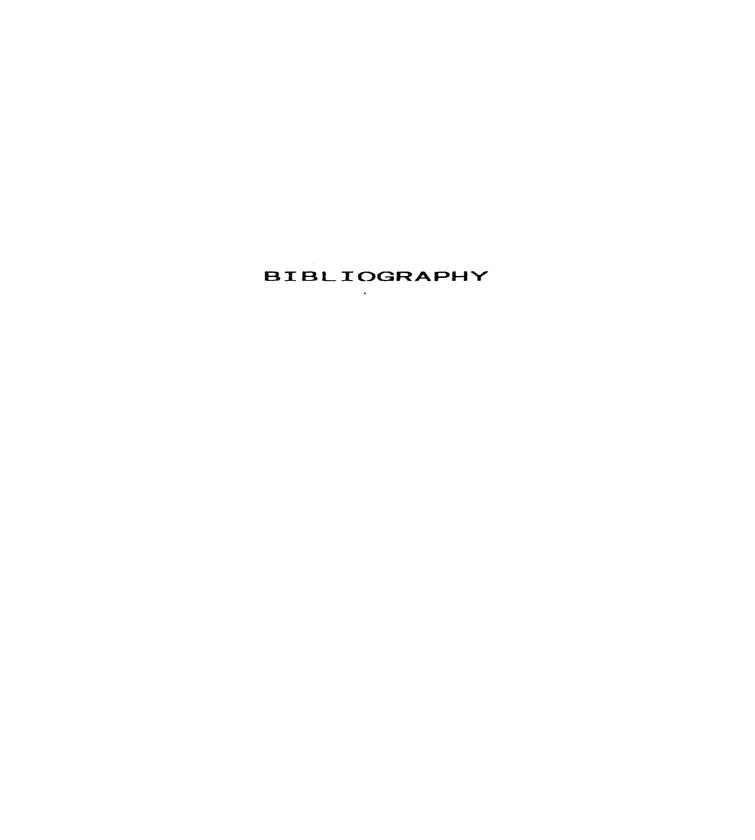
Our study shows that Indian society is constituted by a number of religious communities. Therefore, to talk about a particular community is the ideology of communalism. It is the consciousness which draws on a supposed religious identity. It demands political allegiance to a religious community and supports a programme of political action designed to further the interest of that religious community. An ideology of this kind is of recent origin. But it uses history to justify the notion that community and the communal identity have existed since the early past. Since the identity is linked to religion, it can lead to the redefinition of the particular religion, more so in the case one as 'amorphous' as Hinduism.

Such a claim of identity tends to ignore diversity and insist on confirmity. Because it is only through a uniform acceptance of the religion that it can best be used for political ends. There is a deliberate emphasis both on superiority and the notion of majority, a notion which

presupposes the existence of various 'minority communities'. The construction of 'imagined communities' rejects the applicability of other types of divisions in society such as status or class.

It is the majority communalism which has made the issue of national integration to be debated and discussed in detail. Issues of national integration today continue to receive top priority. But the claim of Hindu Rashtra and the hegemony of majoritarianism is itself the major potential threat to national unity and integrity. It is not only the redefinition of a religious community but the Indian nationalism itself in terms of militant Hinduism.

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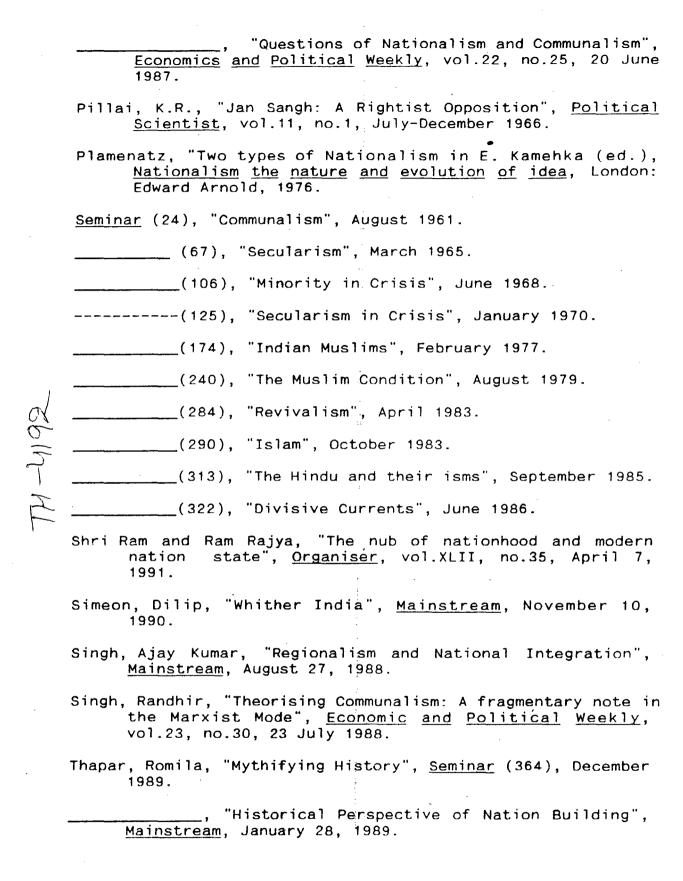Puri, Geeta, Bhartiya Jan Sangh: Organisation and Ideology, Delhi: A Case Study, New Delhi: Sterling, 1980.

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