**Hindutva, Modi and Pakistan**

**Pakistan should not harbor utopian dreams of peace with India in the foreseeable future.**

[Sher Ali Bukhari](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/sher-ali-bukhari)

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The common man on both sides of borders often harbors ambiv­alence toward the rise of Hindut­va and the emergence of PM Modi in the Indian political landscape. Such political apathy fails to take into account the entire narrative surrounding the Hindutva ideology, its historical roots, and its vision for the Indian heartland, as well as its region­al and global outlook.

Hindutva, a political ideology rooted in the Hindu faith, asserts the supremacy of Hinduism and perceives other religions, particularly Indian Muslims, as outsiders. The ideology contends that India’s political, legal, economic, and social landscape should align with Hindu principles. It is note­worthy that such a faith-driven stance is defined by a political leader rather than a religious monk.

Examining the history of Hindutva, one must consider the influential per­spectives presented in Savarkar’s “Es­sentials of Hindutva” (1923) and M.S. Golwalkar’s “We or our Nationhood Defined.” Both figures, admirers of Hit­ler, explicitly advocated for an exclu­sive form of nationalism and society grounded in political Hinduism. They played pivotal roles in establishing the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in 1925, which championed the cause of Hindutva.

[Govt committed to ‘charter of economy & reconciliation’: Tarar](https://www.nation.com.pk/15-Mar-2024/govt-committed-to-charter-of-economy-reconciliation-tarar)

During this period, the Indian Na­tional Congress, the driving force be­hind Indian independence, was led by liberal and pluralistic minds like Gan­dhi and Nehru, who firmly rejected the idea of Hindutva. Nehru, in his semi­nal work “Discovery of India,” expound­ed on an India characterized by diver­sity, pluralism, and religious tolerance. Meanwhile, the RSS worked diligently to propagate its ideology across India, culminating in the assassination of Gan­dhi by the Hindu nationalist Godse, who believed Gandhi favored Pakistan and Muslims post-India’s partition.

Following an initial ban, the RSS re­alized the need for a well-organized political party to advance its mission. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) be­came the preferred political vehicle for the RSS and other right-wing elements in India. The BJP, acting as the political mouthpiece of the RSS, strategically lev­eraged events such as the illegal emer­gency of Indira Gandhi (1975-77), the Shah Bano Case (1985), and the demoli­tion of Babri Masjid (1991) to gain mo­mentum. This strategy paved the way for the BJP’s ascent from a single Mem­ber of Parliament to the largest party in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

[By-polls for KP UCs’ chairmen seats on April 25](https://www.nation.com.pk/15-Mar-2024/by-polls-for-kp-ucs-chairmen-seats-on-april-25)

Enter Modi: Initially, the Chief Minis­ter of Gujarat, he envisioned economic development in the early 2000s. How­ever, in retrospect, his staunch sup­port for Hindutva became evident dur­ing the Gujarat riots of 2002, where he oversaw the deadliest attacks on In­dian Muslims, solidifying his hardlin­er image. Capitalizing on the decline of the Indian National Congress in the early 2010s due to corruption and dy­nastic politics, Modi seized the oppor­tunity and became the Prime Minister of India in 2014.

During his first term, Modi expanded his Hindutva ideology by marginalizing Muslims in politics, economy, and soci­ety. He asserted that the BJP could se­cure the majority of parliamentary seats without nominating Indian Muslims, while simultaneously tightening laws on conversion and remaining silent on violations against Muslims and other minorities. Modi energized his base by evoking the glories of Hindu mythologi­cal past, signaling a departure from the ideals of Nehru and Gandhi.

[More than 25 million tons of debris generated from destruction in Gaza: UN](https://www.nation.com.pk/15-Mar-2024/more-than-25-million-tons-of-debris-generated-from-destruction-in-gaza-un)

In his second term, Modi pursued more assertive policies, revoking the special status of Indian-occupied Kash­mir, overseeing the construction of the Ram Temple on the Babri Masjid ruins, and implementing the National Register of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Act to marginalize Muslims and other minorities. Additionally, he politicized Indian institutions, including the higher judiciary, civil servants, and armed forc­es, consolidating his Hindutva ideology. Consequently, India became a more po­larized, socially exclusive, intolerant, and hostile environment.

Despite India’s ascent to the fifth-largest economy during Modi’s tenure, Oxfam International highlights a stark economic inequality, with 49% of wealth owned by 1% of the elite. This inequality persists despite significant investments from the USA and Europe, leaving the benefits concentrated in a few hands.

Simultaneously, Modi’s tenure wit­nessed strained relations with Pakistan. Adopting a policy of isolation, Modi en­gaged in diplomatic offenses, launching disinformation campaigns against Paki­stan, involving internal matters like Bal­uchistan, funding terrorism, and lever­aging economic coercion through FATF. Talks on Kashmir stalled, and calls for revoking the Indus Water Treaty ema­nated from the Indian side. Modi fur­ther energized his base with claims of fabricated surgical strikes and the Bala­kot air strikes in 2019.

[YouTube blocks Canadian media story about Sikh separatist killing](https://www.nation.com.pk/15-Mar-2024/youtube-blocks-canadian-media-story-about-sikh-separatist-killing)

As a fervent supporter of Hindutva ideology, Modi and his establishment entertain notions of reversing the parti­tion to create Akhand Bharat or acquir­ing regions of Azad Kashmir or Gilgit-Baltistan from Pakistan. Other theories suggest India seeks to weaken Pakistan to assert regional hegemony.

Modi’s posture toward Pakistan indi­cates a lack of interest in peace efforts. His track record in both domestic and international politics underscores his prioritization of political gains and ide­ology over the interests of India. Con­sequently, Pakistan should not harbor utopian dreams of peace with India in the foreseeable future. Instead, policies should focus on creating political and economic stability while avoiding ap­peasement and adventurism with India to protect core interests.

**Sher Ali Bukhari**  
The writer is a UET alumni with keen interest in Pakistan’s foreign policy.