**Deciphering the Indian mindset**

**[Air Marshal Shahid Alvi (Retd)](https://nation.com.pk/contributor/air-marshal-shahid-alvi-retd)**

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India’s geopolitical ambitions to become a regional power with global outreach are predominantly propelled by the surging bonhomie with US-led West. From the Indian perspective, the assertion by Raja Mohan that the state seeks primacy and veto over actions of outside powers within its ‘immediate neighbourhood’, appears realistic as it is the legitimate right of any citizen to aspire for a higher status. However, there is the disquieting facet outlined in the latest Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2021’ that charge-sheets the BJP-led government with serious offences. In fact, after a rather discomfortingly long silence, the international community is finally becoming alarmed by the rising cases of minority lynching, burning of their properties and denial of basic rights.

This gory state has recently compelled multiple key international actors to raise voices on different aspects of human rights. It is, thus, important for the world to understand the reasons why India has shirked away from Gandhian and Nehruvian ideals and embraced an increasingly violent nationalist and religiously intolerant ideology. It is even more important to analyse whether this mindset would wean off with the departure of Modi, as many believe, or the simmering of passions would lead to an unprecedented act of aggression that can destabilise the entire region.

[Antonio Conte appointed new Tottenham manager](https://nation.com.pk/03-Nov-2021/antonio-conte-appointed-new-tottenham-manager)

In order to read BJP’s current mindset to find answers, the Hindutva ideology is worth recalling. The concept of Hindutva revolves around a unifying force that is strictly limited to the bloodline and a common culture that excludes Muslims and Christians since their subnational identities are suspected with divisive tendencies that could eventually be exploited by foreign forces. Veer Savarkar, who developed the Hindutva ideology, was a leading figure in the Hindu Mahasabha whose diehard member, Nathuram Godse, killed Gandhi. Savarkar’s teachings permit Hindus to adopt only those ethical codes which enable them to establish their supremacy over the Muslims. He even encourages rape against Muslim women to avenge the 600-year long Muslim rule over the subcontinent. To meet these objectives, Sangh Parivar started purging Gandhian and Nehruvian ideals from the minds of the Indian masses.

This mindset was at play when the BJP President, Rajnath Singh, announced in 2008 that ‘for any nation to establish its influence in the world, it requires to become a military superpower.’ Although Sangh Parivar could not significantly alter the mainstream foreign policy discourse in India under Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee, it managed to do so successfully under the leadership of PM Modi who in the past used to sulk at the moderate and partly secular approach of Vajpayee. As a result, the strategic community of India lost its voice when it came to their country’s external and internal policymaking to a group of Hindu nationalist organisations.

[We need strong, green armed forces, says NATO chief](https://nation.com.pk/03-Nov-2021/we-need-strong-green-armed-forces-says-nato-chief)

It is even more dismal to observe the likes of Kanwal Sibal and Satish Chandra, former diplomats, and policy analysts like Bharat Karnard validating the Hindutva outlook. These intellectuals have been making demands for a strong and unifying national culture, which is only possible when all other religions ‘hinduise’ themselves. Their idea of equating India with ‘Hinduness’ implies privileging the Hindu community and the subjugation of minorities. The renewed stress on vanquishing minorities has its roots in Muslim and British rule that continues to haunt Indian psyche until today. RSS, on its part, has apportioned blame to a ‘pacifist’ Hindu mindset that remained under the influence of Jainism, Buddhism and Gandhism.

While it is anyone’s guess for how long the current vehement pursuance of right-wing populist agenda by the BJP government would continue, but in view of PM Modi’s plummeting popularity due to a Covid-stricken economy and a growing sense of deprivation amongst the minorities in India, the BJP would be compelled before the next election to pull an act that establishes a link between Modi and India’s survival. While a drama similar to Balakot may appear too orchestrated with a proven risk of turning on its head, the world in general and Pakistan, in particular, should keep a close watch on India’s political landscape, with an added focus on CDS General Bipin Rawat’s reconfiguration of the military’s command structure and cherry-picking of military hardware.

[PM Imran Khan forbids ministers from giving statements regarding proscribed TLP](https://nation.com.pk/02-Nov-2021/pm-imran-khan-forbids-ministers-on-giving-statements-regarding-proscribed-tlp)

India’s tragedy lies in its inherent vulnerability–divisive tendencies from Kashmir to North East. Its reputation as the largest democracy is seriously dented due to growing sense of alienation amongst its minorities. 36 secessionist movements are simmering across India and the figure is expected to rise further with the ongoing persecution of minorities, muffling of dissident voices and prevalent socioeconomic injustices. It is time that sane voices in India should rise to confront actions.

The writer is Deputy President, Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies, Lahore, Pakistan.

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