**Demographics of Inequality in India**

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India, as the world’s largest democracy, boasts a rich tapestry of cultures and faiths, with a thriving economy and Western alliances. India is known as the world’s eighth most diverse and multicultural nation but is openly practising violence against its Muslim population. The rise of Hindutva ideology under the leadership of Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has become alarming. Hindutva, a far-right Hindu nationalist supremacist belief system, has raised fears about the inequality and persecution faced by minority communities in India. Therefore, this article delves into the implications of Hindutva ideology on minorities and the inequalities they have endured since India’s independence in 1947.

Since, the rise of Hindutva ideology, Narendra Modi and the BJP have openly championed Hindutva ideology, seeking to establish a Hindu Rashtra (Hindu Nation) and promoting the concept of Akhand Bharat (Undivided India). This ideological shift and hate speeches in public against minorities have led to growing concerns about the safety and existence of minority groups, including Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Dalits, and others. Scholars and human rights activists have expressed alarm over the implications of this ideology, as it echoes sentiments of supremacy and poses a threat to the secular fabric of Indian society. The roots of communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims in India can be traced back to the colonial era and the partition in 1947. The trauma of partition, which led to the creation of Pakistan, has perpetuated mistrust and animosity between the two religious communities. Some argue that the Hindutva ideology has capitalized on this historical context, stoking religious divisions for political gains.

Recent examples that prove that this government`s behaviour towards Muslims and minorities is discriminatory include the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The Modi government potentially targeted Muslims and created a divide among communities. Furthermore, the government’s response to communal violence, like the Delhi riots of 2020, exposed the government as being ignorant towards the minority’s rights. Along with these, the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir verifies that the governmental decisions towards the minorities, particularly Muslims are biased and particularly referred to the BJP-led Hindutva ideology.

Minority marginalization and violence under the BJP rule have caused an increase in the incidents of communal riots and violence against minorities. It has been noted that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is united by an extremist ideology rooted in religious nationalism, commonly referred to as Hindutva. The Human Rights Watch reports indicate that communal riots have increased by 6.4 per cent since Modi took power, with the majority of cases of violence against minority communities being underreported. The growing intolerance and hostility towards other ethnicities have exacerbated the sense of insecurity among minorities.

One example is February 23, 2020, communal violence in Delhi that killed 53 people, 40 of them Muslim. Instead of conducting a credible and impartial investigation, it was alleged and later proved in the documentary, “India; The Modi Question” that the BJP leaders incited violence and police officials were complicit in attacks. Another incident reported was the mass protest, by the farmers, vilifying minority Sikh protesters and opening investigations into their alleged affiliation with separatist groups.

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The plight of women from minority communities in India faces additional challenges, often becoming victims of violence, harassment, and even rape at the hands of extremist mobs. Besides this brutal behaviour, the law is also missing for Muslims in India. The incident of Gujrat riots in 2002 and then the release of 11 jailed men in Gujarat, who were accused of brutally killing 13 members of a Muslim family, including a three-year-old girl, and raping the mother of the child, serves as a distressing confirmation of the perceived absence of justice for Muslims in India. Along with these, on 31 July 2023, the BJP-affiliated group brutally murdered two Muslim men in Haryana providing evidence of a biased rule of law by the BJP-led government towards the minorities. These incidents further highlight the prevailing gender inequality and discrimination, particularly within the context of Hindutva ideology, as the lack of adequate protection and justice exacerbates the vulnerability of women and those belonging to minority communities.

The spread of Hindutva ideology is not confined to India alone. Its influence has been observed in other parts of the world. For instance, the manifesto of a far-right Norwegian mass murderer mentioned Hindutva and expressed support for the deportation of Muslims from India and from Europe, which further proves that the ideology is not limited to India only. The Hindutva violence is not only limited to Muslims or Christians, but its intolerance against other ethnic groups and other minorities has skyrocketed as well. The extent of violence associated with Hindutva differs across different communities affecting Christians, Dalits and Muslims. The government under Modi’s leadership has asserted that nearly 2 million Muslims, whose families have roots tracing back generations in Bangladesh, do not hold rightful Indian citizenship. These individuals have been relocated to what the government refers to as transit camps or mass detention centres, a situation reminiscent of treating them as refugees.

The unchecked ascent of Hindutva ideology gives rise to grave human rights concerns, and recent events of ethnic violence in Manipur on 3 May 2023, further prove it to be true. Women in Manipur were subjected to harassment and forced nudity, which not only violated human rights but also infringed upon women’s rights. This state-sanctioned support for such actions has eroded the very notion of self-determination in India. The international community needs to hold India accountable for violating the principles of human rights, women`s rights, equality, and tolerance for all its citizens.

Despite the widespread attention given to Islamic extremism as a global threat, the resonance of Hindutva ideology highlights its significant potential consequences on a global scale, which, surprisingly, remains largely unnoticed and unaddressed. The international response to the situation in India has been relatively muted. Economic interests, political alliances and regional interests have contributed to downplaying the issues related to Hindutva ideology and its impact on minority communities within India and Kashmir. Some countries, including the US, have prioritized their economic relations with India over raising human rights concerns, leading to criticism from human rights advocates. US trade with India is estimated at $146.1 billion in 2019, which is empirical evidence that explains the US tilt towards India.

In conclusion, the rise of Hindutva ideology under the BJP rule in India poses a significant threat to the country’s multicultural fabric and the well-being of its minority communities. The growing intolerance, violence, and discrimination against these groups underscore the urgent need for global attention and action. Despite India being the world’s largest democracy, its so-called democratic practices are questionable. Its emergence as an economic powerhouse should not divert attention from critical human rights concerns. The violations of human rights and the ongoing Muslim genocide within India and Kashmir must be addressed earnestly. Minorities should be granted security and religious freedom and the imposition of Hindutva ideology on minorities should be discouraged on the global platforms. True democracy and progress can only be achieved when the rights of all individuals, regardless of their faith or ethnicity, are safeguarded and respected. The international community, including Western allies like the US, must prioritize human rights and equality when engaging with India and any nation facing similar challenges.

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