

**Social Justice and Development during the Age of Hindutva and Neoliberalism: The Indian  
Muslim Experience**

A thesis submitted by

Syed Kasim Masood

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in History

Tufts University

May 2021

Advisers: Kris Manjapra and Ayesha Jalal

## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to examine the conflict between the nexus of neoliberal thought and neoliberalism, and social justice within the Indian context, with particular focus on Indian Muslims. Indian Muslims have been chosen as a subject of this study, due to their depiction as the 'other' in Hindu nationalist rhetoric and because of their socially disadvantaged position, or what is often described as their 'backwardness'. This project focuses on modern India from the 20th century onwards, and it segments this timeframe into three distinct periods of India's political economy that include the classical liberalism of late colonial rule (1900-1947), the era of economic planning after decolonization (1947-1979) and the age of liberalization (1980 – present day). At the same time, this project also follows the development of Hindu nationalist thought and how it responds to changes in India's political economy. The impact of this nexus between nationalists and neoliberals does not only entail that Muslims in India are becoming increasingly socially and economically disadvantaged. It also limits their responses to the increasing inegalitarian nature of the economy. Muslims in India continue relying on the construction of a 'syncretic' identity that has been openly challenged by the Hindu right and on a set of constitutional principles that are being increasingly violated due to the spectacle of development and the need to 'sacrifice' certain values in order to ensure access to global markets and a lack of state-intervention.

## **Table of Contents**

<b><i>Introduction</i></b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b><i>Chapter 1: Hindu Revivalism and Muslim ‘Backwardness’</i></b> .....	<b>8</b>
The Kanpur Report – Juxtaposing the ‘National Synthesis’ with the ground realities.....	11
Communalization of the Congress and the Maulana’s Dissent .....	17
<i>The Arya Samaj</i> and Indian Nationalism .....	21
Social Justice in a ‘Syncretic Society’ .....	25
<b><i>Chapter 2: Nehruvian Secularism, The Hindu Right and Economic Contestations</i></b> .....	<b>31</b>
Nehruvian Secularism Under Pressure .....	34
India’s Political-Economy and Calls for Liberalization .....	41
Liberalization for Rural Propertied Classes, Dispossession for Urban Muslims – The Enemy Property Act of 1968 .....	44
The New Capitalists and the Hindu Right .....	47
<b><i>Chapter 3: Indian Muslims in an Age of Neoliberal Governance</i></b> .....	<b>58</b>
Defining and Identifying Neoliberalism in India .....	60
Muslims and the Biopolitics of Neoliberalism in India .....	66
Tactical Outreach and the Spectacle of Development .....	76
<b><i>Conclusion</i></b> .....	<b>89</b>
<b><i>Bibliography</i></b> .....	<b>94</b>

## **Introduction**

On 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the former Vice-President of India, Mohammad Hamid Ansari, gave an interview in which he talked about the erosion of secular ideals in India and the great deal of insecurity that existed within the Muslim population.<sup>1</sup> Ansari, who is also the former Chairman of the National Commission for Minorities, was right in identifying the rise of what he called ‘strident nationalism’ as a cause for the weakening of institutional efficacy and secular values within the republic. However, one of the more curious claims that he made was regarding the genesis of this wave of ‘hyper-nationalism’. The former Vice-President claimed that this process began with the 2014 general election in which the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) swept to power and was fulfilled with the consolidation of its power in 2019. It is hard to believe that the BJP gave birth to a wave of Hindu nationalist politics that is divisive in nature. Of course, the presence of the BJP has emboldened the forces of *Hindutva*, but it is also evident that the BJP has risen to power on a pre-existing wave of Hindu nationalism.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the conflict between the nexus of neoliberal thought and neoliberalism, and social justice within the Indian context, with particular focus on Indian Muslims. Indian Muslims have been chosen as a subject of this study, due to their depiction as the ‘other’ in Hindu nationalist rhetoric and because of their socially disadvantaged position, or what is often described as their ‘backwardness’. This project focuses on modern India from the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and it segments this timeframe into three distinct periods. In broad terms, these

---

<sup>1</sup> The Wire, “Hyper-nationalism making India Intolerant; Muslims feel Insecure: Hamid Ansari”. 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

distinctions exist due to key turning points in the story of modern India's politics and economic outlook. With regards to neoliberalism, the first period (1900-1947) represents a period of developing identities and nationalisms within the context of a colonial administration that drew heavily from classical liberalism and its reliance on a governmentality of numbers and markets. The second period (1947-1979) begins with independence and the post-colonial resistance to the established global economic order. However, this period is much more nuanced than just viewing India's initial development as state led. This period is also characterized by attempts for a liberal counterrevolution as the economic planners face resistance and in cases compromise on core issues regarding the economy. The last period (1980 – present day) begins with a more rampant program of liberalization that begins to take form in the 1980s and materializes in 1991. Such reforms, particularly those in 1991, deregulate and privatize various sectors of the economy, opening up Indian markets to the world.

Following the other theme of nationalism, the governmentality exhibited in the first period, particularly colonial knowledge leads to the quest to reclaim history and culture, as both Hindus and Muslims strive to redefine what it means to associate with a particular faith, and we see the interaction between the universality of faith and the territoriality of nationalism. This is a period characterized by communal riots, debates on secularism and India's syncretic identity. It also sees the rise of Hindu revivalism which leads to the articulation of a nationalist agenda of *Hindutva*. Another important facet of this period is the construction of the idea of the 'backward' Muslim and how colonial administration and Indian Muslims tackle this problem through tools such as education and governmental employment. The second period also highlights how socialist policies were also vehemently opposed by the forces of the Hindu right. However, their opposition to the

Congress was often on a weak foundation due to a lack of a vision for social justice. Meanwhile, Indian Muslims see constitutional secularism and the struggle for reservations as necessary policies to dispel their ‘backwardness’. In the last period, once the floodgates of neoliberal reform are opened, it leads to the creation of a new form of biopolitics that governs according to the rationale of the ‘most efficient choice’. In this period neoliberal thought uses Hindu nationalism in order to appeal to the Hindu masses. This period is characterized by spectacles of development and new notions of what it means to be a ‘good Muslim’ which are predicated on productivity and economic worth. Thus, neoliberalism is able to construct a strong foundation for itself as it weakens democratic principles. However, neoliberalism’s Achilles’ heel is its inability to guarantee social mobility to the most destitute and this pushes it to embrace exclusionary rhetoric even further. One thing to clarify here is that this project does not see neoliberalism as omnipotent and all-pervading. In fact, a significant facet of neoliberal biopolitics are unintended consequences of neoliberal practice.

Before moving further, it is also necessary to define and attempt to understand certain key terms. It is extremely crucial to understand the difference between Hinduism and *Hindutva*. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, who was a leading force in the formulation of the *Hindutva* ideology, describes *Hindutva* as embracing ‘all departments of thought and activity of the whole being of our Hindu race’ and a total ‘history’ of Hindu people.<sup>2</sup> He defines Hindus as those people who consider their ancestry to be indigenous to India and whose faith originated within the geographical bounds of India. The British regarded ‘Hindu’ as a representation that characterized “all things in

---

<sup>2</sup> Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu?* (Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan, 1969), 3-4.

India (specially elements and features found in the cultures and religions of India) which were not Muslim, not Christian, not Jewish, or, hence, not Western".<sup>3</sup> Arvind Sharma elaborates on this by highlighting how *Hindutva* is a name given to a uniting culture on the basis of values such as belief in *karma*, *dharma* and cow veneration.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it also excludes communities and Muslims as foreign or as the 'other'.

Defining neoliberalism is a much more arduous task as there is no singular conception of neoliberal thought. There are various strands of neoliberal economic thought that are developed in various places such as London, Frankfurt, Vienna and Chicago. In general, neoliberalism entails economic liberalization, privatization, deregulation and the removal of global barriers to trade. However, neoliberalism is also informed to a great extent by local contexts, which is true for India as well. Furthermore, there are differing opinions regarding the role of the state and the degree of intervention it can conduct. The main common aspects between these different neoliberal principles are a faith-like belief in certain core assumptions of the economy, such as its self-corrective nature, and their ability to exist as a thought collective rather than an ideology. Meaning, neoliberalism as we know it today, is constructed by an exchange of ideas.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Robert E. Frykenberg, "The Emergence of Modern 'Hinduism' as a Concept and as an Institution: A Reappraisal with Special Reference to South India" ed. Günther-Dietz Sontheimer and Hermann Kulke, *Hinduism Reconsidered* (Manohar, 2001), 84-85.

<sup>4</sup> Arvind Sharma, "On the Difference Between Hinduism and Hindutva," *Association for Asian Studies*, Asian Philosophies and Religion, 25, no. 1 (2020): 43–47.

<sup>5</sup> For arguments regarding the depiction of neoliberalism as a faith-based ideology, see Daniel Stedman Jones, *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics*, (Princeton University Press, 2012). For further reading on the different strands of neoliberal thought, see Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe, *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009).

This thesis will analyze these two themes together in order to understand how the push for economic liberalization has impacted the social position of India's Muslims. Such an analysis will be used to highlight how ideas such as those regarding Muslim 'backwardness', social justice and progress have evolved over these three periods, with special care given to the continuities within these periods as well.



## **Chapter 1: Hindu Revivalism and Muslim ‘Backwardness’**

*“The Arya Samaj has to remember that the India of today is not exclusively Hindu. Its prosperity and future depend on reconciliation of Hinduism with that greater ism – Indian Nationalism – which alone can secure for India its rightful place in the comity of nations. Anything that may prevent, or even hinder, that consummation is a sin for which there can be no expiation.”<sup>6</sup>*

This chapter seeks to introduce certain themes that arise in the late colonial period and continue to remain relevant in the next two chapters within this study as they evolve along with India’s political economy. The first important theme to consider is the rise of Hindu revivalism and the impact it has on the nationalist movement in India. The second aspect worth consideration is the articulation of ideas of a ‘syncretic’ identity and the shaky foundation they are based on. Thirdly, classical liberalism gives rise to the idea of the ‘backward Muslim’ and this idea in particular is crucial for this project as neoliberalism eventually transforms what it means to be a ‘good’ Muslim. In this particular chapter, these themes will be introduced in order to show that pre-independence India was characterized by an idea of nationalism that was supplemented by Hindu revivalist rhetoric and this had an impact on Hindu-Muslim relations. Furthermore, the idea of Muslim ‘backwardness’ contributed to competition between Hindus and Muslims which often materialized in the form of violence or the rejection of the ‘Indianness’ of the minority community. These contestations would not only have a key impact on constitution-making and Indian

---

<sup>6</sup> Lajpat Rai, *The Arya Samaj* (London; Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co., 1915), 238.

secularism, but would also impact how post-independence India would attempt to alleviate social inequity, both in the age of planning and the neoliberal era.

One of the key arguments made by the Hindu right in relation to the Congress is to describe the party as ‘pseudo-secularists’. In this regard, the *Hindutva* brigade of today takes a markedly different position from that of the Hindu Mahasabha in the 1950s. The Hindu right aims to bring its program into existence not by denigrating the modern secular state but by positioning themselves as the natural ‘secularists’. They contend that the Indian state itself drags religion into politics by appeasing religious minorities. By contesting things such as the existence of a Muslim Personal Law, the *Sangh Parivar* seeks to paint Muslims as the ‘other’. Sumit Sarkar, while comparing the *Parivar* to the Nazis in Germany, states that within the propaganda of the Hindu right, “The Muslim here becomes the near-exact equivalent of the Jew”.<sup>7</sup>

An interesting idea to consider here is the meaning that the term ‘secularism’ has adopted in the Indian context. Some may argue that Indian secularism has developed into an entity that is very different from western conceptions of the term. Furthermore, some may even proclaim that secularism of the western context is inapplicable to the social and cultural realities of India. However, elites within India in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were very much aware of the sort of secular society they intended to fashion and were familiar with the western discourse that surrounded the issue. Partha Chatterjee argues that the need to construct new ‘meanings’ of secularism arose from

---

<sup>7</sup> Sumit Sarkar, “The Fascism of the *Sangh Parivar*”, *Economic and Political Weekly* 28, no. (January 1993): 165.

the fact that these intellectual elites failed in constructing a secular ethos for the Indian state.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, Shabnum Tejani takes the view that since Indian constitutionalism and its articulation of secularism are byproducts of nationalism, the construction of secularism is bound to be impacted by the contradictions of the national movement, such as the use of upper-caste idioms and viewing nationalism as Hindu identity.<sup>9</sup> However, there are two questions that are extremely intriguing as far as the nature of secularism in India is concerned. The first pertains to the implications of viewing these new ‘meanings’ of secularism as a reaction to the failure of the western conception to cement in society. Rather than seeing the failure of secularism in the western sense as the reason for the construction of these meanings, can we consider these new ‘meanings’ as the reason for the failure of these political and intellectual elites? The first chapter of this thesis will attempt to address this issue by looking at some of the writings and debates that existed in this early period that revolved around secularism. This includes both Hindu and Muslim voices, often in conversation with each other.

The second question reflects on another implication of subscribing to the view that the project of secularism has failed to take root in India, or at least the western conception of it has. Why does the Hindu Right choose to redefine secularism and work within the ambit of the modernized state rather than seeking to supplant it? This question will be engaged with primarily

---

<sup>8</sup> Partha Chatterjee, “Secularism and Toleration”, *Economic and Political Weekly* 29, no. 28 (June 1994): 1769.

<sup>9</sup> Shabnum Tejani, *Indian Secularism: A Social and Intellectual History, 1890-1950* (Bloomington, Ind. : Chesham, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press ; Combined Academic distributor, Indiana University Press, 2008), 260-264.

in the second and third chapters as it will be shown how institutional aspects of the modernizing and increasingly economically liberal state suit the project of the *Sangh Parivar*.

### **The Kanpur Report – Juxtaposing the ‘National Synthesis’ with the ground realities**

On March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1931, the Congress committee of Kanpur announced a *hartal* (a protest calling for the shutdown of workplaces, shops etc.) in remembrance of Bhagat Singh. The Muslim shopkeepers at Meston Road refused to shut down their shops and this led to a spate of unabated violence that led to the desecration of places of worship of both communities and the loss of 140 lives.<sup>10</sup> The Karachi session of the Indian National Congress in 1931 decided to set up a committee in order to enquire into the causes of the riots and make recommendations to hinder the breakout of such violence in the future. The resulting report was a rather curious document that attempted to present a ‘holistic’ history of relations between the Hindu-Muslim community. While the report does lament the excesses committed by the two communities against each other, it celebrates the establishment of what it calls a ‘National Synthesis’. It celebrates the ‘synthesis’ that was advocated for by figures such as the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh and the mystic poet Kabir Das.<sup>11</sup> With the advent of colonial rule, the committee claims that Hindus took advantage of ‘westernization’ and even though Sir Syed Ahmed Khan made a great contribution to the Indian

---

<sup>10</sup> For a greater detail of events and the response of the colonial government refer to the *Report of the Commission of the Enquiry into the Communal Outbreak at Cawnpore*, Home (Political), 1931 and the *Fortnightly Report of United Province for the Second Half of March 1931*.

<sup>11</sup> *The Communal Problem: Report of the Committee appointed by the Indian National Congress to enquire into the Kanpur Riots of March 1931* (Delhi: The National Book Trust of India, 1931), 83-90.

Muslim community, the implications of his outlook entailed that Hindus had to bear the brunt of fostering a national movement.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the rise of Hindu revivalism due to the activities of the *Arya Samaj* had aroused suspicion within the Muslim community as this wave of revivalism was inextricably linked to the development of a national consciousness within the Hindu community. The commission was meant to enquire into the events of the carnage that took place in Kanpur in 1931. Yet, the committee chose to furnish a brief history of Hindu-Muslim relations and made several curious claims such as extolling the virtues of the *Arya Samaj* for its revivalist efforts and yet viewing the Pan-Islamic tendencies of the Khilafat Movement with suspicion.<sup>13</sup> The commission also chooses to encourage the reformism of what it refers to as the *Qadiani* sect and praises its efforts to “rationalize and purify the practices of that religion.”<sup>14</sup>

The recommendations made by the committee range from serious claims such as the need to encourage the ‘fusion’ of the two ‘separate cultures’ to encouraging each citizen “to be on familiar terms with at least one friend belonging to the other community”.<sup>15</sup> The committee calls for the construction of an ideal that is contingent on a ‘fundamental unity of religions’ that entails stressing upon the ‘essential truths common to all religions.’ Keeping these aspects of the report in mind, one has to wonder as to why a report on a specific spree of violence chose to construct a history of two communities? Furthermore, why do its recommendations extend beyond remedies

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 132-134.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 156 & 166.

to communal violence and emphasize the existence of a synthesis that is opposed by a few bad apples? The answer to these questions pertains to the conundrum of Indian secularism that we previously highlighted. Did public intellectuals fail in their program to implement western ideals of secularism or was the imbibing of religion with secular ideals a deliberate construction? Despite these attempts to ‘Indianize’ secularism, one should not assume that everyone was on board with this construction as Nehru in his comments urged the need to place less emphasis on the ‘moral and religious’ aspects of ‘Indian civilization’ and pay greater attention to the ‘economic and political’ foundation of western societies.<sup>16</sup>

The report perplexed several observers as far as its decision to undertake a wider task than it was supposed to was concerned. It is clear that the members of the committee saw the ‘fusion’ of different religious communities as one of the remedies to outbreaks of communal violence. However, its understanding of ‘secular’ outlook is tinged with the desire to repackage Hindu and Muslim culture and philosophy in order to fit this program. In a sense, there is a desire to construct an ideal that is predicated on religion rather than divorced from it. In this regard, it provides a selective reading of Indian history by picking figures and events that are complementary to this construction and at the same time ignoring others. In some cases, it even cherry picks certain facets of an individual’s life and politics and chooses to ignore the rest. For example, while quoting Muhammad Iqbal in order to drive the point of unity, the committee clarifies that the verses it chose were written by Iqbal in his ‘better and loftier days.’<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> *Comments of Jawaharlal Nehru on the Kanpur Enquiry Report*, AICC file 62/1931 NMML.

<sup>17</sup> *The Communal Problem*, 152.

The idea of a disrupted ‘national syncretism’ is problematic in nature as there are diverging views on what this syncretic identity represents. The idea is strongly based in historical memory, as flawed as that can be. For example, there are great points of contention between Muslims and Hindus over matters such as the characterization of Muslim rule in India even to this day. For example, writing in 1995, Mushtaque Ahmed, an advocate of the Supreme Court of India reacted to the demolition of Ayodhya by citing the contributions of Islam and Christianity to India’s secular traditions. He writes that these two religions were not spread by violence but in fact contributed *Ruhaniyat* (soulfulness) and *Akhuwat* (brotherhood). He goes on to cite an address by the former Indian President Dr. Zakir Hussain that advocated for the reconciliation of the Hindu belief in *Ahmisa* (respect of all living things) with the Muslim notion of *Tasawar-e-Tauhid* (Passion towards the Obedience of God).<sup>18</sup>

In her magnum opus titled *Aag ka Darya* (River of Fire), Quratulain Hyder attempts to construct a ‘syncretic’ history of India by showing how four characters are reincarnated throughout a 2,500-year history of the subcontinent. Written in 1959, it is clear that the wounds of Partition had a great impact on Hyder’s writing and her construction of this history of syncretism. While the book is largely regarded as a rebuke of the ideologies of the Muslim League and the supporters of *Hindutva*, it also exposes the frailties of a belief in a syncretic identity. For example, at one instance the Muslim Kamal remarks that, “The Indo-Muslim lifestyle is made up of the Persian-Turki-Mughal and regional Rajput Hindu cultures. So, what is this Indianness which the Muslim

---

<sup>18</sup> Mushtaque Ahmad, *Babari Masjid Secularism and the Supreme Court* (New Delhi: Qazi Publishers and Distributors, 1995), 38-41.

League has started questioning? Could there be an alternate India? Why?”<sup>19</sup> Yet, Kamal also believes that Indians have become the victims of urban middle-class politics and that Muslims are ‘merely another caste’ who are restricted by taboos such as no inter-dining. Kamal is of the opinion that if his staunchly anti-League uncle would have been alive in the 1940s then he too would have joined the Muslim League.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Hyder’s conception of syncretic identity is on occasion problematic. For example, in reference to the question of Muslim ‘backwardness’, she cites how in 1921, more Muslim girls attended schools in U.P. than their Hindu counterparts.<sup>21</sup> However, the assumption being made here is that educational trends are the only barometer of measuring this ‘backwardness’ and even within that, there could be differences in educational quality. Similarly, Kamal remarks that there is “No Hindu-Muslim rift in the princely states - the problem is characteristic of post-1857 British India. Yet, the author ignores the oppressive rule of the Dogra Regime in Kashmir.<sup>22</sup> Hyder’s writing on the events leading up to Partition are at times effective in constructing a composite or secular culture. However, her work is also colored by flaws that are more reflective of problems in Indian historiography and her position in the Muslim upper classes than shortcomings in her writing.

---

<sup>19</sup> Qurratulain Hyder, *River of Fire* (New York: New Directions, 1998), 245-6

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 246.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>22</sup> For a further reading of the Dogra regime’s use of Hinduism to garner legitimacy see, Chitralekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).



The construction of a composite identity has to a large extent been informed by not only India's pre-colonial history but also by the way it had been depicted by British historiography that tended to create the periodization of Hindu, Muslim and finally colonial rule. There is also a great deal of difference in how these works depict Muslims depending on whether they were written before or after 1857. For example, Mountstuart Elphinstone regarded syncretism to be a facet of Muslim rule in India but viewed it as not a solely Muslim endeavor but one that was advanced by Hindu realms as well.<sup>23</sup> James Mill wrote an infamous account of India's pre-colonial history that described Hindu civilization as 'inferior' to Muslim civilization.<sup>24</sup> Friedrich Max Müller described Mill's work as having real-world ramifications as he held it responsible for some of the 'greatest misfortunes that have happened in India'.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, historiography following 1857 takes on a much more critical view of Muslim rule that often stems from a desire to highlight the negative aspects of Muslim rule.<sup>26</sup> This dual rhetoric of Muslim excesses and Hindu weakness laid the antecedents for Hindu nationalism and the activities of reformers such as the *Arya Samaj*, who relied on British historiography to create an idea of a 'golden age' that had been disrupted by

---

<sup>23</sup> Mountstuart Elphinstone, *The History of India*, vol. 2, Cambridge Library Collection - Perspectives from the Royal Asiatic Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 182-3 and 191-6.

<sup>24</sup> James Mill, *The History of British India*, vol. II (London: Cradock, Baldwin and Joy, 1820), 425-8.

<sup>25</sup> F. Max Müller, *India: What can it teach us?* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Publishers, 2007), 59-60.

<sup>26</sup> For an analysis of post-1857 historiography see, Amalendu Misra, *Identity and Religion: Foundations of Anti-Islamism in India* (New Delhi; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2004).

Muslim rule.<sup>27</sup> It is clear that colonial knowledge played a key role in cementing difference but also constrained how the religious ideal of ‘universality’ interacted with the nationalist ideal of ‘territoriality’. Partha Chatterjee argues that a reliance on colonial knowledge coupled with the idea of the singularity of national history, early Bengali historiographers were constructing a nation that either depicted Indian Islam to be a byproduct of foreign conquest or a domesticated element of popular life.<sup>28</sup>

Other than its ideological issues, the Kanpur report was also the source of some procedural controversy. Maulana Zafarul-Mulk, one of the Muslim members of the committee, protested the deletion of certain passages that had been “discussed and passed by the whole committee”.<sup>29</sup> The Maulana also penned a dissenting note that included these passages which reflect on the communalization of the Congress in Kanpur.

### **Communalization of the Congress and the Maulana’s Dissent**

Maulana Zafarul Mulk, who would later be known for his opposition to the Muslim League through the *Madhe Sahaba* movement that created tensions between the Sunnis and Shias of the U.P., dissented on multiple grounds as far as the committee’s report was concerned. These criticisms revolved not only on the committee’s claim of a national synthesis being disrupted by

---

<sup>27</sup> Barbara D. Metcalf, “Presidential Address: Too Little and Too Much: Reflections on Muslims in the History of India,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 54, no. 4 (1995): 951–67, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2059955>.

<sup>28</sup> Partha Chatterjee, “History and the Nationalization Of Hinduism,” *Social Research* 59, no. 1 (1992): 111–49.

<sup>29</sup> Dr. Bhagvan Das, *Letter to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, October 26<sup>th</sup> 1931. Published in *The Communal Problem*, National Book Trust of India, 173.

colonialism and the need to revive it, but also on the bare facts of Kanpur and its Congress wing. By relying on witnesses within the party, the Maulana refers to the degree of bigotry that had crept within the Congress ranks, particularly its activists on the ground. He quotes one witness as saying:

“Men who are absolutely above Hindu-Muslim feeling are a microscopic minority – in the Congress organization here, not more than two or three – the rest are all defensive communalists and not offensive communalists... About a dozen of our executive of thirty are such that they think Hindus should be organized separately, so that whenever necessary they should be prepared for self-defense.”<sup>30</sup>

Another witness states:

“(redacted) of the Hindu Sabha was one of our vice-presidents... I do not think it good that a Congressman should be a *Sanghathani* or a Hindu Mahasabhite... There are very few who are above communalism.”<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps the common thread linking together most of the testimonies is the acknowledgement of different levels of communalization within the party rank and file, with most witnesses referring to those who have got ‘some tinge’ of communal feelings but do not practice it. However, it is incorrect to assume that Congress actively aligned itself with ‘communal’ stances. To an extent, the Congress had to pander to middle-class interests in the national movement, especially from 1920 onwards due to the democratization of the party constitution, as it had to pay heed to the sentiments of the overwhelming petty-bourgeois membership of the party.<sup>32</sup> Middle-classes in India in order to further their personal interests could either align with nationalist anti-imperialist ideology that stressed on social progress of the collective or align with a sectional

---

<sup>30</sup> *The Communal Problem*, 199.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1984), 49.

communal-based ideology that would be much more effective in protecting their status. In the case of these Kanpur riots, Bipan Chandra argues that they originated due to commercial jealousies between merchants and in fact such riots were often financed by rival merchants during the Depression years between 1929 to 1939.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Gyanendra Pandey points out how many Hindu social movements became much more violent as they transitioned from the rural to the urban phase in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, the more violent outbreaks of violence over cow protection were mainly instigated and supported by petty zamindars.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, there was a general convergence between the Congress and Hindu revivalist groups such as the *Arya Samaj* during the 1930s, something that had been minimal in the previous decade. Both groups began to identify 'Indian Muslims' as a homogenous political force and this helped shape the rhetoric of the Muslim League.<sup>35</sup> This nexus between the Congress and the *Samaj* was made possible by the use of religious idioms by many in the Congress leadership and this allowed the national movement to use the *Samaj*'s idea of *swaraj* (self-rule) in the non-cooperation movement. However, this also allowed ideas of a Hindu *sangathan* (solidarity) to permeate into the national movement as well.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 70

<sup>34</sup> Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 189-191.

<sup>35</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, 1985), 71. Muhammad Ali Jinnah claimed that the Hindu press had 'fathered this word (Pakistan) on us.'

<sup>36</sup> William Gould, *Hindu Nationalism and the Language of Politics in Late Colonial India*, Cambridge Studies in Indian History and Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 132.

Moving beyond the political sphere, a key point made by the author of the dissenting note revolves around the debate regarding undenominational and denominational educational institutes. Reacting to the objection raised regarding the role of Aligarh University in producing students who do not possess the ‘broader outlook’ of students from undenominational institutes, Maulana Zafarul-Mulk remarks that a large number of members of the *Hindu Sangathan* are former students of these very undenominational universities.<sup>37</sup> This observation reveals volumes about the communalization of social spaces that were viewed as being ‘secular’.

While these objections reveal the degree of anxiety that existed within Muslim minds as far as the very nature of the national movement was concerned, it is necessary to ask what was the Maulana’s own conception of a ‘secular’ ideal and how was it different from the one espoused by the Congress leadership? To a great extent, his own remedies had a very similar ethos to those produced by the broader committee. He called for a greater reverence for the ‘Golden Age of our ancestors’ and in this regard, he was also participating in the exercise of a mythic construction of an innately Indian form of ‘secularism’. At the same time, he condemns the forceful creation of a ‘synthesis’, stating that it would lead to greater conflict. However, he himself is inadvertently participating in this process when he romanticizes the ‘fusion’ under Muslim rule as being a natural process.<sup>38</sup> It is also interesting to note that his recommendations also take into account the factors of deprivation and reparative actions while calling for Hindus to use their advantages in terms of

---

<sup>37</sup> *The Communal Problem*, 206.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

wealth, education and political mobilization to guarantee opportunities to Muslims through the framework of a constitution.<sup>39</sup>

Maulana Zafarul-Mulk signs off by drawing attention to how some ‘inclusive’ programs add to the number of ‘warring creeds’ and spread disunity and reduce toleration within society.<sup>40</sup> It is unclear if this remark is intended to be a rebuke of the majority opinion or is a condemnation of Hindu revivalists like the *Arya Samaj*. Perhaps it is meant to censure both parties as a survey of the Maulana’s anxieties shows us that he is very much dismayed by the degree of ‘communalization’ that exists within the nationalist movement.

### **The Arya Samaj and Indian Nationalism**

The report of the committee highlights two main things that are necessary to take into account as far as any broad study of Indian secularism and its inconsistencies are concerned. The first aspect that is key is the construction of a ‘synthesis’ by mythicizing pre-colonial Indian history. The readiness of the members of the committee to go above and beyond its scope highlights an innate desire within political intellectuals to construct an ideal that is contingent on notions of ‘syncretism.’ Secondly, it is crucial to not underestimate the influence that Hindu revivalism played in this entire exercise. The *Samaj* was extremely effective in constructing a national consciousness among the Hindus of northern India. So much so that the rhetoric and

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 211.

language of the *Samaj* was incorporated by several intellectuals and leaders of the Congress.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, the interests of the Congress and the *Arya Samaj* often overlapped. The desire for social reform, as advocated by the *Samaj*, was amalgamated with a political platform. Founded in 1875, the *Arya Samaj* sought to reform Hinduism by relying on the uncontested authority of the *Vedas*. Using educational institutes and social programs as a form of outreach, the organization also intended to contest with Christian missionaries by incorporating low-caste Hindus into its fold and by ‘reconverting’ vulnerable Christian and Muslim communities. Thus, in matters such as the uplifting of lower-caste Hindus, the platform of the *Arya Samaj* often intersected with that of the Congress. While certain elites of the Congress believed in a western basis for secularism, they could not pass on the opportunity of using the *Samaj*’s organizational infrastructure and mass mobilization to draw support towards its own platform. Thus, the Congress believed that resorting to the idioms of ‘devotional Hinduism’ would allow it to mobilize at a mass-level in the rural areas of North India.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the use of revivalist Hindu rhetoric allowed the Congress to attract a number of Hindu nationalists to its fold that were crucial as cadres. This explains why the party membership in Kanpur was so susceptible to bouts of communal violence.

This wave of the incorporation of revivalism and its amalgamation with ideas of national territoriality go even further back than this as it has its antecedents in the *shuddhi* movement. The

---

<sup>41</sup> For a further reading on the incorporation of the *Arya Samaj*’s rhetoric in the politics of the Congress, see William Gould, *Hindu Nationalism and the Language of Politics in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). A key argument made by Gould refers to the competition of resources between different wings of the Congress and how providing care for the ‘Hindu community’ and using religious symbolism was one of the ways it was contested.

<sup>42</sup> Douglas E. Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India: The Shaping of a Public Culture in Surat City, 1852-1928* (Oxford: 1991), 220-221.

movement itself was supplemented by the construction of ‘Hinduism’ as a distinct religion, a process that both colonial elites and Brahminical elite helped shape.<sup>43</sup> The *shuddhi* ritual was based on ancient Hindu rites of purification and was targeted towards entire *biraderis* or communities of Muslims that had converted in the past and claimed Rajput or *Kshatriya* status for themselves.<sup>44</sup> The Muslim response was to use *tabligh* (propagation) to compete with the *Samajis* for ‘neo-Muslims’, Hindus and other nominal believers by making *tabligh* a duty for all Muslims and not only the *ulema*.<sup>45</sup> However, the culture that emerged from both traditions was to compete for numbers and this led them to be disparage other faiths. Gene Thursby argues that this tendency arose due to the fact that *shuddhi* was not only to proselytize but to offend and excite Muslims, often using satire or even sexual innuendo.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the movement itself gained traction with the support of the All-Hindu Mahasabha, which had the support of rich bankers, lawyers, professionals and landowners in 1915.<sup>47</sup> In fact, this nexus between professionals and holy men could be seen even in the 1870s and 1880s, when lawyers and teachers came to the defense of the *Magh Mela* in Allahabad.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Yoginder Sikand, “Arya Shuddhi and the Muslim Tabligh”, in *Religious Conversion in India: Modes, Motivations, and Meanings*, ed. Rowena Robinson and Sathianathan Clarke (Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 100.

<sup>44</sup> Gene R. Thursby, *Hindu-Muslim Relations in British India: A Study of Controversy, Conflict, and Communal Movements in Northern India 1923-1928* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 151.

<sup>45</sup> Yoginder Sikand “Arya Shuddhi and the Muslim Tabligh”, 105

<sup>46</sup> Thursby, *Hindu-Muslim Relations in British India*, 9-62.’

<sup>47</sup> Mushirul Hasan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1885-1930* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1991), 254.

<sup>48</sup> C.A. Bayly, *The Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad, 1880-1920* (Clarendon Press, 1975).



Khawaja Hassan Nizami, an Indian Sufi Saint of the Chishti Lineage, was one of the leading proponents of *tabligh* and he documented the excesses committed by the *Arya Samaj* against Hindu practitioners that they perceived were not following the true tenets of the *Vedas*. In particular, he denounced the treatment of *Sadhus* or religious ascetics by the footsoldiers of the *Samaj*, the very same activists who would later join Congress and the Mahasabha.<sup>49</sup> In a sense, he contemplates the very sentiment espoused by Maulana Zafarul-Mulk regarding the exclusionary nature of ‘inclusive’ reformers. Nizami goes on to give an account of various incidents in which the cadres of the *Arya Samaj* inflicted violence upon temples and ascetics. Referring to the desecration of a temple of the Hindu deity *Ranganatha* in 1918, he quoted the *Arya Samajis* as claiming that “this is public land, and it is their duty to remove the idol from the temple”.<sup>50</sup> This highlights the particularities of the religious consciousness that the *Arya Samaj* was attempting to inculcate within the Hindu community. It is interesting to note that through the guise of ‘public ownership’ over religious spaces, the *Samaj* sought to exclude those who did not conform to its conception of Hinduism, such as those who revered ascetics or participated in certain forms of idolatory. At the same time, references are made to gatherings that condemned the activities of the group. However, Nizami begs the reader to not be under the false impression that the desecration of one temple has nothing to do with them and hence there is no need for them to condemn the activities of the *Samaj*. A running theme in his pamphlet is the growing strength of the group as far as perpetrating violence is concerned and how this violence impacts all communities of India.

---

<sup>49</sup> Khawaja Hassan Nizami, *Saari Hindu Janata aur Hindu Mahasabha se poochne ki aik baat (A question for the Hindu Community and the Hindu Mahasabha)* (Delhi: Mahboobul Matabe, 1921), 4.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

However, it is necessary to remember that Nizami was also competing for space with the Samaj in order to propagate for his own brand of *tabligh* that was inspired by Sufi Islam and his own notions of syncretism.

The ability of the *Arya Samaj* to perpetrate such violence does not only reflect its convictions but also its intricate structure, which is organized on the local, provincial and national level.<sup>51</sup> Thus, once the Congress starts to agitate on a platform that intersects with that of the *Arya Samaj*, such as the case of social reform for lower-caste Hindus, it is also able to access the vast network of groups affiliated with the *Samaj*. While defenders of the *Arya Samaj*, such as Lala Lajpat Rai and the members of the Kanpur committee, may proclaim that the organization is apolitical, its quest to ‘purify’ Hinduism places it in the center of the political sphere. By linking national consciousness to a Hindu golden-age and ‘otherizing’ outside influences such as Christianity and Islam, the *Arya Samaj* is able to construct the boundaries of citizenship and nationality. By claiming that all moral and ‘national’ responsibility stems from the *Vedas*, the *Arya Samaj* lay the foundation for the creation of a ‘synthesis’ that excluded elements of Indian history and in turn excluded individuals who did not conform to its narrow views on moral authority and national consciousness.

### **Social Justice in a ‘Syncretic Society’**

By looking at some of the ways the Indian National Congress sought to construct alternative ideals of citizenship, it is clear that for reasons of mobilization and political expediency,

---

<sup>51</sup> Rai, *The Arya Samaj*, 150-154.

Congress was able to connect the very same rhetoric used by the *Arya Samaj* to its outlook of a national India. The ‘communalization’ of politics in India led to demands for protection being made on behalf of the Muslim community and lower-caste Hindus. Maulana Zafarul-Mulk had suggested the reparative duty of Hindus to take into account the systemic disadvantages that Muslims faced in financial and educational terms. Yet, after Partition, the issue of reservations was deemed to be one of ‘backwardness’ rather than of a religious nature. Constitutional debates in India constructed secularism in opposition to the idea of ‘communalism’ and this was very much shaped by the trajectory of the anti-colonial agitation.<sup>52</sup>

The ‘proto-nationalist’ movements that served as the foundation for the Indian nationalist movement of the 1920s and 30s were heavily influenced by upper-caste sensibilities. Furthermore, the ‘inclusive’ nature of this movement did not lie in embracing Muslims or Christians as religious communities with equal rights. Rather, conceptions of minority citizenship were articulated in terms of the ‘universal’ nature of Hinduism, a tendency that would later inform the idea of *Ghar Wapsi* for the *Sangh Parivar*. Having shown some of the ways in which the construction of these ideals happened and the influence of Hindu revivalism on this process, it is necessary to now take a step back and consider the broader implications these factors have on Indian secularism.

The reliance on Hindu revivalism as a source of nationalistic rhetoric was intended to create a referential point to a utopia that was considered to be just in nature. While certain members of the INC called for a ‘fusion’ of different communities in order to produce a ‘national synthesis’,

---

<sup>52</sup> For a further reading on this topic, see Shabnum Tejani, *Indian Secularism: A Social and Intellectual History 1890-1950*. (Ranikhet: 2007).

on what terms was this conjunction meant to take place? The grounds of this fusion were very solidly based on a very slanted reading of Indian history that sought to glorify its Vedic heritage and frame Hinduism as an exceptional faith that could alone cater to religious minorities. By constructing faith as the basis for tolerance, Indian secularism was built upon seriously shaky foundations that could be chipped away by reformist movements that sought to redefine 'Indianness' through the lens of faith. While leaders such as Nehru were certainly skeptical of such associations, the political language that they were using to engage with the masses was inundated with references to the Hindu faith and moral sensibilities. This language also allowed them to mobilize at a mass level by emulating social and religious reform movements. As a result, the crisis of secularism in India has been shaped to a large extent by building up of a 'secular' ideal that is premised on the universal and just nature of Hinduism. This chapter has established the core ideological crisis that Indian secularism faces in terms of the very construction of this ideal. In the next chapter, we move towards the institutional crisis of Indian secularism, or of secularism in practice. Furthermore, as we shall see, post-colonial India faces another inadvertent ideological threat to secularism that has much to do with changes of the political economy. Neoliberal reform gives a second life to discriminatory conceptions of citizenship by tying progress and development to the Hindu faith. The construction of this narrative is very much contingent on the relationship between the anti-colonial movement and Hindu revivalism that has been discussed in this chapter.

However, one must also try to focus on the complementary effect that Hindu revivalism and colonial governmentality had on the Muslim subject. Furthermore, it is difficult to reconcile a history of syncretic co-existence with notions of Muslim 'backwardness'. How can Muslims be a disadvantaged group if a syncretic culture has existed within the subcontinent? In the Kanpur

Report, the authors had outlined how colonialism had disrupted this co-existence. However, an indictment of colonial governmentality also condemns the markets that it had created which were now being occupied by a growing middle-class. Instead, the idea of the ‘backward’ Muslim began to permeate in discourses on social injustice and development. Thus, education or governmental employment was seen as a way to alleviate the plight of the Muslims rather than to redistribute wealth. Thus, social change had to be brought about through the ambit of the classical liberalism propagated by the British. The colonial administration used empirical tools such as statistics, trigonometrical surveys and censuses in order to construct a governmentality that was predicated on governing markets and the economy that were a byproduct of a liberal ideology. However, it also had to create room for indigenous form of social power and divisions.<sup>53</sup> In order to reconcile these inequities with ‘liberal’ administration, education was seen as the tool to uplift the ‘backward Muslim’, a category that had emerged following a governmentality of numbers and the reaction to its discovery of Muslims being socially disadvantaged as compared to other groups.<sup>54</sup> In 1911, for example, while 5.5% of India’s Hindu population was considered to be literate, only around 3.8% of Muslims were literate. However, only 0.27% of Muslims were educated in English, while Hindus were almost twice as likely to be educated in English.<sup>55</sup> By 1921, the literacy rate for Muslims had risen to approximately 4.6% but the rate for Hindus had also risen to about 6.5%. At

---

<sup>53</sup> C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870*, Cambridge Studies in Indian History and Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 168.

<sup>54</sup> Sanjay Seth, “Governmentality, Pedagogy, Identity: The Problem of the Backward Muslim’ in Colonial India” in *Beyond Representation: Colonial and Postcolonial Constructions of Indian Identity*, ed. Crispin Bates (New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>55</sup> *Census of India 1911* Vol. 1 Part 1 Report (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1913), 311

the same time, only 0.45% Muslims were literate in English, while 0.75% of Hindus were deemed to be literate in English.<sup>56</sup> Thus, while literacy for both Muslims and Hindus had increased that decade, the gulf between educational trends between Muslims was hardly being addressed.

Muslims themselves also came to see education and governmental employments as the means to compete with Hindus. Bipan Chandra argues that communalism was not a byproduct of the 'backward' Muslim class trying to catch up with an advanced Hindu middle class. In fact, competition between 'individuals' of the middle class forced them to form sectional 'groups' in order to advance their interests. These sectional groupings are used by the more 'backward' middle classes to demand for greater opportunities and for the advantaged to maintain their dominance. Furthermore, in many situations communal agitations were between two particular classes that happened to be from different communities due to the nature of the local economy, such as largely Muslim peasant and Hindu landowners in Bengal.<sup>57</sup>

This contestation also maintains the core assumptions of a market economy and is predicated on competitiveness. On the other hand, since education is seen as the tool to create social equity, then it allows the perpetuation of these core assumptions as this education entails instruction in the western fashion that is designed to create a professional workforce. Furthermore, the main concern that arises from this analysis is how effective is education as a tool to uplift Muslims? In the case of the Moplah Muslims in Malabar, for example, education was seen as the

---

<sup>56</sup> *Census of India 1921* Vol. 1 Part 2 Tables (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1923), 74-75.

<sup>57</sup> Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India*, 45-46.

means to raise their social position by the All-India Muslim Educational Conference in 1926 and 1927. However, the measures recommended by the Conference had a limited tangible impact on addressing social inequities but instead encouraged the growth of a spirit of nationalism and greater cognizance of an 'Indian Muslim' identity.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the use of education as a source of upliftment solidified these sectional interests and groupings. However, as it will be highlighted in the next two chapters and periods of this thesis, such quotas or reservations were seen to be forms of 'appeasement' by the Hindu Right. However, more resistance was exhibited regarding quotas in public services. Mahatama Gandhi argued in 1924 that all 'employment under national government' should be on the basis of merit in order to safeguard the value of good governance.<sup>59</sup> While it might be argued that this stance is meant to protect the interests of the Hindu middle-classes, it also maintains the idea of a competitive economy and labor market. Taking this further, if educational quotas and spending on Muslim educational institutes was seen as a relatively less threatening issue, does this idea support the hypothesis that such a policy of social injustice was of limited success? Reservations in education, or even employment, impact a very particular section of Muslims.

---

<sup>58</sup> Abdul Rashid Khan, *The All India Muslim Educational Conference: Its Contribution to the Cultural Development of Indian Muslims, 1886-1947* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 234-6.

<sup>59</sup> Gandhi, *Hindu-Muslim Tension, Its Cause and Cure* (Ahmedabad: Young India Office, 1924), 5 and 37-38.

## **Chapter 2: Nehruvian Secularism, The Hindu Right and Economic Contestations**

This chapter tries to show how changes in India's political economy, the Hindu right and the fate of Nehruvian secularism are inextricably tied to one another. In the colonial period, the idea of a 'backward Muslim' had begun to emerge due to the reliance on statistics to measure educational and employment trends. At the same time, the nationalist movement was to an extent reliant on notions of Hindu revivalism. In this chapter, as India transitioned from the colonial period to independence, Hindu nationalists adopted an anti-socialist stance due to their opposition to the state's economic policies. At the same time, business elites and conservatives espoused free market principles in order to oppose Congress' central planning. However, the former lacked a clear economic vision, while the latter lacked mass appeal. While India attempted to develop along a socialist trajectory, the idea of Nehruvian secularism was under pressure not only due to the Congress' own tryst with Hindu nationalism but also due to assaults on the secular nature of the state by Hindu nationalists. However, this chapter identifies the emergence of a nexus between business elites and Hindu nationalists. However, this nexus was prone to certain inconsistencies and weaknesses. While the Hindu right was eager to dispossess the Muslim 'other' through legislation such as the Enemy Property Act, there was no clear alternate vision that promised prosperity to India's poor. Furthermore, this chapter also emphasizes the idea that while neoliberal reform in India is understood to have begun in 1991, the state could be seen inching towards liberalization even as early as the 1960s.

In the previous chapter, it was argued that the rhetoric and idioms of Indian nationalism heavily relied on allusions to a 'golden age' of Indian civilization that needed to be resurrected



through a ‘fusion’ of different communities. Combined with slogans of social reform and caste-based upliftment, the national movement was able to attract a broad base of support that cut across urban and rural spaces. However, it was unclear as to how a ‘golden age’ would be recaptured. The period after Partition was also characterized by a resistance to the established liberal order by post-colonial states. The state was more than willing to intervene within markets in order to guide development and commit to social justice. However, proponents of neoliberal development described such a developmental trajectory as ‘economic nationalism’ and Friedrich Hayek, one of the main formulators of neoliberal thought, viewed it as a ‘naïve fallacy’.<sup>60</sup> A planned modernization of the Indian economy was meant to create a strong manufacturing base, but it would also draw away public resources from the agrarian sector that employed the vast majority of Indians. Wilhelm Röpke, who was another founder of the neoliberal thought collective, argued that developing countries would have to stay underdeveloped for a while in order to prevent the “over-industrialization and underagriculturization of the world.”<sup>61</sup> The planners of India’s economy did indeed try to reform the agrarian sector, but this was met with resistance by the provincial propertied classes and the rural bourgeoisie. From the late 1960s, this rural elite wielded enough political capital to resist the surrendering of their surpluses and then having the ability to invest these surpluses in other areas of the economy, in effect transitioning from being rural bourgeoisie to urban ones. If the previous chapter of this thesis revolved around the interaction between the creation of religious identities with a governmentality informed by classical

---

<sup>60</sup> Dieter Plehwe, “The Origins of the Neoliberal Economic Development Discourse,” in *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*, ed. Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 238–279 and F. A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 490.

<sup>61</sup> Wilhelm Röpke, “Unentwickelte Länder,” *Ordo* 5 (1953), 82.

liberalism, this particular period is characterized by the quest for economic independence and a counter-push for economic liberalization.

This economic counterrevolution coincided with the rise of the Hindu right as these provincial elites allied with outfits such as the RSS, regional parties and political platforms such as J.P. Narayan's Janata Party, and later the BJP. The common thread running between this motley crew was the platform of economic liberalization. The social transformation stimulated by the changes to agrarian society had created an urban environment in which the interests of the higher castes and middle castes began to converge, particularly in states where capitalist development was more advanced such as Gujarat.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, these provincial capitalists were from the very social group that was crucial to the Congress' success in generating a social movement that combined elements of social justice with idioms inspired by Hinduism. In fact, even several state bosses of the Congress attempted to derail Nehru's land reforms in the 1950s.<sup>63</sup> Resistance came from within the agriculture ministry as well in the form of disagreements and resignations.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, scholars of the Indian political economy have argued that India's post-independence economic planning laid the foundation for greater economic integration between the

---

<sup>62</sup> Radhika Desai, "The Slow-Motion Counterrevolution: Developmental Contradictions and the Emergence of Neoliberalism". In *Social Movements and The State in India: Deepening Democracy?*, ed. Alf Gustav Kenneth Bo Nielsen and Alf Gustav Nilsen. Rethinking International Development Series. 2016, 45.

<sup>63</sup> Stuart Corbridge, "The political economy of development in India since Independence" in *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal*, ed. Paul R. Brass (London: Routledge, 2010)

<sup>64</sup> Ashutosh Varshney, *Democracy, Development, and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 44.

states and the center. Measures in the period of central planning such as the implementation of VAT, development of national institutions, fiscal federalism and the push for a common market are evidence of the pressures of globalization towards being economically efficient.<sup>65</sup>

So, what does a growing rural-urban divide and a push for neoliberal reform mean for secularism and the Hindu right? More aptly, how do these socio-economic changes that advocate for ‘freedom’ in the market contribute to a crisis of secularism in which the basic freedoms of minority citizens are under assault? This thesis does not argue that neoliberalism alone is responsible for this crisis or the growing discrimination that Indian Muslims face. Rather, there are other handicaps that the project has faced that have made it so vulnerable to the socio-economic changes induced by economic liberalization. Thus, while the social reasons for communal tensions may exist independently of economic liberalization, neoliberal thought has worsened their impact on Indian society.

### **Nehruvian Secularism Under Pressure**

Jawaharlal Nehru’s vision for a secular idea was informed by the idea that religion should be consigned to the private sphere and that it was the state’s duty to safeguard the virtue of tolerance. At the same time, ‘communal’ politics were a reality of late-colonial and post-colonial India. Furthermore, religious rhetoric was often appropriated by the national movement. Shabnum Tejani, when writing about the Constituent Assembly debates argues that ‘secularism’, as

---

<sup>65</sup> For a further reading on the integrative aspects of state-led industrialization in India see, Baldev Raj Nayar, *Globalization and India’s Economic Integration*, South Asia in World Affairs Series (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014)

constructed in India, was meant to form a Hindu majority by enveloping low caste Hindus into the fold of a homogenous 'Hindu' identity.<sup>66</sup> However, this does not mean that Nehru wanted to inculcate divisive majoritarian values into the national identity he sought to foster. In fact, Nehru was compelled to drag the state into matters such as administration of religious institutions and their funding.<sup>67</sup> The first chapter already discussed some of the ways in which members of the Congress were susceptible to Hindu nationalist ideals. Nehru found himself navigating a political arena that consisted of such individuals, both inside and outside the membership of the party and often had to succumb to the sentiment of the party leadership. At the same time, he saw modernization and economic prosperity as a means to tame communal sentiments but as we shall see later, the eventual deviation from his economic ideals did lead to a form of economic prosperity, albeit one that was latched onto by the Hindu right.

Rajeev Bhargava, when advocating for a 'principled distance' model of secularism in India, laments the degree of involvement that the state has in the administration of religious institutions in certain cases. At the same time, he considers a western conception of secularism to be insufficient as well, as the state can sometimes enact 'positive' legislation on religious matters in order to achieve social justice.<sup>68</sup> However, even Bhargava is cognizant of the numerous objections that can be raised in order to contend with the efficacy of this model. Disregarding those shortcomings for a moment, Bhargava's argument is premised on the fact that secularism as a

---

<sup>66</sup> Shabnum Tejani, *Indian Secularism: A Social and Intellectual History 1890-1950*. (Ranikhet: 2007), 264-265.

<sup>67</sup> Chatterjee, "Secularism and Tolerance".

<sup>68</sup> Rajeev Bhargava, "Reimagining Secularism: Respect, Dominance and Principled Distance". *Economic and Political Weekly* 48, no.50. 2013, 87.

concept needs to be de-westernized and de-Christianized. The challenge of secularism in post-colonial states such as India is also contingent on the fact that the idea of secularism, as constructed, does not take into account the social norms of non-western societies. It is natural to assume that the state in India can intervene in matters regarding religious institutions and can either aid or hinder their progress. However, as we will show later, this matter is not of the state struggling to establish dominance over these institutions. In fact, these institutions may collaborate with the bourgeoisie classes and often benefit from the impacts of corporatization. The nexus between Hinduism and the capitalist classes also presents great opportunities for the political elite. Thus, the story of dominance is actually one of engagement and disengagement, and sometimes of collaboration. As Nehruvian secularism begins to unravel, capital intersects with sectional politics that can be regional, linguistic or of a religious nature. In North India, we see the emergence of opposition to the Congress that consists of middle-caste rural capitalists, big business interests and the religious right. In a sense, the proponents of free-market principles latch onto the platform of protecting the socio-cultural aspirations of threatened sections of society and even the Congress collaborated with these interests occasionally in order to navigate a turbulent political landscape.

As far as relations between Hindus and Muslims were concerned, the wounds of Partition had also served to sow distrust between religious communities within India. Muslims were seen with the gaze of distrust due to the communalized rhetoric that characterized Indian politics in the lead up to independence, often resulting in bouts of violence. At the same time, the reduction in numbers of the Muslim community emboldened the Hindu right. Furthermore, Hindu nationalist accuse the state of ‘appeasing’ the Muslim community in matters such as protecting Muslim Personal Law and generally pandering to the minority community for the sake of unity. The

mobilization of the right on issues such as Partition and a perceived threat to Indian culture allowed the forces of *Hindutva* to renew their agitation on issues that had remain unresolved during the colonial period. One such issue was that of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, which Hindu nationalists believed was the site of *Rama*'s birthplace and that his temple had been demolished under the rule of the Mughal Emperor Babar.

While the colonial authorities had largely prevented the issue of the site's ownership from flaring up, they had still left the contention unresolved. Nehru's government too had to contend with this issue long before the *Ram Rath Yatra* (chariot journey for *Ram*) led by the BJP's L.K. Advani that eventually led to the demolition of the mosque in 1992. In fact, one of the first challenges to the national identity that Nehru sought to enshrine came in the form of a Hindu Mahasabha offshoot that placed idols of Ram in the mosque. In 1949, Digvijay Nath, who is considered to be part of the *Gorakhnath* wing of the Hindu nationalist movement, became the 'unifying factor' for the Hindu Mahasabha and other Hindu nationalists who saw Ayodhya as the centerpiece of their grand strategy.<sup>69</sup> Known for going to jail for calling for the death of M.K. Gandhi a few days before his assassination and for being from the same line of *mahants* (chief priests) that the current Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath leads, Digvijay Nath represented a religious order that has maintained a degree of autonomy from the *Sangh Parivar* and is known to be even more hostile towards Muslims.<sup>70</sup> Inflamed by his rhetoric, Nath's

---

<sup>69</sup> Dhirendra K. Jha & Krishna Jha, *Ayodhya, The Dark Night: The Secret History of Rama's Appearance in Babri Masjid*, HarperCollins Publishers India. 2012, 60.

<sup>70</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, "The Other Saffron", Indian Express. October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

followers placed idols of Ram in the mosque while government officials were alleged to be complicit in the act.<sup>71</sup>

Nehru and other leaders of the Congress lamented the breakout of trouble over the contested site. Nehru was legitimately concerned about the impact this would have on the project of secularism but also considered the incident to have come about at an inopportune time and cites the negative impact this could have on the Kashmir dispute.<sup>72</sup> Others such as Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister, called for a peaceful resolution of the issue but remained vague on their own stance on the dispute. In fact, Patel is of the opinion that the issue had come up at an inopportune time and that the ownership issue should be resolved without force.<sup>73</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru is very much aware of the degree of ‘communalization’ that has taken over the Congress as well as the bureaucracy. Writing to Kishorilal Mashruawal, an aide of M.K. Gandhi, in 1949, he laments:

“The U.P. Government put up a brave show, but actually did little. Their District Officer in Fyzabad rather misbehaved and took no steps to prevent this happening. It is not true that Baba Raghavdas instigated this, but it is true that after it was done, he gave his approval to it. So also, some other Congressman in the U.P. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant condemned the act on several occasions, but refrained from taking definite action probably for fear of big-scale riot...

---

<sup>71</sup> In their book on Ayodhya, Dharendra K. Jha and Krishna Jha give an account of the involvement of K.K.K. Nayar, the District Officer in Fyzabad (the old name of Ayodhya), in orchestrating the desecration of the mosque and multiple sources document his refusal to implement orders from the central government, including Nehru himself, who writes about this in a letter to K.G. Mashruawal.

<sup>72</sup> Nehru’s Letter to G.B. Pant. February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1950. As published in A.G. Noorani, *The Muslims of India: A Documentary Record* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press). 2003, 241.

<sup>73</sup> Durga Das, *Sardar Patel’s Correspondence* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House) vol.9. 1974, 310-311.

Today many Congressmen have become communal insofar as Pakistan is concerned and this reacts on their behaviour towards Muslims in India. I just do not know what we can do to create a better atmosphere in the country. Merely to preach goodwill irritates people when they are excited. Bapu might have done it, but we are too small for this kind of thing.

I am afraid, in the prevailing atmosphere, there is no chance of Bapu's peaceful march being copied in Bengal."<sup>74</sup>

Nehru's letter highlights that rather than having a grand vision of secularism, he is at times at the mercy of the right-wing of the Congress and bureaucrats who are affiliated with the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS. Zafarul-Mulk, the author of the dissent in the Kanpur Riots report, has emphasized the existence of 'offensive' and 'defensive' communalists within local chapters of the Congress and Nehru's letter refers to both of these elements. There were certain members of Congress who vehemently forwarded a Hindu nationalist agenda and there were those who tried to hinder the violence but did not care to step on the toes of the *Hindutva* brigade. His letter also alludes to one of the charges made against the Congress i.e., of appeasing the Muslim minority by attempting to create 'goodwill'. Thus, Pandit Nehru succinctly articulates the ideological bind that the project of secularism in India is trapped in. By relying heavily on Hindu revivalism and ideas of the 'universality' of Hinduism, the national movement seeks to rise above religious articulations of national identity but cannot forsake these roots due to the prevalence of these beliefs in ranks of the Congress.

Given that the Muslims of India were increasingly being depicted as the great 'other' by Hindu nationalists, it is necessary to ask how the government attempted to bridge the gap that was

---

<sup>74</sup> J.N. Collection, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*. As published in A.G. Noorani, *The Muslims of India: A Documentary Record* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press). 2003, 242.



increasingly widening between Hindus and Muslims in India in the immediate decades after Partition? More importantly, how did Muslims themselves articulate their grievances? It appears that there was a bit of convergence between the government and the Muslim political class as far as these problems were concerned. Both of these stakeholders agreed that the Muslim community was suffering from economic deprivation. As a result, leaders such as Nehru advocated for greater representation for Muslims in the public services and an increase in economic opportunities for the community. However, the establishment of quotas was considered to be politically and ideologically impractical given the nature of the constitutional settlement on reservations. On the other hand, some Muslim leaders were articulating demands that were rather bold to say the least. For example, in 1961, Dr. Syed Mahmud, who was the former Minister of External Affairs and part of the senior Congress leadership during the national movement, called for an end to the autonomy of states. Instead, he argued that the center's writ should be enforced through administrative subdivisions.<sup>75</sup> It is natural that some Muslims did not trust state institutions and governments as far as the protection of their rights were concerned. The U.P. government's inaction and to an extent complicity with regards to the closure of Babri Masjid reflected how certain states were more prone to becoming the grounds for contested space than others. At the same time, the center under Nehru did at least attempt to address the problem of minorities, albeit haphazardly and ineffectively.

Considering how Indian 'secular' elites were hamstrung as far as their ability to affect meaningful change for minorities was concerned, the only limited action the central government

---

<sup>75</sup> *The Times of India* "Convention Demands Effective Role for the Minorities Towards Attainment of National Progress". 11 June 1961.

could take was through the instruments of economic incentives and a centrally planned strategy for modernization. If Nehruvian secularism could not stimulate change through establishing primacy in the field of contesting ideologies, it needed to eliminate communal sentiments by changing the established social hierarchy. However, it has been shown in this chapter that the crisis of secularism in India was increasingly becoming an institutional crisis due to the proliferation of Hindu nationalist ideals within both the political and economic sphere. This thesis will go on to show how ideological resistance to the will of India's economic planners manifested in the form of growing liberalization of aspects of the economy. These changes would go on to create a larger base for the Hindu right and would merely increase its capability to oppose the Congress and to form alliances with other aggrieved parties.

### **India's Political-Economy and Calls for Liberalization**

The opening of this chapter reflected on the increased social cognizance of the growing rural-urban divide in India that was being driven by the economic policies of the central government. By 1955, Nehru's Planning Commission had attained great political importance, with either the deputy chairman or a member of the commission receiving the same rank and benefits as that of a Cabinet Minister.<sup>76</sup> Speaking to the National Development Council in 1954, Nehru had expressed the desire to produce heavy machinery, power and other basic manufactured goods in India, rather than relying on importing these goods to cater to the consumer economy.<sup>77</sup> The

---

<sup>76</sup> Francine R. Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947-2004: The Gradual Revolution*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press). 2005, 114.

<sup>77</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *Planning and Development*, "Speech Delivered to the National Development Council". November 9, 1954, 15-16.

success of this plan required sustained growth in agricultural output due to the growth in demand that it entailed. However, a plan that prioritized building up the manufacturing sector meant that very little central investment was left for the agrarian economy. As a result, Nehru showed a willingness to reform the agrarian sector by instituting cooperative farming, as it was seen as a way to stimulate economic growth without the injection of any substantial investments such as subsidies, mechanization and irrigation programs.<sup>78</sup> The center's plan to drive agrarian reform was stalling however, due to the resistance that it faced from large landowners, many of whom were supporters of the Congress. This resistance obviously had an impact on the efficacy of the industrial reform as planned by the commission and it only increased their urgency to implement a sweeping reform that included cooperative farms and ownership ceilings.<sup>79</sup>

The calls for land reform were met with a great deal of resistance from the politically powerful landed groups. By the late 1960s, these groups were able to restrict the scope of these reforms by only compromising on abolishing the most exploitative forms of land ownership. Furthermore, by keeping control over surpluses, these groups were able to reinvest these gains in the urban economy and in turn increase their social importance by becoming a key stakeholder within the growing capitalist elite. The urban business community was also dismayed by the lack of compromise from the side of the central government as far as catering to their demands was concerned. As a result, these two strands of capitalist elite were pushed closer to one another. Given the resistance that they faced from middle-caste peasants, the Indian government was forced

---

<sup>78</sup> Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947-2004: The Gradual Revolution*, 120.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

to boost agricultural productivity by relying on mechanisms that were of an inegalitarian nature.<sup>80</sup> Thus, these provincial elites were able to fashion an agrarian transition that was on their own terms and embraced commercialization, capital accumulation and the free-market.

While agrarian capitalists were reaping the rewards of successful resistance to meaningful land reform, their urban counterparts had formed a tenuous relationship with the political elite. Factors such as the government's lack of faith in private-oriented growth and a corrupt licensing system meant that business houses needed to spend a considerable amount of energy and resources in liaising with the bureaucracy.<sup>81</sup> Institutionally, the Congress Party was unable to create a uniform system of brokering deals with the business elite. As a result, a great deal of disaffection existed within the urban capitalists as well. Pranab Bardhan describes this 'license raj' as "patron-client regime fostered by a flabby and heterogeneous dominant coalition preoccupied in a spree of anarchical grabbing of public resources tends to choke off efficient management and utilization of capital in the public sector".<sup>82</sup>

On the other hand, other scholars and economists argue that while the Nehruvian plan for development may have met its end after the economic and political crises of the late 60s, it may have also sown the seeds for its own demise. While the contradiction between agrarian and

---

<sup>80</sup> Desai, *The Slow-Motion Counterrevolution*, 38.

<sup>81</sup> Sabyasachi Kar and Kunal Sen, *The Political Economy of India's Growth Episodes. Building a Sustainable Economy*. 2016, 40.

<sup>82</sup> Pranab K. Bardhan, *The Political Economy of Development in India* (Oxford, UK; New York, NY, USA: Blackwell, 1984), 70-71.

manufacturing policies has already been brought up, there were other inconsistencies that may have hamstrung these efforts.

The step-by-step model of building up industrial capacity meant that India would be dependent to an extent on foreign states. However, these collaborations did not only happen in public projects. Even private enterprise needed to rely on foreign actors, especially for acquisition of technology.<sup>83</sup> While this does not mean that free-market principles were seeping into the economy, it does mean that only those enterprises that were able to broker these deals would form the bulk of 'big business.' Secondly, private enterprises were irked by the number of regulations they had to contend with and were skeptical of a centralized economic plan. Lastly, these capitalists were able to obtain an edge due to their access to foreign brokers. Rather than perceiving this to be a case of economic dependence, one must also consider that big business was itching to expand their links to the global economy. The economic crisis of 1967 only pushed them towards demanding the deregulation of key industries.

### **Liberalization for Rural Propertied Classes, Dispossession for Urban Muslims – The Enemy Property Act of 1968**

While the propertied middle castes in the Indian countryside were reaping the rewards of considerable economic gains and acquiring capital in the cities too, the Muslims of India were still viewed with a large degree of suspicion. War with Pakistan in 1965 had led to a marked increase in anti-Muslim sentiment in India. One of the ways in which these sentiments materialized was in

---

<sup>83</sup> D. N. "Political Economy of the Nehru Era." *Economic and Political Weekly* 23, no. 45/47. 1988, 2461.

the form of an assault on Indian Muslims, particularly those with relatives in Pakistan. The Enemy Property Act of 1968 gave the state the right to reclaim enemy properties, which were defined as being, “any property for the time being belonging to or held or managed on behalf of an enemy, an enemy subject or an enemy firm.”<sup>84</sup> An affected individual under the law could have been anyone who was deemed to have aided the enemy, resided in Pakistan before or been a legal successor of Pakistani citizen. Thus, one could have been an Indian citizen and yet they were consigned to this liminal space of being both a citizen and an ‘enemy’.

Unsurprisingly, the law did exactly what its critics said it would. It extremely disproportionately targeted Indian Muslims, particularly those who lived in Uttar Pradesh and had relatives in Pakistan. Hindu nationalists may argue that the law only targeted those individuals who were actively working with the ‘enemy’ or were Pakistani citizens and was applied in those cases. However, as of 2017, around 16,000 properties have been seized, with their value estimated to be about \$15 billion or 1 trillion rupees.<sup>85</sup> Recent amendments to the law have also made it near impossible to contest property ownership in civil courts, even though the Supreme Court had ruled that legal successors who were citizens of India could reclaim the ‘enemy property’. The most famous case of ‘enemy property’ was that of the Raja of Mahmudabad, who had migrated to Pakistan and his successors were residing in India. However, not all ‘reclaimed’ properties were large holdings and less-affluent Muslims were also targeted. Furthermore, even if these Muslims were able to prove their right to ownership in court, verdicts were often delayed and sometimes it

---

<sup>84</sup> The Enemy Property Act, 1968. Section 2, Definition (c).

<sup>85</sup> Rina Chandran, “New ‘enemy property’ law unfairly targets Indian Muslims, analysts say”, *Reuters*. March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

was found that the Custodian Office abused its authority by delaying the transfer of property to its rightful heirs.<sup>86</sup>

The Hindu right in contemporary India often extolls the virtues of the ‘great Hindu mind’ in bringing about the economic ‘miracle’ and admonishes the Muslim community for hampering its own prospect of achieving prosperity. However, Indian Muslims were being stripped of their right to property and being denied equal economic opportunities.

Other than its economic impacts on the Muslim community, the act cast doubts over the loyalty of Indian Muslims. Such an outcome was a consequence of communal sentiments that had been enflamed by the Indo-Pak War of 1965. However, it also reflects the institutional crisis of secularism that has been explored in this chapter. The Custodian Office, as a body, was partaking in an exercise that disadvantaged a particular religious minority and it relied on viewing Muslims with suspicion in order to fulfill its role. Thus, it often succumbed to communal biases when dealing with ‘enemy’ property and also allowed Hindu citizens to encroach on or claim contested properties. In recent years, the current U.P. government has started to auction these properties. As a result, Hindu citizens have directly benefited from this law as they have managed to occupy a space that was previously occupied by Indian Muslims. One of the affected individuals, Dr. Anisul Haq, whose property was seized and then encroached upon by businesses remarks, “Be it money or business they want to destroy us.”<sup>87</sup> He is referring to the outlook of the government towards Indian Muslims and one can understand his perspective if one realizes that he has been waging a

---

<sup>86</sup> *Bunaid Husain v Zila Adhikari, Barabanki* [1998], C.M.W.P No. 1685 of 1984 (Allahabad High Court —Lucknow Bench), 1998 (2) AWC 946

<sup>87</sup> Nikita Doval, “The Casualties of the Enemy Property Act”, *Mint*. 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

40-year legal battle over his property. Furthermore, the act has recently been used to strip away other economic assets such as shares in companies and resold to other individuals.

If Hindu middle caste rural elites were able to blaze a path towards social mobility by utilizing the surpluses of their agrarian properties and were able to exercise this ability to invest in the urban economy, the citizenship and loyalty of Indian Muslims was being challenged. Furthermore, their ability to compete economically was being adversely impacted by the seizure of properties and economic assets. Thus, the agents of neoliberal change were predominately Hindu, and their wealth did not come into question by the state, unlike landed Muslims. It should also be noted that even being trapped in a cycle of litigation was enough to financially cripple families and also made them vulnerable to the extrajudicial seizure of their properties due to the ‘communalization’ of their identity. In the previous period, communal violence was also to a degree a production of economic contestations between Hindu and Muslim middle classes. The Property Act seems to be an extension of this analysis, as properties owned by the Muslim ‘other’ can be stripped away and auctioned off. The newer application of the law also reflects the growing financialization of the economy, as it increasingly applied to stocks, shares, commercial entities and other similar assets.

### **The New Capitalists and the Hindu Right**

As discussed earlier, the desire for free market principles was the common thread that ran between a diverse set of actors that were opposed to the politics of the Congress. The economic and political instability following the Nehruvian years was crucial in giving these disgruntled sections of society a platform to voice their grievances. Whether we see this crisis as a byproduct



of the ideological inconsistencies of secular governance, institutional overreach or as resistance to government control over economic institutions, it is clear that economic contestations and transformations emboldened these sections. While the project of economic liberalization would not come to fruition until the last decade of the century, the push for liberal policies had begun with resistance to planned agrarian reform. However, is it correct to say that the new capitalist classes being inadvertently created by the planners were of a 'neoliberal' nature? Furthermore, even if they were what kind of 'neoliberalism' did they espouse?

While neoliberalism broadly advocates for free market principles that are contingent on a program of private entrepreneurship and deregulation, there have been various conceptions of the doctrine from German Ordoliberalism to the sort of America-centric conception that is predominant today. In fact, some scholars have argued that the term is essentially meaningless, as it has been used to assume the form of policies that are antithetical to its proclaimed principles.<sup>88</sup> The historian Quinn Slobodian argues that twentieth-century neoliberals seek to design institutions to safeguard markets, rather than liberate them and this tendency arises from a need to "inoculate capitalism at the scale of the entire world".<sup>89</sup> So, while liberalization would not begin in full swing until 1991, the creation of institutions to protect these markets started well before that. As far as the nature of this neoliberalism is concerned, that question becomes moot if we consider the rapid way in which the project itself has evolved, which is something that we will also consider in the third chapter. Be as that may, neoliberals were cognizant of the fact that democracy and neoliberalism were not synonymous, and that the former could often impede free markets. Thus,

---

<sup>88</sup> Rajesh Venugopal, "Neoliberalism as Concept," *Economy and Society* 44, no. 2. 2015, 181.

<sup>89</sup> Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberals*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press). 2018, 2.

the proponents of free market principles in India desired to push for liberal economic policies and then to insulate them against democratic instruments. Consequently, these markets become 'free' from oversight and corrective measures that are aimed at targeting inequity. These arguments regarding the nature of neoliberal thought push us to consider the next pertinent question. Why does the project of neoliberalism begin to align with the project of *Hindutva*?

The answer to this question lies in the very aims of the project. If the goal is to hamper the ability of democratic institutions to regulate markets, then in the Indian context at least, the platform of the Hindu right presents the most potent threat to these institutions. In the general sense, Wendy Brown argues that neoliberalism inadvertently promoted antidemocratic norms and that the wave of nationalism sweeping the west today is a 'Frankensteinian creation' of neoliberalism. Rather, it is the neoliberal formulation of freedom that has aided the right to build up its own discourses around a warped conception of freedom.<sup>90</sup> Thus, the left's attempts to legislate against economic inequity is dismissed as an authoritarian infringement on 'freedom', the sort of rhetoric that is very similar to what one would hear in the current American political climate. An important consideration to take into account with regards to India pertains to the strength of the neoliberal project. One might assume that the current political climate in India points towards the success of neoliberal thought as democratic norms are being chipped away at a considerable rate. However, the process of 'Hinduizing' India is reflective of neoliberalism failures rather than its successes. Neoliberalism has failed in its promise of letting the free market be the vessel of economic prosperity and social justice. The inegalitarian nature of the project as it has emerged

---

<sup>90</sup> Wendy Brown, *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press). 2019, 10.

has made linkages to the right even more desirable as the frustration for these failures is then directed towards immigrants, leftists and minorities. In a sense, neoliberalism was meant to generate wealth, but it has instead redistributed it into fewer hands through the rubric of ‘accumulation by dispossession’.<sup>91</sup> The Enemy Property Act is one of the ways in which the right and capital interests align in order to dispossess people, whether it be directly or forcing them into debt-traps by making them incur massive legal costs.

Yet, Hindu nationalists had not always been proponents of the free market. Golwalkar, the second RSS *Sarsanghchhalak* (chief), wrote that it was the state’s duty to regulate all vocations and be an agent of morality, not a ‘class agent.’<sup>92</sup> However, with the rise of Indira Gandhi as the head of the Congress and the failure of the centralized economic planning of the 1960s, and in some cases even before that, Hindu nationalist parties and outfits sought to attract disaffected members of Congress by adopting a softer approach on the liberal market economy. Hindu nationalist rhetoric, such as agitating against Muslims, became the unifying factor between disparate members of the new middle classes, who had varying conceptions of the role the state should play within markets. The Hindu right exploited the social anxieties of the lower middle classes and the new capitalist classes, by channeling them towards the idea of self-preservation. Even though supporters of Hindu nationalism were often victims of economic inequity, their frustrations were directed towards caste-based reservations and the perceived appeasement of Muslims. Thus, the alliances that had been forged by a disdain for Nehruvian socialism were held together by divisive

---

<sup>91</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). 2005, 159.

<sup>92</sup> M. S. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts*, 3rd ed. (Bangalore: Sahitya Sindhu Prakashana, 2000), xviii.

discourses. In fact, a rise in communal violence was not reflective of the strength of this alliance but rather its weakness, as society's attention was drawn towards issues such as Ayodhya rather than the prevailing economic maladies of the time.

An important question to consider is whether there was a space in Indian politics for campaigning on the conservative values of minimal state intervention without the support of Hindu nationalism? The Swatantra Party was one such political party that espoused principles of economic liberalism. Formed in 1959, the party had its roots in the organized interest groups of the Forum of Free Enterprise (FFE) and the All-India Agriculturalists' Federation (AIAF), both of which were founded in 1956 and 1958 respectively.<sup>93</sup> In the 1967 elections, Swatantra emerged as the largest opposition party as it was able to gain more seats than both the Jana Sangh and the leftist parties.<sup>94</sup> The party itself articulated its economic ideology in the following way:

“The Swatantra Party is founded on the claim that individual citizens should be free to hold their property and carry on their profession freely and through binding mutual agreements among themselves and that the State should assist and encourage in every possible way the individual in this freedom, but not seek to replace him”<sup>95</sup>

The party tried to position itself as a voice of reason during the years of centralized planning and was to a degree informed by the neoliberal positions of thinkers such as Hayek. The FFE which was one of the social organizations behind the party critiqued Nehru's economic policies by

---

<sup>93</sup> Howard L. Erdman, *The Swatantra Party and Indian Conservatism*, Cambridge South Asian Studies 5 (London: Cambridge UP, 1967), 65-67.

<sup>94</sup> “Statistical Report on General Elections to the Fourth Lok Sabha”, Vol. 1 (New Delhi: Election Commission of India), 75.

<sup>95</sup> *Why Swatantra?* (Bombay: Central Office, Swatantra Party, n.d.), 3.

constructing the dual argument of the ability of free enterprise to generate growth and democratic values. Using Hayek's warning, the FFE argued that a large public sector and high taxes would lead India down a road of authoritarianism.<sup>96</sup> While the party had a clear economic ideology, its view on religion was not as clear. The party presented itself as secular and on certain issues such as relations with Pakistan, the party diverged from the Hindu right and called for strengthening ties between the two countries.<sup>97</sup> However, it would be incorrect to say that the party was completely divorced from the Hindu nationalist politics. Not only did the party form alliances with nationalist parties such as the BJS, some of its ideological stances were also colored by India's social realities. For example, even though the party did not subscribe to a policy of Hindu nationalism, it still believed that religion helped bolster moral values in society. In the case of education, the party stressed the need to 'impart moral and religious education to the young without forcing any such instruction not belonging to the same denominations as those agencies.'<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, on issues of communal agitation such as the status of Kashmir, the party leadership remained incredibly divided, with some members supporting the abrogation of Article 370, while others like the party founder C. Rajagopalachari called for the United Nations to administer the territory as preliminary exercise in 'World Government'.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> Erdman, *The Swatantra Party*, 67.

<sup>97</sup> Motilal A. Jhangiani, *Jana Sangh and Swatantra; a Profile of the Rightist Parties in India* (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1967), 106-110.

<sup>98</sup> *The Election Manifesto: Swatantra Party* (Bombay: Central Office, Swatantra Party, 1960), 17.

<sup>99</sup> Jhangiani, *Jana Sangh and Swatantra; a Profile of the Rightist Parties in India*, 109.

Ideas such as safeguarding property rights, support for increased foreign investment and a hatred for socialist policies may make one consider that the Swatantra Party was forwarding a neoliberal agenda by relying on ideas that are very similar to the founding fathers of the neoliberal thought collective. At the same time, one should exercise caution when making such claims. The Swatantra Party was not explicitly against economic planning, but the sort of planning conducted by the Congress. The party supported indicative planning and social welfare policies. However, it was vehemently opposed to high taxes and macro-plans for the economy as a whole. Furthermore, it did not believe that state enterprises should extend beyond certain industries like infrastructure.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, one can also argue that such claims were natural as Swatantra could not be openly against social welfare, especially regarding reserved castes. After all, the Congress' message of social progress was a popular one. Another unique argument to consider is that neoliberal reform does not necessarily entail a complete disavowal of state intervention. Naturally, some sort of intervention is necessary in order to create the conditions for 'free markets.' An idea that will be further in the next chapter pertains to the idea that there is no singular form of neoliberal thought. For example, the German *Ordoliberal* ideal of neoliberal thought supports both free markets and social welfare policies that create equitable opportunity.<sup>101</sup>

The Swatantra Party's failure was due to the fact that its ideology of free markets and free enterprise did not resonate with the masses. The party did attempt to use religion for its purposes

---

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>101</sup> For further reading on how *Ordoliberalism* is distinct from classical liberalism or American neo-liberalism, see Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 101-158.

by presenting its platform as in line with Gandhian and *dharmic* values. Furthermore, it did rely on alliances with other parties on the right. However, the party was unable to balance its more liberal elements with its conservative elements, many of whom had an aristocratic disdain for constitutionalism and universal suffrage.<sup>102</sup> As a result, it was not able to articulate a clear synthesis between liberalization and Hindu values. The Swatantra Party was at the end of the day regarded as a party of ‘rajas’ (kings) and this also had an impact on its electoral allies such as the BJS, as their coalition came to be viewed as the ‘haves’ against the ‘have-nots’.<sup>103</sup>

In order to address the ambiguity of their economic goals, Hindu nationalist conceptions of the state kept evolving over time. At the same time, this evolution was also subject to the project of liberalization in India. In the next chapter, we shall focus more on the ‘patriotic consumerism’ that starts to emerge in India after liberalization, something that will be discussed in the next chapter. From denouncing foreign influence to embracing it selectively, Hindu nationalist ideologues began recalibrating their ideology in order to obtain the ‘universal’ from exclusionary nationalist policies.<sup>104</sup> Thus, the demise of ‘Nehruvian secularism’ in India is not just a tale of ideological contestations but one of socio-economic pressures as well. This chapter has highlighted how the foundations are laid for the collaboration between the right and big business. Ultimately, as the Hindu right gains access to the instruments of state power, the state emerges as a protector not of its citizens but of a neoliberal economic regime that rewards good ‘customers’. However,

---

<sup>102</sup> Erdman, *The Swatantra Party*, 248-51

<sup>103</sup> Meera Nanda, *The God Market: How Globalization Is Making India More Hindu* (New York: NYU Press, 2011), 32-33.

<sup>104</sup> Priya Chacko, "Marketizing Hindutva: The State, Society, and Markets in Hindu Nationalism." *Modern Asian Studies* 53, no. 2. 2019, 393.

the Hindu right also hinders the ability of Muslims to accumulate capital and in fact tries to wring capital from their hands and into the hands of predominately Hindu capitalist classes. As we move towards the broader liberalization of 1991, Indian society steps into a *Naya Daur* (new age) that is much more divisive and inegalitarian. However, as we shall see in the next chapter, the tale of Hindu nationalism and neoliberalism is not without its own peculiar inconsistencies.

Raising questions regarding the efficacy of state institutions, however, was not only a byproduct of neoliberal resistance. In fact, Hindu nationalists had for some time pivoted the depiction of a utopia from that of a Hindu state to that of a Dharmic society. Deendayal Upadhyaya, one of the key thinkers of the right-wing Hindutva ideology, described this notion by writing that:

“What constitutes the good of the people, Dharma alone can decide. Therefore, a democratic Government ‘Jana Rajya’ must also be rooted in Dharma i.e., a ‘Dharma Rajya’ must also be rooted in Dharma i.e., a ‘Dharma Rajya’. In the definition of ‘Democracy’ viz. ‘government of the people, by the people and for the people’, ‘of’ stands for independence, ‘by’ stands for democracy, and ‘for’ indicates Dharma. Therefore, the true democracy is only where there is freedom as well as Dharma.”<sup>105</sup>

These ideas of a society with Hindu values were also applied to the state’s intervention in the economic sphere. While critiquing the economic plans of Nehru’s government, Upadhyaya wrote that, “We have also to determine and decide whether economic planning should be subservient to social and political planning or the social and political values should simply be a function of economic values. Should we aim at economic welfare sacrificing our democratic values

---

<sup>105</sup> Deendayal Upadhyaya, *Integral Humanism* (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 1965), 18–30, 31–9.



and human and cultural ideals?”<sup>106</sup> The Hindu right has historically attacked state intervention on the double front of democratically enshrined individual freedoms and the protection of India’s Hindu cultural values. Upadhyaya’s conception of society in *Integral Humanism* builds a case for a separate economic ideology that is distinct from socialism and capitalism.<sup>107</sup> It is true that Upadhyaya argued for a balance between the two extremes of state control and rampant capitalism. However, the works of Upadhyaya also perform the construction of the ideal of Hindus as naturally an entrepreneurial community. Furthermore, it is not as if capitalism is undesirable but in fact, Upadhyaya states that economic liberalism belongs to the ‘*krita-yuga*’, or the age of righteousness.<sup>108</sup> Thus, even when thinkers on the Hindu right critiqued the laissez-faire economy, their analysis openly criticized state-sponsored production. Moreover, in a stance that is very similar to Friedrich Hayek’s, Upadhyaya also criticizes democracies tendency to adopt socialism and bring about its own doom.<sup>109</sup> The stalwarts of Hindu nationalism attempted to portray their philosophy of *integral humanism* as one that existed as ‘third-way’ by incorporating India’s Hindu social values. Yet such discussions also compel one to consider the similarities between Swatantraites and the followers of Upadhyaya’s philosophy. Both forms of resistance stemmed from a disdain of state intervention in the economy yet offered little as far as constructing explanations for their own vision of social justice. Whereas Swatantra lacked the key to gain appeal for their economic program from the masses, Hindu nationalists in this period lacked a clear

---

<sup>106</sup> Deendayal Upadhyaya, *The Two Plans* (New Delhi: Prabhat Books, 2001), 10.

<sup>107</sup> John Abraham, “In Search of Dharma: Integral Humanism and the Political Economy of Hindu Nationalism,” *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 16–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2019.1557362>.

<sup>108</sup> Deendayal Upadhyaya, *Integral Humanism*, 26.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

program of socio-economic progress in order to broaden the appeal for their majoritarian agenda. It was not enough for Hindu nationalists to dispossess the enemy 'other'. It had to have a clear agenda of upliftment. In the next period covered by this thesis, there is a greater synthesis between *Hindutva* and liberalization, as these forces take advantage of economic stagnation and social upheaval to articulate a program that makes the negative aspects of both these creeds seem palatable once viewed in conjunction.

### **Chapter 3: Indian Muslims in an Age of Neoliberal Governance**

The idea of education as a cure to Muslim ‘backwardness’ had been articulated in colonial times in order to explain the economic plight of Indian Muslims. After independence, the state had attempted to address economic inequality by developing a central plan for the economy that prioritized heavy industries and social welfare. However, the experience of Partition had allowed the Hindu right to depict Muslims as the ‘other’. Thus, Muslims were not given the same sort of constitutional protections as those that were made available to the Scheduled Castes/Tribes and Other Backward Classes. However, public sector employment was still seen as one of the ways to improve the standing of India’s Muslims. In the period that this chapter covers, neoliberal reform has led to the emergence of a new form of ‘biopolitics’ that valorizes individuals who produce value in society. This ‘enterprise society’ not only has led to a reconfiguration of the meaning of citizenship but also redefined what it meant to be a ‘good Muslim. In a sense, productivity has become the measure of what it means to be a good citizen. In the case of Muslims, this has led to the creation of a trap as neoliberal reform disincentivizes the state from expanding a social safety net and encourages the use of the private sector as a tool to alleviate poverty. However, this has not stopped the state and even the agents of Hindu nationalism from tactically engaging with India’s Muslims for electoral gain and to legitimize Indian neoliberalism.

In the previous chapter, it was detailed how even before the 1990s, economic reform in India was inching towards neoliberal principles of development and reform. However, this does not mean that there were no alternative conceptions of what India’s engagement should be with global markets. The New International Economic Order was one such platform that came to be a

source of resistance against the established Breton Woods system. In the first few decades after decolonization, the wealth gap between the Global North and South was widening and developing states attributed this to the unfair economic hegemony that the west exercised through unfair terms of trade, the west's monopoly over natural resources and what was perceived to be an intrinsically biased international monetary system. The set of proposals made under the NIEO included radical demands such as the regulation of transnational corporations and greater international assistance to aid industrialization in the developing world. It was argued that since the post-colonial world mainly exported raw materials, the international commodity pricing regime unfairly discriminated against the developing world as the Global North maintained its hegemony over global markets. While many radical proposals were made under the framework of the NIEO at the United Nations, by the 1990s, the NIEO was more or less an empty shell. Organizations such as the World Bank and IMF helped push the 'Washington Consensus' regarding development. Such a program was predicated on liberalization, deregulation and privatization. Structural Adjustment Programs along these principles were applied in India as well after its balance of payments crisis in 1991.

What followed was a program of deregulation and economic liberalization that sparked off a period of remarkable growth of India's economy. This economic boom led to the creation of a new budding middle class that took advantage of the new opportunities that were a byproduct of neoliberal reform. At the same time, such reform has drastically widened the gap between the rich and the less affluent sectors of society. Furthermore, it seems that Indian Muslims have become the forgotten entity as far as 'Brand India' is concerned. If neoliberal reform, as argued, was meant to be the ideal approach towards poverty alleviation in the developing world, why had Muslims in India not been able to reap its benefits? Furthermore, how had neoliberalism altered Muslim

representations of their own political consciousness. Also, how has the Hindu right balanced a program of marginalization with a developmental doctrine that calls for the separation of the economic and political spheres? While it is clear from studies regarding economic development in India that Muslims remain one of India's most economically 'backward' communities, this does not mean that the neoliberal program has led to the creation of new class hierarchies in Muslim India. While there may be a sense of disproportionality as far as the social mobility of Indian Muslims is concerned, a number of Muslims have taken advantage of new opportunities in the sectors of finance, trade and industry.

### **Defining and Identifying Neoliberalism in India**

One of the great struggles of scholars of neoliberal reform has been to articulate a standard definition of neoliberalism. This predicament arises from the idea that one should perceive neoliberalism to be more of a 'thought collective' than a cogent ideology. Naturally, multiple schools of thought have informed the development of neoliberal thought such as those based in Geneva, London, Chicago etc. What remains common between these different strands of economic thought is a 'faith-based' belief in core assumptions made regarding the market.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, neoliberalism should be seen as more of a 'thought collective' that existed well before the Reagan and Thatcher years or India's liberalization in 1991.<sup>111</sup> Most of these different conceptions of

---

<sup>110</sup> Daniel Stedman Jones, *Masters of the Universe, Hayek, Friedman, and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 329–46.

<sup>111</sup> For further reading on the localized origins of neoliberal thought and their convergence see Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe, *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009).

neoliberal thought emerge from the Mont Pelerin Society that was established in 1947 by neoliberal thinkers such as Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig von Mises and Milton Friedman. From 2008-2010, the society's President was the Indian-British economist Deepak Lal. Lal had long advocated for neoliberal reform in India and had also served on the state's Planning Commission. He was also associated with various agencies of the United Nations and the World Bank that pertained to economic development and trade. Deepak Lal's work on India's economy and his writings on what he calls the 'Liberal International Economic Order' (a term that was most likely coined to contrast with the NIEO).<sup>112</sup> Deepak Lal's writings offer us a glimpse into the creation of arguments for neoliberal reform that were localized in order to adapt to India's economic constraints and social realities such as the caste system. In a sense, Lal is one of many economic thinkers who participated in the process of the construction of a neoliberal project that would lay the foundations for the heightened crisis of secularism in India.

In short, Lal's work framed neoliberal reform as the way to not only alleviate poverty in India but also tackle systemic problems such as caste discrimination and reservations. Lal argues that India's economy for the majority of its existence can be characterized as being bound by an ancient 'Hindu-equilibrium' that yielded effective results until the 1600s. However, in order to meet the demands of the modern world, it is important for India to move beyond the parameters of this 'ancient equilibrium' due to India's rampant population growth, the prevalence of contract over custom and reduced village autarky.<sup>113</sup> At first glance, it may seem as if Deepak Lal's

---

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 364.

<sup>113</sup> Deepak Lal, *The Hindu Equilibrium: India c. 1500 B.C.-2000 A.D.*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 383-389.

conception of neoliberal development does not promote a brand of majoritarianism due to his support for western liberal ideals. In fact, he actively advocates for the erasure of this equilibrium. However, he is also participating in an exercise that promotes a sense of nationalist economic history of India, albeit in the neoliberal mode. Deepak Lal makes assertions such as claiming that Muslim rule largely left this equilibrium untouched.<sup>114</sup> In a sense, this sort of conception of history lays the groundwork for a localized strand of neoliberalism. One cannot see Lal's work as merely an indictment of traditional social relations and stressing upon the economic stability of the colonial period.

The key thinkers of neoliberal thought such as Friedrich Hayek have argued how they do not disagree with the left's goal of poverty alleviation in the west. Rather, they see their program as a more efficacious way of realizing the goals of liberalism. In India, the project of neoliberalism was packaged as a cure to the socio-economic issues that were prevalent within its specific context. Thus, Lal frames neoliberalism as a way to reduce the impact of casteism and rural poverty. At the same time, it might be too presumptuous to perceive his work as a complete condemnation of social traditions. Lal argues that a unique Hindu entrepreneurial and administrative ethos was responsible for India dominating trade for millennia. As a result, economists such as Lal lay the foundation for ideas of Hindu exceptionalism that would seep into neoliberal thought as well. In the previous chapter, the nexus between the Hindu right and neoliberal reform was highlighted. In this particular period, this nexus becomes even stronger as one of the key fault lines of neoliberalism becomes apparent. While neoliberalism advocates for the primacy of globalization, in India this program is used to further a nationalist conception of an innately Hindu spirit of

---

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 103.

entrepreneurship. Ironically, India's global turn is characterized as a *Swadeshi* (of one's own country) phenomenon. To add to this irony, Hindutva neoliberals condemn state intervention in the economic sphere but welcome the state's role in promoting Hindu institutions such as temples.<sup>115</sup>

The particular construction of neoliberalism in India has allowed programs such as economic liberalization and deregulation to become facets of a grander spectacle of nationalism.<sup>116</sup> India's increased participation in global markets is perceived as a projection of its power on a global scale. This participation is seen as a testament to the power of an innately Hindu civilization and is typified by advancements in sectors such as Information Technology. At the same time, neoliberal thought is viewed as the most efficacious mechanism to bring about poverty alleviation, especially for India's minorities. The Bhopal Declaration, for example, was drafted in 2002 with the support of the Congress-led government in 2002. It was the end product of a conference of Dalit intellectuals and activists. One of the most interesting recommendations of the declaration urged the state to "democratize the capital so as to ensure proportionate representation for SCs (Scheduled Castes) and STs (Scheduled Tribes)."<sup>117</sup> The Conference aimed to form a roadmap for providing economic opportunities and training for Dalits through the private sector.<sup>118</sup> Thus, the

---

<sup>115</sup> Meera Nanda, *The God Market*, 53-57.

<sup>116</sup> See, Pavan K. Varma, *The New Indian Middle Class* (HarperCollins, 2014), 75. The author argues that the bait of governance and development keeps the middle class in 'tactical abeyance' and allows the BJP to forward a Hindu nationalist agenda.

<sup>117</sup> Bhopal Declaration, "21 Point Action Agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", Article 6. The Bhopal Conference: Charting a New Course for Dalits in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. 12-13 January, 2002.

<sup>118</sup> Sudha Pai, *Developmental State and the Dalit Question in Madhya Pradesh: Congress Response* (Routledge, 2013), 2-3.



construction of a unique 'Dalit capitalism' was underway at the turn of the century. However, while such policies may be considered to be aligned with 'neoliberal thought', they are still reflective of the innate contradiction of neoliberal thought. While neoliberals detest state intervention, they have no qualms regarding intervention that creates a conducive environment for free markets.

The rise of neoliberal policies in India was precipitated by a balance of payments crisis in 1990, that was followed by a wave of deregulation, privatization and the reform of the monetary system in India.<sup>119</sup> However, it is still hard to find a cogent definition of neoliberalism in India due to the particular contradictions of neoliberal thought that are both general and specific to India. Much like in the United States where there was a nexus between the conservative right and neoliberals in the post-Second World War era, neoliberals in India have relied on the Hindu right to forward an agenda of liberalization. In turn, neoliberalism has to an extent allowed upward social mobility for certain Indians but has been disproportionate in its impact. In fact, the rise of a strong Hindu middle class is based on the fact that poverty alleviation through the private sector only benefits those individuals that can take advantage of economic opportunities that require a certain level of education and social networking. Similarly, the Dalits who are framed as the beneficiaries of 'Dalit capitalism' are actually condemned to be a captive labor market that can provide work in exchange for limited social security and wages.<sup>120</sup> Neoliberal practice removes the onus from the state to reform public institutions and legal frameworks to align with the

---

<sup>119</sup> "World bank report P-5678-IN – report of the IBRD and IDA on a proposed structural adjustment loan to India" World Bank Documents, 1991.

<sup>120</sup> Nanda, *The God Market*, 46.

principle of redistribution. Instead, the market ensures selective mobility along the lines of caste and class. In a sense, the *neo* in neoliberalism can be deceiving as it masks the fact that neoliberalism is more of a reaction than a progressive creed. Yet, some argue that the state has not receded but has recalibrated and still plays a very centralized role in the economy through aspects such as an ‘audit culture’, and within society as well through large bureaucracies.<sup>121</sup> Corbridge and Harris see neoliberal reform in India as an elite revolt, with Hindu nationalism as the connection between the masses and the elites.<sup>122</sup> Atul Kohli sees this as a more concerted electoral strategy of the capitalist elites to reach out to the majority.<sup>123</sup> Ashutosh Varshney attempts to draw our attention away from elite politics and towards mass politics. He argues that liberalization was able to pick up the pace under the Rao government and not in 1985 under Rajiv Gandhi, due to other external issues such as the Hindu-Muslim divide and the Kashmir insurgency crowding it out of the arena of mass politics and relegating it to a matter of elite political maneuvering.<sup>124</sup> Most of these arguments revolve around the idea that Hindu nationalism exists as a bridge between the pro-business elite and the masses. This project argues that while these arguments may hold weight, one needs to pay attention to the very construction of neoliberal governmentality and biopolitics in India. One may realize that while the nexus between Hindu nationalism and neoliberalism is by

---

<sup>121</sup> Nikita Sud, *Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and the State: A Biography of Gujarat*, 1st ed. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>122</sup> Stuart Corbridge and John Harriss, *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 119-161.

<sup>123</sup> Atul Kohli, “Politics of Economic Liberalization in India,” *World Development*, World Development, 17, no. 3 (1989): 305–28, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X\(89\)90205-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(89)90205-2).

<sup>124</sup> Ashutosh Varshney, “Mass Politics or Elite Politics? India’s Economic Reforms in Comparative Perspective,” *The Journal of Policy Reform* 2, no. 4 (November 1, 1998): 301–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13841289808523388>.

design, it produces several unintended consequences. Furthermore, what if this is not merely an interaction between elite-level and mass politics? Attention needs to be given towards how these two arenas have transformed each other. On another level, if neoliberalism has altered Hindu consciousness and is trying to reformulate Dalit politics, surely it has had an impact on the consciousness of different stratum of Indian Muslims. At the same time the convoluted definition of neoliberalism in India leaves us with a few key questions. What type of governmentality does neoliberal thought produce and if the ideal citizen is one with an entrepreneurial spirit, how does this impact the Hindu right's depiction of India's Muslims?

### **Muslims and the Biopolitics of Neoliberalism in India**

In his lectures on biopolitics, Michel Foucault stressed American neoliberalism's tendency to use economic analysis in order to find a remedy for various social problems. At the center of this analysis lay the figure of the *homo economicus*, or an individual who would make rational choices. Thus, for example, issues such as crime would be perceived through the lens of economic utility and particular reasons for which individuals commit crimes.<sup>125</sup> Even in German *Ordoliberalism*, the goal of the state was to construct the individual as an 'enterprise', i.e., one who does not only consume but produces value in society. As a result, neoliberalism produces a unique sense of biopolitics that alters our notions of citizenship. An ideal citizen is seen to be one who contributes to society by participating in the market not only as a consumer but adds value to it as well. At the same time, democracy is seen as an impediment in certain regards to the

---

<sup>125</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 250-252.

development of the individual as an enterprise. Hayek, for example, stressed upon the idea that democracy allowed voters to be misled regarding central planning and redistribution, and allowed planners to impose their will on the electorate.<sup>126</sup> In the Indian context, scholars have also pointed out the emergence of a new model of citizenship due to the rise of a new middle-class that seeks to exert its dominance over weaker social groups by shifting the focus from workers' rights to that of the consumer.<sup>127</sup>

Thinking of neoliberalism as a 'negative' or reactionary ideology sheds some light on the disenfranchising aspects of neoliberal thought. Internationally, neoliberalism had been used to justify the perpetuation of economic imperialism and take illiberal stances such as condemning sanctions on the Apartheid regime in South Africa by framing these issues as assaults on the free market. The idea was to maintain *dominium* without *imperium*, or economic hegemony without the institutions of empire.<sup>128</sup> Internally, neoliberalism functions in a very similar manner as it helps to justify and maintain the economic hegemony of capitalist classes by attaching value to their contributions to society. In India, these capitalist classes have disproportionately been represented by high-caste Hindus and neoliberalism continues to widen the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. Furthermore, neoliberal practice does little to alleviate the social impediments to economic mobility.

---

<sup>126</sup> F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom: Text and Documents--The Definitive Edition* (University of Chicago Press, 2009), 57.

<sup>127</sup> Leela Fernandes, *India's New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 182-183.

<sup>128</sup> Slobodan Quinn, *Globalists*, 14.

This project does not reject the fact that neoliberalism has created a Muslim middle-class. However, the growth of this section in society has been inadequate and a very low percentage of Muslims are employed in the public sector or have salaried jobs. The vast majority of Muslims are part of labor markets that provide labor for meagre income and welfare. Furthermore, neoliberalism is predicated on the idea that it liberates society by giving the freedom of choice, whether it be to buy whatever we want or to live wherever we desire. However, social stigma and religious bigotry prevent Muslims from exercising this freedom in neoliberal India. For example, Muslims are forced to live in their *mohallas* due to the fear of communal riots and religious animosity.<sup>129</sup> Similarly, occupational discrimination remains a reality as Muslims in certain professions, such as the millworkers of Mumbai face an air of distrust due to being seen as religious extremists or having links to organized crime.<sup>130</sup>

The existence of such social impediments to progress suggests that alleviating the plight of Muslims is contingent on either a process of redistribution or constitutional guarantees. Furthermore, it seems as if the problems faced by Indian Muslims not only pertain to religious identity but to class as well. In almost all economic indicators, Indian Muslims rank the lowest. For example, if we are to consider access to property as the neoliberal dream, over 51 percent of landholding rural Muslims cultivate no land.<sup>131</sup> Similarly, in 2012, only 18.5 percent of Muslim

---

<sup>129</sup> Sameera Khan, 'Negotiating the Mohalla: Exclusion, Identity and Muslim Women in Mumbai', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 42, no. 17 (28 April 2007), pp. 1527–33.

<sup>130</sup> Sumeet Mhaskar, 'Indian Muslims in a Global City: Socio-Political Effects on Economic Preferences in Contemporary Mumbai', MMG Working Chapter, 13-04 (Göttingen: Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, 2013).

<sup>131</sup> National Sample Survey 55th Round, Report No. 468, 2001.

males held salaried occupational roles, with the vast majority being self-employed or performing casual labor.<sup>132</sup> At the same time professional Muslims, as a growing class, have supported the movement towards liberalization, which highlights the disparity between higher and lower class Muslims, as the latter has arguably been decimated by globalization.<sup>133</sup>

These differences in the desires of Muslims are not only highlighting the class structure of India's Muslims but also turns our attention towards how globalization has redefined the rhetoric of 'Good Muslims' and 'Bad Muslims'. Hilal Ahmed highlights three basic ideas of what constitutes as a good Muslim in India. These include having access to cultural capital, being politically correct and fulfilling the expectations of being an 'ideal Muslim'.<sup>134</sup> As it was noted in the last chapter, the governmental desire to increase the availability of jobs for Muslims in the public in order to construct the image of the *Sarkari* Muslim (with governmental employment) was seen as one of the ways to fit the type of a 'good Muslim' and Muslims too welcomed greater quotas within these institutions in order to find that level of acceptance. So, how does neoliberalism alter society's perception of what constitutes a 'Good Muslim' who is part of the mainstream?

Within this period of the Indian political-economy, it is no longer enough for Muslims to be secular, left-leaning and to subscribe to a 'syncretic' identity. In a society where productivity is the measurement of one's worth, Indian Muslims are meant to avail the economic opportunities of

---

<sup>132</sup> National Sample Survey, 68th Round, 2011–12

<sup>133</sup> Hilal Ahmed, *Siyasi Muslims: A Story of Political Islams in India* (New Delhi: Penguin Random House India Private Limited, 2019), 137.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 158

neoliberal reform. However, neoliberal institutions prevent minorities from accessing these opportunities due to their reliance on them as labor. Furthermore, the private sector is unable to meet the educational and social demands of the vast majority of Indian Muslims. Instead, only those who are part of the old elite or rising professional classes can access these resources, and that too at a disproportionate level. As a result, neoliberalism produces a particular sort of biopolitics that condemns Muslims to be the victims of a developmental rhetoric that uses their religious affiliation as a basis for their backwardness.

Indian Muslims who have access to the private institutions created by neoliberal reform are also subject to social discrimination that stems from their identity. Proponents of neoliberalism argue that these institutions offer consumers freedom of choice by creating efficacious markets that are more responsive to the social needs of Indians. However, the question remains as to how free and liberating these markets are? In terms of education, Muslims remain a disadvantaged community with abysmal rates of literacy as compared to other communities in India. The expansion of private education is seen as a way to create a system that removes the structural and geographical limitations to equitable education. One may argue that these institutions are laying the groundwork for a budding Muslim middle-class that can easily adapt to the evolving Indian economy. However, since the social impediments to progress are not being directly tackled by such social programs, these schools are not tackling the very biases that prevent Muslims from accessing equitable opportunities. For example, in cities such as Bhopal, where there is a sizeable Urdu-speaking minority, many private schools divide their classes on the basis of what optional languages students choose. So, section A will contain those students who have Sanskrit as a secondary language, while section B will consist of those who opt for Urdu. Schools in Bhopal

argue that such a division according to language allows them to maximize resources and allocate them more efficiently. In a sense, the neoliberal mentality of opting for the ‘most-economic’ solution is creating divisions in schools according to religious lines. However, some parents have expressed the view that since children in Urdu classes are seen as ‘low-scorers’ and ‘troublemakers’, better quality educators are assigned to the Sanskrit classes.<sup>135</sup> Thus, even the argument of maximizing and economizing resources does not stand. Furthermore, such measures play an active role in the construction of social difference, and this can be seen by the marked rise of faith-based bullying in private schools in India from the 1990s onwards. In Nazia Erum’s work on raising Muslim children in India, she notes that of the 118 Muslim families with children in leading Delhi private schools she had interviewed, a hundred students had been referred to as a terrorist or Pakistani.<sup>136</sup>

The emergence of private education has also led to the weakening of the public system as the former attracts the best teachers and resources. Furthermore, it removes the onus from the state to invest heavily in public education. Also, the government unequally distributes resources within a particular state as better-quality schools are often concentrated in particular localities. To add to this, private schools are also concentrated in particular regions and enroll a fewer number of students, leading to a rural-urban divide as far as the provision of quality educational services is concerned. Due to greater competition within society, parents also enroll their students in private tuitions due to an artificial need and these are often provided by their teachers within the non-

---

<sup>135</sup> Nazia Erum, *Mothering a Muslim* (New Delhi: Juggernaut Books, 2017), 42-45.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.



governmental schools. Meaning, private schools are not necessarily the most efficient as far as providing education is concerned as many teachers divert their attention towards private tutoring rather than the classroom.<sup>137</sup> As a result, a class divide is emerging within the educational sector as poorer children cannot access private tuition and poorer performance in school also encourages greater absenteeism. Privatized education removes the public as stakeholders when it comes to debating what sort of curriculum and instructions would best suit students. With public education, at least there is the potential for greater collective action to improve the quality of education and this also allows the creation of a democratic space that informs the critical thinking abilities of students.<sup>138</sup> Leaving the provision of education to the whims of the market leads to the emergence of an imbalanced system in which better quality schools are concentrated in affluent urban areas. As a result, these differences are entrenched as only students from particular classes are able to access the best economic opportunities in the future.

So, what does it even mean to be a ‘good Muslim’ in the age of Hindutva and neoliberalism? Professional Muslims can enroll their children in the leading institutions in India and still be subject to social discrimination on the basis of their faith. Even though it may be expected of Muslims to shed the identity-markers of their faith, schools often end up cementing these differences. Even if, for example, a student in Bhopal may opt for Sanskrit instead of Urdu, they may still be treated as outcasts at worst, or may be treated with suspicion at best.

---

<sup>137</sup> For a further reading on educational trends, see Pratichi (India) Trust, ed., *The Pratichi Education Report II: Primary Education in West Bengal: Changes and Challenges* (Delhi: Pratichi (India) Trust, 2009) and Kumar Rana, Abdur Rafique, and Amrita Sengupta, *The Pratichi Education Report : With an Introduction by Amartya Sen* (Delhi: Pratichi Trust, 2002)

<sup>138</sup> *The Pratichi Education Report II*, 19-32.

To what extent is this change in the Indian Muslim lived experience informed by neoliberal reform? There are other factors to consider such as an increase in terrorist attacks in the 1990s and the rise of Islamophobia globally in the post-9/11 age. However, this thesis does not discount that these factors have played a role in the marginalization of Muslims in Indian society. However, this marginalization also predates the securitized narratives that emerged globally due to the aftermath of the War on Terror. As highlighted earlier, the ‘backwardness’ of Muslims can be viewed as a class issue as well, considering how Muslims are lagging in most socio-economic indicators. Of course, the specter of Partition has informed anti-Muslim sentiments in India as well and contributed to the binary of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Muslims. Neoliberal reform has transformed this binary by tying economic activity and potential to it. Furthermore, the nexus between the Hindu right and neoliberal thought has rendered the social position of Indian Muslims to be even more precarious in nature.

In her last novel titled *Chandni Begum*, Quratulain Hyder writes a tale that spans a timeframe from pre-Partition India to the late 1980s. The novel was written in 1989, right when India was at the cusp of neoliberal reform and the *rath yatra* that eventually demolished the mosque at the contested site in Ayodhya was soon to begin. This book revolves around issues of class, caste and ownership in Lucknow. More specifically, it offers us a glimpse into the lives of the Muslim landed elite of the city. However even within this ‘homogenous’ class of Muslims, Hyder depicts the diversity that exists as far as their outlook on life is concerned. The novel includes characters such as Qambar Ali, who are not concerned with what the state perceives to be the ‘traditional’ demands of the Muslim electorate. Instead Qambar Ali devotes his time to make

speeches against private property. Similarly, Safia Sultan withstands stigma against her decision to open a convent school by emphasizing the idea that no 'good' Indian family will send their daughters to a school that is not a convent. This novel cuts across different genres and occasionally the plot may come across as convoluted. Hyder uses themes such as memory, traditions, poetry and division, both geographical and social to create a relevant tale. However, for our purposes, this work offers us an intriguing insight into the rapidly changing dynamics of the Muslim upper-class. One main takeaway is the folly of 'good' Muslims. No character, save for Chandni Begum, who even though lends her name to the title of the book, features minimally within it, can be seen as inherently 'good'. The Muslim intelligentsia of Lucknow is full of intricacies and contradictions. For example, the socialist Qambar Ali inherits the contested site of the palatial Red Rose House and desires a bride who is not from among the Muslim elites of the city, only for his wife to desperately emulate the social ways of the *Lakhanvi* elite women. The politics surrounding Ayodhya remain in the background of the novel and are not used to make a political statement but as a plot device that compels both the characters and the reader to ponder over issues pertaining to belonging and a 'syncretic' identity. Hyder's book points out the new contours of Indian society that are rapidly making this shared tradition a vestige of the past. Red Rose House too becomes a contested site as characters debate whether the mosque or the temple in the compound came first. Globalization plays an interesting part of the tale as well, as it is noted that those characters that have now settled in the UK consider themselves to have set aside their 'ideological bigotry' as their interests have converged due to the desire to compete with the 'whites' for money. However, Hyder does move us away from this simplistic view by showing how slanted historical memory inhibits us from removing constructed prejudices.

This thesis has so far highlighted three distinct periods that have informed Muslim consciousness and their socio-economic standing. In the first period that spans the years leading up to independence, it can be seen that allusions were still actively made to a 'syncretic' nationalism and that the promise of constitutionalism and independence were seen as the means to counter the socio-economic disadvantages faced by India's Muslims. In the second period, it can be noted that since legal frameworks fail to alleviate the plight of India's Muslims, the state moves to address issues such as personal law and governmental employment. Furthermore, the state's ability to bring about equitable economic reform has an added impact on India's Muslims, both in terms of economic development and the effect this has on empowering the Hindu right. So, what sets apart the period of rampant neoliberal reform from the other two? The argument being made in this chapter suggests that neoliberalism discredits legal and redistributive means of correcting social inequities. Secondly, it further emboldens the Hindu right due to the alignment of certain goals of Hindu nationalists and neoliberal thinkers. Lastly, the amalgamation of developmental rhetoric and nationalist ideals creates a unique phenomenon of a nationalist spectacle of development. Furthermore, this spectacle to an extent also involves moments of tactical outreach to minorities that are meant to portray the neoliberal-right nexus as one that is not discriminatory. Naturally, neoliberalism also produces some unintended consequences that are worth studying further. For example, if neoliberalism produces a unique Hindu middle-class consciousness and aims to produce the framework for something such as 'Dalit capitalism', it is safe to assume that it has some sort of impact on the political and social consciousness of various classes of Muslims. This project has already highlighted a slew of negative impacts that exist but some of these unintended changes may be creating a new form of political and social consciousness.

### **Tactical Outreach and the Spectacle of Development**

The demand for social justice for Muslims through constitutional or institutional measures was met by cries of ‘appeasement’ by the Hindu right. While the state has often seen greater quotas for Muslims in public services as a means to pander to the Muslim community, these measures and enrollment drives only impacted a specific section of Muslims that had the necessary skills to serve in public institutions. Furthermore, Hindu nationalists believed that such measures, coupled with protections for a distinct Personal Law, amounted to the Congress pandering towards the Muslim community and forsaking India’s secular identity. The emergence of neoliberal reforms, which were followed by a unique neoliberal biopolitics, led to the emphasis on privatized means of poverty alleviation. Moreover, even if public measures are adopted, their scope is limited in size and they are not fashioned according to minority-specific lines. For example, a bill was passed by the BJP to give poor Indians who did not belong to the reserved categories to be given a 10% reservation in public sector jobs and higher education. The BJP’s 2019 election manifesto described these measures as being geared towards the ‘economically weaker sections’ of society.<sup>139</sup> At the same time, the definition of economically weak sections of society includes the vast majority of Indian society, many of whom are poorer high-caste Hindus.

The BJP’s reaction to the Sachar Committee, which had described the Muslims of India as facing conditions worse than those faced by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, was to denigrate legal ‘appeasement’ and reservations for Muslims as policy prescriptions for alleviating

---

<sup>139</sup> “Sankalp Patra Lok Sabha 2019” (New Delhi: Bharatiya Janata Party, 2019), 33.

the plight of India's Muslims.<sup>140</sup> For example, L.K Advani touted the achievement of Narendra Modi's administration in Gujarat as evidence for the social impact that liberalization has had on Gujarat's Muslims. He cites the Imam of the Jamia Masjid in Ahmedabad as claiming that "Modi has provided an atmosphere which is conducive for those who want to trade peacefully in Gujarat".<sup>141</sup> The remarks of L.K. Advani use educational enrollment and economic policies as evidence of Gujarat's ability to alleviate the plight of its Muslim citizens but glosses over the fact that not all Muslims are covered by these statistics and pockets of rich urban Muslims do drive up mean incomes figures. At the same time, a narrative is constructed of how business and trade are the means to alleviate the social backwardness of India's Muslims, rather than welfare that is given to them on the basis of their rights as citizens, not as consumers and producers.

At the same time, Muslims in Gujarat have 50 percent higher poverty ratios than scheduled castes and tribes in Gujarat, even though the per capita net state domestic product is one of the highest in India.<sup>142</sup> The Sachar Committee Report also highlighted a higher incidence of poverty among India's urban Muslims than their rural counterparts. In fact, the urban-rural differential is the highest among Muslims as compared to OBCs and SC/STs and urban poverty for Muslims has only reduced moderately between 1993 and 2005.<sup>143</sup> While Muslims may holistically be slightly

---

<sup>140</sup> "Social Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India", Prime Minister's High Level Committee, Government of India (New Delhi: 2006), 25-26.

<sup>141</sup> 'Sachar Committee: Tell-Tale facts about Muslims in Gujarat: Shri Advani', NarendraModi.in, 17 May 2010, <https://bit.ly/2MRJ8JH>.

<sup>142</sup> For the shortcomings of the 'Gujarat model' and the UPA in general in alleviating Muslim poverty, see Abusaleh Shariff, *Institutionalizing Constitutional Rights: Post-Sachar Committee Scenario, Institutionalizing Constitutional Rights* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016)

<sup>143</sup> "Social Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India", 157-160.

better off than other reserved classes in terms of poverty and consumption, they are worse off in terms of public sector employment, post-graduate employment and enrollment in elite institutions.<sup>144</sup> While the committee recommended the need for general policy initiatives to tackle socio-economic deprivation, the reaction of the Congress-led UPA government was to opt for policies that were tinged with pragmatism and electoral considerations due to the resistance from reserved classes and the Hindu right. Furthermore, bureaucratic opposition and overlapping executive structures prevented the UPA government from actually delivering effective change in areas where attempts were made to alleviate the plight of Muslims, such as increasing the availability of credit.<sup>145</sup> Thus, the reaction of the UPA and to an extent the NDA government that followed it was to tactically implement the recommendations of the Sachar Committee.

Partha Chatterjee highlights how advanced capitalist economies have moved away from the Gramscian model of an ethical state, where civil society and the state are separate, to the integral state, where the bourgeoisie exercises hegemony over other classes.<sup>146</sup> However, in post-colonial societies the integral state often ‘tactically contracts’ in order to manufacture consent for those people who do not benefit from open access to markets. The state may choose to engage with those in the informal sector by creating zones of exception in which the typical laws of property, taxation etc. do not apply.<sup>147</sup> Kalyan Sanyal argues that capitalism in post-colonial

---

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 68-69, 73 & 165.

<sup>145</sup> Heewon Kim, *The Struggle for Equality: India’s Muslims and Rethinking the UPA Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 127-170 & 199.

<sup>146</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *I Am the People: Reflections on Popular Sovereignty Today*, Ruth Benedict Book Series (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 75-76

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

societies does not transform precapitalistic institutions, rather its strength lies in its ability to maintain hegemony over the dispossessed through the need economy.<sup>148</sup>

The most important takeaway from the works of Chatterjee and Sanyal is recognition of the idea that poverty in the post-colonial world is not a byproduct of a pre-capitalist past but is maintained by what Sanyal refers to the ‘arising of capital’ or what Chatterjee considers as a reaction to the crisis of the integral state. Those dispossessed by the accumulation of capital are integrated into the informal sector. As the ‘traditional’ sector transitions to the ‘informal’, and the unemployed are converted to the ‘working poor’, the state has to tactically engage those who are part of the need economy in order to offer them a level of subsistence. However, these tactical extensions are based on electoral or political reasons. As a result, we see a new notion of citizenship emerging that denies universal rights to specific members of society. Those who are part of the need economy are dealt on the basis of their economic and political importance. Thus, not all informal workers may be free from the scourge of evictions and surveillance. However, an important aspect to consider is that since the stalwarts of *Hindutva* oppose minority ‘appeasement’ by the state and certain forms of social welfare, this tactical engagement does not necessarily need to stem from the state. In fact, organizations under the umbrella of the *Sangh Parivar* often engage with minorities in order to not only improve their image but to further their ideas of a *Dharmic* society and its ability to alleviate poverty.

---

<sup>148</sup> Kalyan K. Sanyal, *Rethinking Capitalist Development Primitive Accumulation, Governmentality, and Post-Colonial Capitalism* (New Delhi ; New York: Routledge, 2007), 39-41.



One should not assume, however, that the Hindu right has homogenous set of principles pertaining to issues of nationalism and citizenship. For example, even ideas such as *Ghar Wapsi* (Homecoming) have different interpretations. Hardliners within the *Sangh* interpret M.S. Golwalkar's broad definition of Hindu as being a sanction for 'reconversions' of Muslims and Hindus. On the other hand, other ideologues such as Balraj Madhok and Upadhyaya had advocated for the 'Indianization' of Indian Muslims rather than a 'Hinduization'.<sup>149</sup> At the same time, ideologues such as Raj Eshwar advocate for reconversions as the means to save a besieged Hindu identity.<sup>150</sup> These differences in opinion also impact the sort of outreach that Hindu nationalists conduct when dealing with Muslim communities. While the BJP and the *Sangh Parivar* may rely on the spectacle of development in order to package their economic vision as all-inclusive, at the same time they need to engage with India's Muslims in order to ensure social cohesion within certain markets, especially in those spaces where Muslim artisans or traders may play a key role.

Organizations such as the RSS have historically rejected the notion of reservations as a permanent solution for the upliftment of lower castes.<sup>151</sup> Instead, the RSS believes that social institutions need to be strengthened in order to tackle the issue of minorities. As attacks are made on state institutions, the RSS continues to expand its own network of affiliated groups that are targeted towards specific sections of Indian society such as farmers, Dalits and Sikhs. One such

---

<sup>149</sup> Balraj Madhok, *Indianisation? What, Why and How* (New Delhi: S. Chand, 1970), 678-679, 90-95 and Deendayal Upadhyaya, *Integral Humanism* (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 1965), 18-30.

<sup>150</sup> Raj Eshwar, *Paravartan (Back to Hinduism): Why and How* (New Delhi: Suruchi Prakashan, 1999), 9-19.

<sup>151</sup> *RSS Resolves: Full Text of Resolutions from 1950 to 1983* (Bangalore: Prakashan Vibhag, RSS, 1983), 103-4.

project is the *Muslim Rashtriya Manch* (Muslim National Forum). The story of the MRM begins on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2002, when a curious *Iftar* gathering of prominent Muslim personalities and members of the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* took place in Delhi. The gathering included members of the All-India Imam Council, the Shahi Imam of the Fatehpuri Masjid and Muslim intellectuals such as the Indian writer, Muzaffar Hussain. The intriguing aspect of this gathering was the attendance of the RSS *Sarsanghchalak* at that time, K.S. Sudarshalan and other important functionaries such as Indresh Kumar.<sup>152</sup> The topic that was under discussion at this meeting pertained to the gap that existed between the Muslims and Hindus of India. According to the RSS, this event led to several leaders of the Indian Muslim community approaching the *Sangh* to ask for the creation of an organization of that could bridge the gap that existed between India's Hindu and Muslim communities. Thus, an organization titled *Rashtravadi Muslim Andolan-Ek Nayi Raah* (National Muslim Movement – A New Way) was born, which was later renamed as the *Muslim Rashtriya Manch* (Muslim National Forum) in 2005.<sup>153</sup> This led to the holding of many more curious *Iftar* parties, Eid gatherings and national conventions in which ‘communal issues’ of interest were discussed by the membership of this nascent organization and its patrons from the *Sangh*.

Organizations like the RSS, which are unique in their emphasis on social engagement, depend on their ability to access an acceptable level of space in order to propagate their ideological

---

<sup>152</sup> “About Us”, Muslim Rashtriya Manch.  
<http://muslimrashtriyamanch.org/Encyc/2016/1/13/About-us.aspx> (accessed 21st February 2020).

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

views. The ‘Reconstruction’ phase of the RSS has focused on accessing social, political and economic space at both the local and national level. However, an organization such as the MRM also grants members of the Muslim community access to the networks used by the RSS to disseminate social benefits such as its *shakhas* (branches), schools and coaching centers. In return, the RSS is given access to spaces that were previously inaccessible such as urban localities with predominately Muslim resident. At a greater scale, a Muslim organization allows the *Sangh* to gain a foothold in Muslim majority Jammu and Kashmir. Thus, the struggle for socio-political space takes on a territorial dimension as well. Another aspect that needs to be considered is the larger economic landscape of India being visualized as a ‘contested space’. Both Muslims and Hindus are subscribing to a model of intra-faith outreach in the form of the MRM in order to gain economic benefits. For the Muslims of the *Manch*, they stand to benefit from the numerous educational and economic opportunities created by the *Sangh Parivar* network. Religious clerics, for example, are particularly drawn towards the *Manch* as it allows them to wield greater social influence. This is important especially for clerics from smaller sects of Islam such as the *Dawoodi Bohra* community or followers of the Sunni Deobandi school of thought.<sup>154</sup> The MRM’s platform allows these religious authorities to gain proximity to the RSS and to the state. This further enables them to lobby for increased endowments and patronage.<sup>155</sup>

---

<sup>154</sup> Walter Andersen and Shridhar D. Damle, *Messengers of Hindu Nationalism: How the RSS Reshaped India* (London: Hurst & Company, 2018), 100 and Mohammad Ali, “Does RSS believe in Tricolour, Constitution?: Dar ul Uloom Deoband”. *The Hindu*, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>155</sup> Muslim Rashtriya Manch, “Delegation of Muslim Ulema, Intellectuals and Academicians Calls on PM”. *Activities*, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017. <http://muslimrashtriyamanch.org//Encyc/2017/1/20/Muslim-delegation-meets-PM.aspx>

For individual Muslims, the MRM allows them to access certain economic and social benefits. The MRM also chooses to focus its efforts on disaster relief and strives to meet the needs of those localities where the state or regional authorities are lethargic to respond to.<sup>156</sup> Often times, events organized by the MRM will be centered around food such as Iftar parties or *khichdi bhoj* (*khichdi* is a dish comprising of rice and lentils). It is necessary for the MRM to conduct such events as it allows the *Sangh* to use Muslim volunteers from the *Manch*, that are often from among these communities. As a result, members from local communities are likelier to engage with these volunteers. Furthermore, the presence of ulema gives an aura of legitimacy to these events. Through the use of such incentives, the MRM is either able to distribute its literature or discuss issues such as the CAA debate or the movement for cow protection.

As far as economic opportunities are concerned, the MRM offers Muslims to access the wide social network that the RSS offers. While the *Sangh*'s own organization does offer these incentives to Muslims, inherent distrust of the RSS prevents these mechanisms from becoming effective. In a sense, the MRM is fast becoming a middleman that grants the RSS an aura of legitimacy. Furthermore, the MRM is able to engage at a much more local level that involves concentrating these efforts not only on a certain city, but even on particular communities of Muslims within those urban spaces. Individuals can either join the *Manch* or benefit from its social outreach. As far as the latter is concerned, this entails access to coaching centers for some of India's most competitive schools or government jobs. It allows these individuals to have access to the sort of social mobility that would not be available within their localities. Often times, the MRM

---

<sup>156</sup> "MRM activists distribute food to flood-hit people of Varanasi". Activities, Muslim Rashtriya Manch. <http://muslimrashtriyamanch.org/Activity.aspx>

attempts to legitimize certain government schemes as well, such as schemes that give financial incentives for rearing milch animals.<sup>157</sup> Further engagement in rural areas include the setting up of *Anaaj* Banks (grain banks), educational facilities and providing aid to women in cases of domestic strife. As far as women's issues are concerned, in Maharashtra, the MRM has attempted to institute a system of pensions for needy and divorced women in the state.<sup>158</sup> In Hyderabad, the MRM launched Telengana's first family counselling center for Muslims. The *Parivar Sulah Kendra* (family dispute redressal center) is one of the ways the RSS is trying to gain a foothold in Telengana, a state with a significant Muslim population.<sup>159</sup> It is also interesting to note that in Telengana, the MRM is choosing to promote Urdu, even if such a policy is at odds with the RSS' linguistic beliefs.<sup>160</sup>

In order to gain dividends from these spaces, the relationship between the RSS and the Muslim cadres of the MRM needs to be contingent on reciprocity. Clearly the MRM offers certain disenfranchised Muslims opportunities that they would not be able to avail without the Sangh. Balraj Madhok, the RSS ideologue that we referenced earlier, argues that in order to 'Indianize' In Kashmir, for example, the MRM has relied on offering economically disenfranchised Kashmiris the opportunity to access the RSS' network of coaching centers that prepare candidates that seek

---

<sup>157</sup> Muslim Rashtriya Manch, "Avail Government Schemes for Rearing Milch Animals: Faiz Khan". *Activities*, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>158</sup> Dhaval Kulkarni, "Muslim Rashtriya Manch launches pension scheme for needy Muslim women in Maharashtra". *Daily News Analysis*, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

<sup>159</sup> Syed Akbar, "After Talaq Bill, RSS opens help centre for Muslims in Hyderabad". *The Times of India*, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

<sup>160</sup> *Business Standard*, "Muslim Rashtriya Manch plans to expand its footprint in Telengana". July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019.

to gain admission at India's elite universities. Furthermore, it allows the leadership of the MRM to gain proximity to the corridors of power due to a channel that now exists between them and the RSS. However, it is debatable as to how reciprocal this relationship is. In Nagpur, 5000 members of the *Manch* allegedly defected to the Indian National Congress in 2019.<sup>161</sup> Even if these numbers may not be accurate, more than 20 local leaders of the MRM, including the President of the Nagpur chapter joined the Congress as they felt the RSS kept ignoring their demands.<sup>162</sup> Be as that may, the RSS still offers members of the *Manch* a plethora of opportunities since the *Sangh* has extremely well-developed social networks. In a country where the state fails to guarantee a reasonable standard of living, especially to Muslims living in poor urban neighborhoods, the RSS' social outreach program offers these citizens the chance to avail educational opportunities and healthcare.<sup>163</sup>

While the MRM presents itself as being a platform for social outreach towards the Muslims of India, one needs to also consider the possible economic benefits that can be incurred by the RSS for projecting a more progressive image. It can be argued that the MRM is one of those vessels through which the RSS can present itself in the mold of a forward-looking group whose program of nationalism intersects with national development. While the RSS may claim that it was

---

<sup>161</sup> Shishir Arya, "Disillusioned Muslim cadre leaves the RSS, clutches Congress hand", Times of India, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/disillusioned-muslim-cadre-leaves-rss-clutches-cong-hand/articleshow/68648586.cms>

<sup>162</sup> Anoha Sengupta, "5,000 Members of RSS-linked Muslim Rashtriya Manch to Join Congress After Facing 'Discrimination'", *News18*, <https://www.news18.com/news/politics/5000-members-of-rss-linked-muslim-rashtriya-manch-to-join-congress-after-facing-discrimination-2083517.html>

<sup>163</sup> "MRM activists distribute food to flood-hit people of Varanasi". Activities, Muslim Rashtriya Manch. <http://muslimrashtriyamanch.org/Activity.aspx>

approached by leaders of the Muslim community to form a group that could mend relations between the two communities, one needs to realize that the group was formed in the aftermath of the Gujarat pogrom in 2002. The image of the BJP and the RSS had taken a hit due to their role in stoking the flames of violence in the state. In order to fulfill their promises of development and economic growth, the BJP and the RSS needed to gain support from the economic elites and more affluent members of Indian society. While a politics of hate and division may draw a disenchanted middle-class towards the *Sangh*, the divisions being created by the RSS signify instability for the economic elites of India. Keeping this in mind, it's important to consider that the more affluent sectors of Indian society see the creation of the MRM as softening of the RSS' stance. However, one needs to understand that even though the RSS may be the 'parent' organization of the BJP, there have been differences between the leadership of the two groups. Furthermore, even within the RSS, leaders view the MRM in different ways. While K.S. Sudarshalan attended every single national convention of the MRM, the current head of the RSS, Mohin Bhagwat, has only attended one national convention to date.<sup>164</sup> Be that as it may, the RSS and the BJP do to a great extent rely on the support of economic elites in order to further their agendas. Politically speaking, these elites are necessary to win elections and provide effective governance. These upper echelons of Indian society represent a lucrative source of funding and support. More importantly, if these elites are not on board, the RSS can find it extremely difficult to implement its program through the BJP.

Apart from projecting a progressive image of the RSS to the economic elites of India, the MRM has also attempted to garner international recognition of its work. The MRM has invited

---

<sup>164</sup> Suchdana Gupta, "No One Has a Right to Measure Other's Patriotism: Mohan Bhagwat", *The Times of India*, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhopal/no-one-has-a-right-to-measure-others-patriotism-mohan-bhagwat/articleshow/57103204.cms> (Accessed 1st March 2020).

ambassadors of Muslim countries, primarily from the Gulf, to take part in Eid celebrations and other such activities. Even the Pakistani High Commissioner to India was invited for one such occasion in 2015 but his invitation was rescinded after the RSS considered his remarks on an attack in Pampore, Kashmir to be callous.<sup>165</sup> Clearly the several measures outlined in this section are designed to repatriate the image of the RSS locally and internationally. However, the rehabilitation of this image is meant to fulfill certain pragmatic goals, some of which revolve around expanding its influence in those regions or localities of India where a hardline *Hindutva* ideology does not hold much appeal.

The use of organizations such as the MRM exemplifies the neoliberal approach of distributing socio-economic incentives through social or private organizations rather than the state. This also overlaps with the Hindu right's disdain for state-sponsored welfare institutions. Moreover, such practices also participate in the process of the construction of a 'good Muslim' in the neoliberal age. However, neoliberalism also has certain kinds of unintended impact on Muslim political consciousness. In a study of Muslim artisans, Thomas Chambers describes how these workers are being impacted by globalization in two main ways. Either the neoliberal project of constructing the entrepreneurial 'self' succeeds or they buy into the globalized project of *tabligh*, with both having an impact on their labor and how they view it as either a representation of their competitiveness or piety.<sup>166</sup> Similarly, Suroor Hasan notes how increased globalization has led young Muslim professionals to display markers of their identity more openly as this global exchange of Islamic ideals, coupled with a generational ambivalence regarding Partition has made

---

<sup>165</sup> Andersen and Damle, *Messengers of Hindu Nationalism*, 92.

<sup>166</sup> Thomas Chambers author, *Networks, Labour and Migration among Indian Muslim Artisans, Economic Exposures in Asia* (London: UCL Press, 2020), 136-57.



them less anxious about their identity.<sup>167</sup> In communities that have been impacted by the impacts of neoliberalism, resistance also often happens through the means of neoliberal ideals.<sup>168</sup> For example, in the case of the Qureshis of Delhi, who have traditionally slaughtered animals as a trade, resist the dual assault of Hindu nationalism and neoliberalism by advocating for *taaleem* (education), *tanzeem* (association) and *tijarat* (business).<sup>169</sup> In essence, the economized Indian Muslim is willing to engage with the tactical extensions of the state. However, this does not mean that the Muslim subject is in a state of compliance or obedience. Muslims often resort to resistance on neoliberal lines by demanding protection of their sectional interests or fall back on a rhetoric of constitutionalism and secularism. However, the latter approach, as exhibited during the recent protests regarding new citizenship law, has limited impact due to the neoliberal and *Hindutva* disdain for democratic principles and regulations, and a reliance on spectacles of development.

---

<sup>167</sup> Hasan Suroor, *India's Muslim Spring* (New Delhi: Rupa Publications India, 2014), 100-108.

<sup>168</sup> See, Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, First edition., *Near Futures* (New York: Zone Books, 2015), 201-210. Brown argues that even if neoliberal measures are scaled back, the economization of political life caused by the biopolitics of neoliberalism are hard to reverse and resistance to neoliberalism is also impacted by this process.

<sup>169</sup> Zarin Ahmed, "Taleem, Tanzeem aur Tijarat" in *Frontiers of Embedded Muslim Communities in India*, ed. Vinod K. Jairath, (New Delhi; New York: Routledge, 2011).

## **Conclusion**

This thesis has covered three different periods that have been differentiated both in terms of the political-economy and the growth of Hindu nationalism. These three periods have highlighted distinct developments not only regarding the lurch towards economic liberalization but the governmentality and biopolitics that such reform entails. Such an analysis has been supplemented with the development of Hindu revivalism and nationalist thought. The growth in Hindu nationalist thought has been developed not only due to a reliance on colonial knowledge regarding India's social history but also by post-colonial responses to the challenge of development. Furthermore, the Muslim reactions to these developments has also been taken into account.

Interpreting the periodization in this project makes for an interesting exercise as one can look at the different aspects discussed in this thesis through the lenses of both continuity and evolution. It seems as if the transition between these different periods tells the tale of an imperial project of classical liberalism being followed by post-colonial resistance, and in turn a push back against the interventionist tendencies of India's initial developmental trajectory. The final period revolves around the success of this reactionary push for economic liberalization. In a sense, one would not be wrong to view the second period as a disjuncture for natural flow of liberalism. After all, this study has highlighted how certain themes have remained present throughout these distinct periods. For example, communal politics did not become a contestation ground for middle-class

interests from different communities in the period of neoliberal growth, but in fact even in the late colonial period economic competitiveness induced by the rise of free markets had pushed communities to form sectional groupings. For example, the riots in Aligarh, particularly those between 1978-80 were similarly informed by competing business interests at a time of general economic discontent and the rise of Muslim representation in traditionally Hindu-dominated professions. At the same time, it can also be argued that a history of communal politics was a bigger factor in the production of these riots and that they also involved Hindu businessmen antagonizing Muslim artisans in order to profit from dependencies and wage-cuts in return for guaranteeing job security.<sup>170</sup> Similarly, the notion of a 'backward Muslim' subject was indeed constructed by a colonial adherence to statistics and a misinformed reading of India's history and social attitudes. However, this developmental predicament has loomed large in India's post-colonial history and continues to dominate debates on reservation and social justice.

At the same time, it might be too presumptuous to view this tale as one of continuity being restored. While neoliberalism, in global terms, is rightly understood as representing the continuity of western economic hegemony, its impact on national institutions and relations also highlights the manner in which governmentality and ideas of social justice have evolved during this period. In the case of viewing communal agitation as the contestation site of Hindu and Muslim middle-class interests, neoliberalism has altered the ways in which these classes compete with each other. While the element of competition has remained constant, neoliberalism takes away ground from the minority community due to its tendency to rely on anti-democratic and anti-welfare rhetoric.

---

<sup>170</sup> Paul R. Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 199-216.

As a result, Indian Muslims have limited constitutional or institutional remedies for their predicament. Furthermore, neoliberalism's inability to tackle the social reasons for discrimination means that the Hindu majority has greater chances to access mobility in markets that might be 'free' but also exclusionary. Taking into account the idea of the 'backward Muslim', neoliberalism constructs a subject that is very distinct from the one that was created in the late colonial period. Yes, both neoliberalism and colonial classical liberalism frame education as the basis for enacting social change. However, the construction of a 'good' and 'backward' Muslim is not only based on social trends of the Muslim community but by also measuring their productivity in relation to the rising Hindu middle-class. In a sense, neoliberalism encompasses a very dangerous tendency of perpetuating illiberalism within the markets in order to protect their 'freedom' by ensuring majoritarian support for such a program.

Keeping these elements in mind, this study also offers a few conclusions regarding the impact of the nexus between neoliberalism and Hindu nationalism, and the consequences it has had on Indian Muslims:

- a) Neoliberalism does not necessarily reject state intervention. In fact, it is necessary for the state to intervene in order to maintain the 'freedom' of markets and to control sources of labor. Such intervention could be in the form of creating barriers to entry for minorities in order to bolster its support within an increasingly nationalist middle-class. It could also come in the form of tactical outreach towards minorities in order to govern labor markets and entice minorities with incentives geared towards entrepreneurship. However, in an ideal case, the state would not need to intervene in these areas after a

point and these incentives can be distributed through private enterprises and social groups, such as those under the umbrella of the *Sangh Parivar*.

- b) In the Indian context, economic conservatism and Hindu nationalism cannot flourish independently of one another. Both creeds gained momentum due to their mutual opposition to state led development. However, economic liberalism lacked mass appeal, whereas Hindu nationalism lacked a coherent vision for alternate mechanisms for development and social progress.
- c) The impact of this nexus on Indian Muslims does not only entail that Muslims in India are becoming increasingly socially and economically disadvantaged. It also limits their responses to the increasing inegalitarian nature of the economy. Muslims in India continue relying on the construction of a 'syncretic' identity that has been openly challenged by the Hindu right and on a set of constitutional principles that are being increasingly violated due to the spectacle of development and the need to 'sacrifice' certain values in order to ensure access to global markets and a lack of state-intervention.
- d) The binary of a 'good' and 'bad' Muslim does not only revolve around the degree of participation of Muslims in governmental opportunities and their attitudes towards left-leaning politics. In the neoliberal age, Muslim 'backwardness' is increasingly being seen through the prism of the neoliberal tendency of viewing individuals as enterprises. Thus, the state's attitude towards social protection is not based on the principle of citizenship or even consumption, but as viewing individuals and entire communities as producers. Such an approach does not take into account the sheer diversity within the category of Indian Muslims such as their social status, regional identity and political

beliefs. Constructing a general theory for ‘backwardness’ is dangerous as it limits the state’s responses to these social conditions, often resulting in advantages for particular sections of minorities. For example, by relying solely on educational and public service quotas, the state is only providing mobility to those Muslims who can access these opportunities in the first place. Such policies do very little for the vast majority of Muslims who provide their labor in exchange for meagre wages and very limited social security.

Since the third period of this thesis stretches to the present-day, it remains to be seen whether neoliberal governmentality can bear the pressure of increasing social inequity by continuing to evolve its relationship to society. However, there are several challenges ahead for the proponents of neoliberal economic thought. The recent farmers’ protests signify a reaction against neoliberal agricultural policies and the lack of care that the state has exhibited for poor and middling farmers. Furthermore, given the nature of India’s economy, technology will be another interesting arena where neoliberal thought will be challenged. The nature of the internet entails that it becomes increasingly difficult to tax Big Tech, which is predominately American, for services and advertisements that target Indians. There has been a recent push to increase taxes on these corporations. Furthermore, while neoliberal thought dictates that the technology sector remain free of state-control, the state is also enticed to assume a greater role in the digital economy in order to expand its powers of surveillance and discourse creation.

## **Bibliography**

- Abraham, John. "In Search of Dharma: Integral Humanism and the Political Economy of Hindu Nationalism." *South Asia* 42, no. 1 (2019): 16–32.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2019.1557362>.
- Ahmed, Hilal. *Siyasi Muslims: A Story of Political Islams in India*. Penguin Random House India Private Limited, 2019.
- Ahmed, Mushtaque. *Babari Masjid Secularism and the Supreme Court*. New Delhi: Qazi Publishers and Distributors, 1995.
- Ahmed, Zarin. "Taleem, Tanzeem Aur Tijarat." In *Frontiers of Embedded Muslim Communities in India*, edited by Vinod K. Jairath. New Delhi ; New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Akbar, Syed. "After Talaq Bill, RSS Opens Help Centre for Muslims in Hyderabad." *The Times of India*, July 27, 2019.
- Andersen, Walter, and Shridhar Damle. *Messengers of Hindu Nationalism: How the RSS Reshaped India*. London: Hurst & Company, 2018.
- Anderson, Edward, and Arkotong Longkumer. "'Neo-Hindutva': Evolving Forms, Spaces, and Expressions of Hindu Nationalism." *Contemporary South Asia* 26, no. 4 (October 2, 2018): 371–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2018.1548576>.
- Bardhan, Pranab K. *The Political Economy of Development in India*. Oxford, UK ; New York, NY, USA: BBlackwell, 1984.

- Bayly, C. A. *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870*. Cambridge Studies in Indian History and Society. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511583285>.
- Bayly, C.A. *The Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad, 1880-1920*. Clarendon Press, 1975.
- Bhargava, Rajeev. “Reimagining Secularism: Respect, Domination and Principled Distance.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 48, no. 50 (2013): 79–92.
- Brass, Paul R. *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011.
- Brown, Wendy. *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism: The Rise of Antidemocratic Politics in the West*. Columbia University Press, 2019. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/brow19384>.
- Chacko, Priya. “Marketizing Hindutva: The State, Society, and Markets in Hindu Nationalism.” *Modern Asian Studies* 53, no. 2 (2019): 377–410. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000051>.
- Chandra, Bipan. *Communalism in Modern India*. New Delhi: Vikas, 1984.
- Chandran, Rina. “New ‘Enemy Property’ Law Unfairly Targets Indian Muslims, Analysts Say.” *Reuters*, March 13, 2017.
- Chatterjee, Partha. “History and the Nationalization Of Hinduism.” *Social Research* 59, no. 1 (1992): 111–49.
- . *I Am the People: Reflections on Popular Sovereignty Today*. Ruth Benedict Book Series. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.7312/chat19548>.
- . “Secularism and Toleration.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 29, no. 28 (1994): 1768–77.
- . *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton: University Press, 1993.



“Convention Demands Effective Role for the Minorities Towards Attainment of National Progress.”

*The Times of India*, June 11, 1961.

Corbridge, Stuart. “The Political Economy of Development in India since Independence.” In

*Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and*

*Nepal*, edited by Paul R. Brass, 305–20. Routledge Handbooks. London: Routledge, 2010.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203878187>.

Corbridge, Stuart, and John Harriss. *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and*

*Popular Democracy*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.

Cush, Denise, Catherine Robinson, and Michael York. *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Routledge, 2012.

Das, Durga. *Sardar Patel’s Correspondence*. Vol. 9. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1974.

David Harvey author. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press,

2007.

Desai, Radhika. “The Slow-Motion Counterrevolution: Developmental Contradictions and the

Emergence of Neoliberalism.” In *Social Movements and the State in India: Deepening*

*Democracy?*, edited by Kenneth Bo Nielsen and Alf Gunvald Nilsen, 25–51. Rethinking

International Development Series. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016.

[https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59133-3\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59133-3_2).

“Does RSS Believe in Tricolour, Constitution?: Dar Ul Uloom Deoband.” *The Hindu*, January 11,

2016.

Doval, Nikita. “The Casualties of the Enemy Property Act.” *Mint*, July 18, 2017.

Elphinstone, Mountstuart. *The History of India*. Vol. 2. Cambridge Library Collection - Perspectives

from the Royal Asiatic Society. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139507639>.

Erdman, Howard L. *The Swatantra Party and Indian Conservatism*,. Cambridge South Asian Studies  
5. London: Cambridge UP, 1967.

Erum, Nazia. *Mothering a Muslim*. Juggernaut Books, 2017.

Eshwar, Raj. *Paravartan (Back to Hinduism): Why And*. New Delhi: Suruchi Prakashan, 1999.

Frankel, Francine R. *India's Political Economy, 1947-2004: The Gradual Revolution*. 2nd ed. New  
Delhi ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Gandhi. *Hindu-Muslim Tension, Its Cause and Cure*. AHmedabad: Young India Office, 1924.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiuc.2034833>.

Golwalkar, M.S. *Bunch of Thoughts*. Bangalore: Sahitya Sindhu Prakashana, 2000.

Gopal, Sarvepalli. *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Rise of Communal Politics in India*. London ;  
Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books, 1993.

Gould, William. *Hindu Nationalism and the Language of Politics in Late Colonial India*. Cambridge  
Studies in Indian History and Society. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511497391>.

Gyanendra Pandey author. *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. Delhi ; New  
York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Hasan, Mushirul. *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1885-1930*. Manohar Publications,  
1991.

Hayek, F. A. *The Road to Serfdom: Text and Documents--The Definitive Edition*. University of  
Chicago Press, 2009.

Haynes, Douglas E. *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India: The Shaping of a Public Culture in Surat  
City, 1852-1928*. University of California Press, 1991.

Hyder, Qurratulain. *Chandni Begum*. Delhi: Educational Publishing House, 1993.

- . *River of Fire*. New Directions, 2019.
- “Hyper-Nationalism Making India Intolerant; Muslims Feel Insecure: Hamid Ansari.” *The Wire*, February 9, 2021.
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. “Deendayal Upadhyaya.” In *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader*, 139–57. Princeton University Press, 2007. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7s415.13>.
- Jalal, Ayesha. *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*. Cambridge University Press, 1985. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511558856>.
- Jha, Dharendra K., and Krishna Jha. *Ayodhya: The Dark Night - The Secret History of Rama's Appearance In Babri Masjid*. Delhi: HarperCollins Publishers India, 2016.
- Jha, Krishna. *Ayodhya - The Dark Night*. HarperCollins, 2012.
- Jhangiani, Motilal A. *Jana Sangh and Swatantra; a Profile of the Rightist Parties in India*. Bombay: Manaktalas, 1967.
- Daniel Stedman Jones. *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics*. Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Kar, Sabyasachi, and Kunal Sen. *The Political Economy of India's Growth Episodes*. Palgrave Pivot. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016.
- Khan, Abdul Rashid. *The All India Muslim Educational Conference: Its Contribution to the Cultural Development of Indian Muslims, 1886-1947*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Kim, Heewon. *The Struggle for Equality: India's Muslims and Rethinking the UPA Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108235839>.
- Kohli, Atul. “Politics of Economic Liberalization in India.” *World Development*, World Development, 17, no. 3 (1989): 305–28. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X\(89\)90205-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(89)90205-2).

- Kulkarni, Dhaval. "Muslim Rashtriya Manch Launches Pension Scheme for Needy Muslim Women in Maharashtra." *Daily News Analysis*, August 15, 2018.
- Lal, Deepak. *The Hindu Equilibrium: India c. 1500 B.C.-2000 A.D.* Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- . *The Hindu Equilibrium: India c. 1500 B.C.-2000 A.D.* Abridged&Revised Edition. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Lall, K. B. "India and the New International Economic Order." *International Studies* 17, no. 3–4 (July 1, 1978): 435–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002088177801700305>.
- Leela Fernandes. *India's New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.cttsjgt>.
- Madhok, Balroj. *Indianistaion? What, Why and How.* New Delhi: S. Chand, 1970.
- Maidul Islam author. *Indian Muslim(s) after Liberalization.* First edition. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Metcalf, Barbara D. "Presidential Address: Too Little and Too Much: Reflections on Muslims in the History of India." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 54, no. 4 (1995): 951–67.
- <https://doi.org/10.2307/2059955>.
- Mhaskar, Sumeet. "Indian Muslims in a Global City: Socio-Political Effects on Economic Preferences in Contemporary Mumbai." *Working Papers WP 13-04*, MMG Working Papers Print. Accessed May 1, 2021. <http://www.mmg.mpg.de/60622/wp-13-04>.
- Mill, James. *The History of British India.* Vol. II. London: Cradock, Baldwin and Joy, 1820.
- Mirowski, Philip, and Dieter Plehwe. *The Road from Mont Pèlerin : The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009.

- Misra, Amalendu. *Identity and Religion: Foundations of Anti-Islamism in India*. New Delhi ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2004.
- Müller, F. Max. *India: What Can It Teach Us?* New York, n.d.
- “Muslim Rashtriya Manch Plans to Expand Its Footprint in Telengana.” *Business Standard*, July 3, 2019.
- Nagaraj, R., and Sripad Motiram. “Introduction: From ‘Intermediate Regime’ to Crony Capitalism.” In *Political Economy of Contemporary India*, edited by R. Nagaraj and Sripad Motiram, 1–22. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316691373.002>.
- Nanda, Meera. *The God Market: How Globalization Is Making India More Hindu*. NYU Press, 2011. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qfjt4>.
- Nayar, Baldev Raj. *Globalization and India’s Economic Integration*. South Asia in World Affairs Series. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/j.ctt9qdshh>.
- Nizami, Khwaja Hasan. *Saari Hindu Janata Aur Hindu Mahasabha Se Poochne Ki Aik Baat (A Question for the Hindu Community and the Hindu Mahasabha)*. Delhi: Mahboobul Matabe, 1921.
- Noorani, Abdul Gafoor Abdul Majeed. *The Muslims of India: A Documentary Record*. New Delhi ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Pai, Sudha. *Developmental State and the Dalit Question in Madhya Pradesh: Congress Response*. Routledge, 2013.
- “Political Economy of the Nehru Era.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 23, no. 45/47 (1988): 2459–62.

- Quinn Slobodian author. *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018.
- Rai, Lajpat. *The Arya Samaj*. Prabhat Prakashan, 101AD.
- Röpke, Wilhelm. “Unentwickelte Länder.” *ORDO: Jahrbuch Für Die Ordnung von Wirtschaft Und Gesellschaft* 5 (1953): 63–113.
- RSS Resolves: Full Text of Resolutions from 1950 to 1983*. Bangalore: Prakashan Vibhag, RSS, 1983.
- Sameera Khan. “Negotiating the Mohalla: Exclusion, Identity and Muslim Women in Mumbai.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 17 (2007): 1527–33.
- Sankalp Patra Lok Sabha 2019*. New Delhi: Bharatiya Janata Party, 2019.
- Sanyal, Kalyan K. *Rethinking Capitalist Development Primitive Accumulation, Governmentality, and Post-Colonial Capitalism*. New Delhi ; New York: Routledge, 2007.
- <http://ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/login?url=http://www.tandfebooks.com/isbn/9781315767321>.
- Sarkar, Sumit. “The Fascism of the Sangh Parivar.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 28, no. 5 (June 5, 2015): 7–8.
- Savarkar, Vinayak Damodar. *Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu?* Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan, 1969.
- Seth, Sanjay. “Governmentality, Pedagogy, Identity: The Problem of the Backward Muslim.” In *Beyond Representation: Colonial and Postcolonial Constructions of Indian Identity*, edited by Crispin Bates, 55–76. New Delhi ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Shariff, Abusaleh. *Institutionalizing Constitutional Rights: Post-Sachar Committee Scenario*. *Institutionalizing Constitutional Rights*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016
- Sharma, Arvind. “On Hindu, Hindustān, Hinduism and Hindutva.” *Numen* 49, no. 1 (2002): 1–36.
- . “On the Difference Between Hinduism and Hindutva.” *Association for Asian Studies, Asian Philosophies and Religion*, 25, no. 1 (2020): 43–47.

- Sikand, Yoginder. "Arya Shuddhi and the Muslim Tabligh." In *Religious Conversion in India: Modes, Motivations, and Meanings*, edited by Rowena Robinson and Sathianathan Clarke, 98–118. Delhi ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Singh, Pritam. *Federalism, Nationalism and Development: India and the Punjab Economy*. Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series 9. London ; New York: Routledge, 2008.
- "Social Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India." New Delhi: Prime Minister's High Level Committee, Government of India, 2006.
- Sontheimer, Günther-Dietz, and Hermann Kulke. *Hinduism Reconsidered*. Manohar, 2001.
- "Statistical Report on General Elections to the Fourth Lok Sabha." New Delhi: Election Commission of India, n.d.
- Sud, Nikita. *Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and the State: A Biography of Gujarat*. 1st ed. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Suroor, Hasan. *India's Muslim Spring*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India, 2014.
- Tejani, Shabnum. *Indian Secularism: A Social and Intellectual History, 1890-1950*. Bloomington, Ind. : Chesham, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press ; Combined Academic distributor, Indiana University Press, 2008. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/j.ctv1b3qqtk>.
- The Communal Problem: Report of the Committee Appointed by the Indian National Congress to Enquire into the Kanpur Riots of March 1931*. Delhi: The National Book Trust of India, 1931.
- The Election Manifesto: Swatantra Party*. Bombay: Central Office, Swatantra Party, 1960.
- Thomas Chambers author. *Networks, Labour and Migration among Indian Muslim Artisans*. Economic Exposures in Asia. London: UCL Press, 2020.
- Thursby, Gene R. *Hindu-Muslim Relations in British India: A Study of Controversy, Conflict, and Communal Movements in Northern India 1923-1928*. BRILL, 1975.

- Upadhyaya, Deendayal. *Integral Humanism*. New Delhi: Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 1965.
- . *The Two Plans*. New Delhi: Prabhat Books, n.d.
- Varma, Pavan K. *The New Indian Middle Class*. HarperCollins, 2014.
- Varshney, Ashutosh. *Democracy, Development, and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511609367>.
- . “Mass Politics or Elite Politics? India’s Economic Reforms in Comparative Perspective.” *The Journal of Policy Reform* 2, no. 4 (November 1, 1998): 301–35.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13841289808523388>.
- Venugopal, Rajesh. “Neoliberalism as Concept.” *Economy and Society* 44, no. 2 (2015): 165–87.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03085147.2015.1013356>.
- Brown, Wendy. *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism: The Rise of Antidemocratic Politics in the West*. Columbia University Press, 2019.
- . *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution*. First edition. Near Futures. New York: Zone Books, 2015.
- Why Swatantra?* Bombay: Central Office, Swatantra Party, n.d.
- Zaidi, R.H. *Bunaid Husain v Zila Adhikari, Barabanki*, No. 1998 (2) AWC 946 (Allahabad High Court March 3, 1998).
- Zutshi, Chitrallekha. *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.



